Citizenship, Community and the State in Western India: The Moulding of a Marathi-Speaking Province, 1930s-1950s

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis examines how ideas about citizenship emerged out of the mutually constitutive relationship between the 'everyday' state and society in the specific region of Maharashtra, western India. By concentrating upon Maharashtra between the 1930s and 1950s, it looks to provide new perspectives upon the construction of citizenship in India during this formative period, thereby complementing, building upon and re-contextualising recent scholarship that has been principally interested in deciphering the repercussions of independence and partition in the north of the subcontinent. This thesis suggests that the reasons why Maharashtrians supported the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines were intrinsically linked to ideas and performances of citizenship that had emerged in the past few decades at the local level. Despite the state's interactions with its citizens being theoretically based upon accountability, objectivity and egalitarianism, they often diverged from these hyperbolical principles in practice. Because local state actors, who were drawn from amongst regional societies themselves, came to be subjected to pressures from particular sub-sets, groups, factions and communities within this regional society, or shared the same exigencies and sentimental concerns as its ordinary members of the public, the circumstances in which citizenship was conceptualised, articulated and enacted within India differed from one location to the next. Perceptions of the state amongst ordinary Indians, and their sense of belonging to and relationship with it were thus formulated in the discrepant spaces between the state's high-sounding morals and values, and its regionally specific customs and practices on the ground.

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Glossary

Abhang – Hindu devotional hymn

Adivasi – The term for 'tribal' groups, meaning the 'original inhabitants' of India

Ahir – Cow-herding caste of relatively low status, traditionally from north India

Avatar – An earthly incarnation of a Hindu deity

Bahujan Samaj – 'People in the majority'; refers to people of low-caste origin

Bandh – Literally 'closed'; a form of protest involving a general strike

Bania – An occupational caste of traders, merchants, bankers and moneylenders

Bhat – A Brahman caste surname; also used by non-Brahmans as a derogatory term for a Brahman priest

Bhil – An adivasi people who generally follow agricultural occupations

Brahman – Highest varna in the fourfold varna scheme; traditionally priests, but now also involved in governmental, landowning and entrepreneurial occupations and activities

Chhatrapati – Literally 'paramount sovereign'

Chitpavan – A Brahman sub-caste originally from the Konkan, western Maharashtra

Daivadnya – A Brahman sub-caste originally from coastal Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa

Daldi – A Muslim community who traditionally work as fishermen

Dalit – Literally 'ground', 'suppressed', 'broken to pieces'; preferred designation of former 'untouchables'

Desh – Native land; region; nation

Deshashta – A Brahman sub-caste originally from the Deccan plateau in Maharashtra

Deshmukh – Headman of a group of villages

Dhangar – An occupational caste of shepherds located primarily in Maharashtra

Dharma – Religious and moral 'natural' law

Fitna – The 'drawing away of allegiance' or 'sedition'

Gaud Saraswat – A Brahman sub-caste originally from the Konkan coast of Maharashtra and Karnataka

Harijan – Literally 'child of God'; Gandhian term for Dalits/'untouchables'

Inam – Hereditary land rights

Jain – A follower of Jainism, a South Asian religion that originally developed out of protest against caste restrictions within Hinduism, but now often operates like a separate caste group

Jat – A non-elite 'peasant' caste of north India

Jati – Literally 'birth', 'name', 'breed', 'order'; caste in the sense of a specific named 'birth-group'

Jus sanguinus – An exclusive interpretation of entitlement to citizenship based upon ethnicity and descent

Jus soli – An inclusive interpretation of entitlement to citizenship based upon birth and residence

Kaliyuga – 'The Age of Kali'; last of the four stages the world goes through as part of the cycle of yugas described in the Indian scriptures, associated with the apocalyptic demon Kali

Kanbi – Gujarati 'peasant' caste title

Kayastha – Predominantly north Indian caste involved in scribal occupations

Khot – Landlords with proprietary rights in the villages of the coastal Konkan districts of western India

Kshatriya – second highest varna in the fourfold varna scheme; traditionally occupied in lordly/kingly and martial pastimes

Kshetra – Land; field; place

Kulkarni – Brahman village book-keeper of Maharashtra

Kunbi – Marathi 'peasant' caste title; closely linked to Maratha caste

Kurubar – An occupational caste of shepherds located primarily in Karnataka

Lathi – Literally 'stick'; commonly used as a crowd control device by Indian police

Lingayat – Caste title of Kannada-speaking 'peasant' population with distinctive Shaivite sectarian religious tradition

Mali – An occupational caste of gardeners and flower growers

Mamlatdar – Administrative heads of sub-districts

Maratha – A caste title of superior 'peasants' and warriors in Maharashtra with traditions of arms-bearing and privileged land rights

Marwari – Indian ethnic group that originate from Rajasthan, traditionally involved in business enterprises

Mleccha – Literally 'barbarian' or 'foreigner'

Mofussil – Rural hinterland

Mohalla – Urban neighbourhood

Panchayat – Form of local self-government

Pandit – Brahman religious scholar with knowledge of classical Hindu scriptures

Parsi – An ethnic Persian member of Zoroastrian religious communities in India

Patidar – Caste title of superior 'peasant' tillers in Gujarat

Patil – Village headman

Pavada – Ballads

Peshwa – 'Prime Minister' of the Maratha polity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha – Poona People's Service Society

Rashtra bhasha – National language

Samyukta Maharashtra – 'United' Maharashtra

Satyagraha – Literally 'truth force'; Gandhian non-violent/civil resistance

Satyashodhak Samaj – Truth Seekers' Society

Shiv Sena –Maharashtra-based organisation with an anti-Muslim and pro-Marathi political agenda

Shuddhi – Literally 'purification'; can refer to reverting to Hinduism after initially converting from Hinduism to another religion

Shudra – The lowest of the orders defined in the fourfold varna scheme; traditionally peasant or occupational castes

Sonar – Occupational caste of goldsmiths

Swadeshi – Literally 'own country'; home industry; early twentieth-century nationalist campaigns featuring boycott of British goods

Swaraj – 'Self-governance', 'self-rule', 'home rule'; synonymous with Gandhi's anti-colonial nationalist campaign

Tahsildar – Local tax-collector

Taluka – Sub-district; small unit of administration below the district

Vaishya – Third in the rank order of the fourfold varna scheme; usually designating commercial livelihoods

Varna – Literally 'colour', 'rank', 'class'; the idealised fourfold scheme of ranked human callings or orders as set out in ancient Hindu scriptures

Note on Terminology

Throughout this thesis I will refer to the particular area under study as Bombay Province, despite the fact that it was also known as and referred to by contemporaries as Bombay Presidency (after Bombay was declared a Presidency Town by the East India Company alongside Calcutta and Madras in the late seventeenth century). I have also chosen not to begin referring to this area of South Asia as Bombay State after 1950, when the nomenclature was changed for sub-national units of administration with the introduction of independent India's first constitution. This is to avoid confusion with any references I make to 'the state' during this thesis. My study of 'the state' is not just about Bombay State, but also 'the state' at the levels of the nation, the district, and more locally. Whilst these levels are interconnected with one another, they are not reducible to one sole entity. Throughout this thesis, I have therefore endeavoured to make it clear which particular echelon of 'the state' I am referring to at that particular moment.

I have also referred to the largest metropolis and administrative capital of Bombay Province throughout as 'Bombay City' in accordance with contemporary usage in the period under study, rather than using the present official pseudonym of 'Mumbai'. The same reasoning applies to my references to all-India locations such as 'Calcutta' (Kolkata) and 'Madras' (Chennai), and Maharashtrian places such as 'Poona' (Pune) and 'Thana' (Thane).

1: Introduction: Citizenship, the State and Society in Western India

'Thackrey [sic] was the ugly reality of so-called democratic India, this artificial democracy always worked for Majority but it's just a dream for minorities ... Bal is gone but his legacy will carry on'. Sukhvinder-Punjabi

'[Thackeray] was a real "Tiger" to have take[n] on religio[us] extremis[m] operating from Pak[istan]. He worshipped in Mah[arashtra], but he constantly fought for Kashmir ... I am really proud that I read about Sardar Patel but lived in an era of "Tiger" Thakre [sic]'. Vishsays

'Forget Bal Thackeray and move on, his views are antithesis to the fabric of our constitution'. Amith[1]

Invited to comment and respond to an editorial by the British Broadcasting Corporation's Delhi correspondent on Bal Thackeray's legacy, after his death on 17 November 2012, the lines quoted above are indicative of the mixed feelings that this right-wing Hindu leader of the Maharashtra-based Shiv Sena party had aroused throughout his life. Over the past fifty years, Thackeray had presided over a nativist agenda based around opposition to Muslims, as well as south Indian and north Indian migrants to the western Indian city of Bombay/Mumbai.[2] For many Indians he was a hero, standing up for the interests and rights of the ordinary Hindu and/or Marathi-speaking citizen in response to non-native, anti-national and extra-territorial enemies. For others, Thackeray's majoritarianism, based around the demographic politics of community, epitomised the problems that an unhindered political democracy had let loose upon the original national project of 'modernisation' (and its component parts – secularism, welfare, and development). Originally initiated in the constitutional legislation of the state's

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[1] Excerpts taken from, Soutik Biswas, 'Comments', *The Legacy of Bal Thackeray* (2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-20389849> [accessed 6 July 2013].

[2] The Bombay City Municipal Government, under the political leadership of the Shiv Sena, changed the city's name from the Anglicised 'Bombay' to the indigenous Marathi 'Mumbai' in 1995. See, Thomas Blom Hansen, *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001); Meera Kosambi, 'British Bombay and Marathi Mumbai: Some Nineteenth-Century Perceptions', in *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, ed. by Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 3-34.

'founding fathers', this project was perceived to have stuttered and stalled as the primarily parochial and communitarian concerns of the 'masses' had ultimately trumped national imperatives. For yet another decipherable set of Indian opinion, the success of Thackeray's politics instead demonstrated the inherent hollowness of these state principles from the start, with entirely negative consequences for a whole 'minority' sub-set of its citizenry. By now, then, it should be clear that the remarks on Thackeray's legacy quoted above are also suggestive of the various ways in which ordinary members of society[3] have come to conceptualise and articulate their own membership and identity, and their particular rights and responsibilities, within India over the course of the twentieth century. The central objective of this thesis is to trace the manner in which these diverse ideas about citizenship came to be formulated and enacted in the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province, in the context of the anticipation and achievement of independence, partition, and the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines, between the 1930s and 1950s.

This thesis argues that citizenship was not solely constructed as a result of the legal-jurisdictional frameworks implemented within the first constitution of an independent India in 1950. Rather, it considers the ways in which ideas about citizenship emerged out of the mutually constitutive relationship between the 'everyday' state and society in the specific region of Maharashtra in western India. By concentrating upon Maharashtra it looks to provide new perspectives upon the construction of citizenship in India during this formative period, thereby complementing, building upon and re-contextualising recent scholarship that has been principally interested in deciphering the repercussions of independence and partition in the north. Despite the state's interactions with its citizens being theoretically based upon accountability, objectivity and egalitarianism, they often diverged from these hyperbolical principles in practice. And because local state actors, who were drawn from amongst regional societies themselves, came to be subjected to pressures from particular sub-sets, groups, factions and communities within this regional society, or shared the same exigencies and sentimental concerns as its ordinary members of the public, the circumstances in which

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[3] Although I refer to 'ordinary' Indians/citizens/members of society throughout this thesis, this is not to be interpreted as a catch-all phrase that homogenises and generalises the subcontinent's population. Rather, this introduction and the rest of the thesis go on to highlight the class- and community-based differences within this category, and the implications of these differences upon interactions with the state and constructions of citizenship rights.

citizenship was conceptualised, articulated and enacted was to differ from one location to the next. Perceptions of the state amongst ordinary Indians, and their sense of belonging to and relationship with it, i.e. citizenship, were thus formulated in the discrepant spaces between the state's high-sounding morals and values, and its regionally specific customs and practices on the ground.

In October 1966, Thackeray launched the Shiv Sena as an organisation demanding greater access to both public and private jobs for Marathi-speakers in Bombay City. The Sena looked to employ regional and linguistic rhetoric and pride in a historic Maratha past to mobilise support around this 'nativist' agenda. In doing so, it effectively redeployed the strategies and tropes of the Samyukta ('united') Maharashtra movement of the 1940s and 1950s, whose supporters had campaigned for the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines. On the one hand, its proponents anticipated the formation of a separate province that would develop local democratic representativeness, assist the effective distribution of state jobs and resources, and support the improvement of state-society relations by making the local vernacular the language of governance. On the other hand, calls for linguistic reorganisation were also formulated around the potential for state 'capture' by locally dominant groups and communities, in which they would be able to monopolise bureaucratic appointments, parliamentary posts and governmental resources, and introduce discriminatory legislation against 'outsiders'. The reasons why Maharashtrians supported the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines were therefore, this thesis suggests, intrinsically linked to ideas and performances of citizenship that had emerged in the past few decades at the local level.

1.1 The Setting

The focus of this thesis's attempts to ascertain constructions of citizenship at the nexus of 'everyday' state-society relations will therefore be upon western India and, in particular, the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province. In 1960 these districts were separated from other parts of Bombay Province to create part of the new unilingual province of Maharashtra. The decision was the culmination of the aforementioned demands amongst many Marathi-speakers in Bombay to

form Samyukta ('united') Maharashtra, which had first emerged in the context of growing anticipation of a forthcoming independence from British colonial rule. The expectancy of autonomy, democracy, self-government, 'Swaraj', 'Pakistan', and other 'various vocabularies of freedom in circulation', were critical to the formulation of a multiplicity of contrasting and overlapping ideas about the future status of the various peoples of South Asia, within, as of yet, ill-defined and shapeless nation-state(s).[4] And this diverse assortment of demands, visions and 'ideas of India'[5] continued to prevail in the aftermath of the achievement of independence and the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 – this was indeed, as the title of Vazira Zamindar's 2007 monograph has suggested, a 'long partition'.[6] This thesis therefore adheres to the current trend amongst historians of South Asia, which has emerged over the past decade, to traverse the colonial/postcolonial divide and enter a domain previously the preserve of political and social scientists.

One particular subset of this scholarship has focused upon the events of independence and partition, noting how the new postcolonial Indian government had to establish and assert its legitimacy and integrity, delineate its territorial boundaries, control the transfer of populations, and conceptualise who constituted its citizenry, all within a prevailing atmosphere of insecurity and flux.[7] Over the course of the next decade, attempts to resettle and rehabilitate huge numbers of Hindu and Sikh refugees were accompanied by suspicions over the

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[4] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 5; see also, Sugata Bose, 'Nation as Mother: Representations and Contestations of "India" in Bengali Literature and Culture', in *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*, ed. by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 50-75 (particularly pp. 70-75).

[5] I have borrowed this phrase from, Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 1999).

[6] Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

[7] Khan, *The Great Partition*; Ian Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 45 (2011), 109-130; Zamindar, *The Long Partition*; Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); William Gould, Taylor C. Sherman, and Sarah Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the Everyday State in the Post-Partition Government Services of India and Pakistan', *Past and Present*, 219 (2013), 237-279.

loyalties of Muslims who had either chosen, or been forced by circumstances, to remain behind. With state representatives casting doubt on their patriotic devotion, and considered 'fifth-columnists' in the employ of an aggressive and menacing Pakistan, Muslims in India quickly came to be seen as 'the most excluded members in the whole body of Indian citizenry'.[8] In this context, debates on citizenship and belonging in the immediate post-independence years have come to be principally constructed along the lines of religion, a tendency captured in the evocative title of Gyanendra Pandey's essay, 'Can a Muslim be an Indian?'.[9] Yet if we look beyond those parts of the subcontinent that were directly partitioned, we can discern a much more nuanced perspective on partition's spectre in addition to this 'Hindu-Muslim Question'.

First, however, it is necessary to note that Pakistan was only one manifestation of the demands for freedom, autonomy and self-government that were strengthened by the increased likelihood and then achievement of independence – indeed, there was nothing inevitable about its territorial distinctiveness and separate sovereignty. As Ayesha Jalal was to suggest in her revisionist account of the high politics of partition, the Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah actually sought to secure Muslim interests *within* India in a loose con-federal arrangement based upon Hindu-Muslim parity at the centre.[10] For Jinnah, Pakistan was a 'bargaining chip' in his efforts to be recognised as the 'sole spokesman' of India's Muslim community – not only by the British, but amongst Muslims themselves. The demand served as a political device through which to reorient Muslim allegiances in the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab, Bengal, and elsewhere, away from (often inter-communal) provincial parties and towards religious identity politics and the League instead. Jinnah therefore intentionally 'avoided giving the demand a precise definition, leaving the League's followers to make of it what they wished'.[11] Jalal's work, as David Gilmartin proposes, thus begins to suggest that,

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[8] Ornit Shani, 'Conceptions of Citizenship in India and the "Muslim Question"', *MAS*, 44 (2010), 145-173 (p. 145, Abstract).

[9] Gyanendra Pandey, 'Can a Muslim be an Indian?', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (1999), 608-629.

[10] Asim Roy, 'Reviews: The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', *MAS*, 24 (1990), 385-408 (pp. 391, 398).

[11] Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 4.

'It is critical also to bring into the narrative the British devolution of power to the provinces in the period after 1919, a process that had as much influence on the dynamics of the debates leading to partition as did an earlier British policy of "divide and rule" tied to religion'.[12]

In her account of the 'forgotten alternative' in Bengal during this period, the work of Sana Aiyar fleshes out the central implications of this revisionist scholarship. Aiyar suggests that the predominant focus upon 'two possible alternatives – [Congress] secular nationalism or [Muslim League] religious communalism' in conventional historiography has ignored the possibility of a 'third alternative' that relates to regional sentiments and solidarities.[13] The support proffered by the Bengali Premier, Fazlul Huq, for the Muslim League's 1940 Lahore Resolution was actually based around a pluralised conception of autonomous and sovereign 'independent states', rather than a singular 'Pakistan'. It thus 'amounted to more provincial autonomy than the [1935 Government of India] Act had so far provided, for it gave independence not only from the central government but also from the central policy of the Muslim League'.[14] Despite being a prominent supporter of the Pakistan demand and although ultimately overrun by exclusive communal rhetoric and practice, Huq's provincial politics, built around Bengali regional identities, thus cut across any straightforward representation of a homogenised and unitary Muslim community promulgated by Jinnah and the League.

If we look beyond Bengal and Punjab, we can trace similar manifestations of regional sentiment in more novel arenas within India, which demonstrate the broader, more comprehensive impact of independence and partition. Semi-autonomous princely rulers in territorially-viable areas like Bhopal, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Travancore began to plan for their own separate nationhood, opening up diplomatic ties with European and North American states.[15] Outbreaks of violence and popular resistance ensured that military force was resorted to in Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir to ensure their accession to the Indian Union. Beyond the princely states, other conceptualisations of freedom and democracy prevailed. The Rajaji formula of 1942, for example, fashioned by C.

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[12] David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57 (1998), 1068-1095 (p. 1072, fn. 3).

[13] Sana Aiyar, 'Fazlul Huq, Region and Religion in Bengal: The Forgotten Alternative of 1940-43', *MAS*, 42 (2008), 1213-1249 (p. 1215).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 1220; see also, Roy, 'Reviews: The High Politics of India's Partition', p. 392.

[15] Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 229-260.

Rajagopalachari, the Madras-based Gandhian Congress leader, advocated permitting the Muslim majority provinces of the north-east and north-west the option to go their own way. But as a committed Tamil of southern India, Rajaji's plan also sought to cut down the political, demographic and cultural weight of the north in comparison to the south. The plan was supported by leaders of the Dravidian movement as evidence of the need for autonomy from the troubles and demands of the north.[16] Across the south and west of the subcontinent, new movements that demanded the reconstruction of provincial administrative boundaries on cultural and linguistic lines emerged. Whilst largely non-secessionist in intent, Tamil-, Telugu-, Malayalam-, Kannada-, and Marathi-speakers envisaged the creation of semi-autonomous sub-national units within a federally-structured Indian Union.

A broadened outlook upon independence and partition has important implications for the study of citizenship in India. The majority of previous scholarship on citizenship during this period has focused primarily on the implications of boundary demarcation, refugee rehabilitation, and Muslim loyalties in northern India, thereby corroborating the argument of David Washbrook, who has pointed out that South Asian histories of 'the whole' have invariably focused on Bengal and the Gangetic valley. Alternative histories of 'India's pluralism and the parallel construction of multiple cultural nationalisms' have been ignored – 'except perhaps as supposed challenges to and betrayals of an Indian national principle'.[17] There have been compelling reasons, however, for privileging such an 'instituted perspective', ultimately tied into dominant narratives of nationalism, partition, and religious conflict.

Politically, the north Indian province of Uttar Pradesh (UP) was the epicentre of the 'cow protection' movement of the late nineteenth century and the *shuddhi* (literally 'purification') campaign of the Hindu Mahasabha in the 1920s, whilst Bengal played host to the *swadeshi* movement of 1905-11 and Punjab witnessed the colonial massacre at Amritsar in 1919. UP is the birthplace of both the Aligarh

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[16] J.B. Prashant More, *Muslim Identity, Print Culture, and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004), pp. 160-162.

[17] David Washbrook, 'Towards a History of the Present: Southern Perspectives on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, ed. by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar and Andrew Sartori (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 332-357 (p. 334).

Muslim University and the Deobandi movement, and it continues to be the home of the Nehru family dynasty, including that most important of scions, Jawaharlal.[18] Demographically, UP maintains a sizeable Muslim minority community, whilst being the most populous province in the country by some distance. And ultimately, it was the provinces of Bengal and Punjab that were arbitrarily divided at independence. Yet there are also many benefits to exploring conceptions of belonging and citizenship beyond the north in a country as large and diverse as India. This thesis, by focusing upon particular Marathi-speaking districts of western India instead, considers how 'everyday' notions of citizenship were also formulated around local exigencies and concerns related to an impending reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines.

The contemporary province of Maharashtra, according to the 2011 Census, is the second most populous province in India, and of comparable demographic size to Mexico (the eleventh largest country in terms of population in the world) with a population of over 112 million people.[19] Situated on the western side of the southern peninsula of the Indian Union, it can be divided into three distinct regions, which reflect the historical separation of Marathi-speakers into different provinces and princely states under the British Raj. Vidarbha, situated in the east of the contemporary province, previously made up part of the Central Provinces, whilst Marathwada was an erstwhile dominion of the semi-autonomous Nizam (or princely ruler) of Hyderabad. But it is upon western Maharashtra, and the former Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province, which this thesis concentrates.

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[18] Sandria B. Freitag, 'Sacred Symbol as Mobilizing Ideology: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24 (1980), 597-625; Charu Gupta, 'Articulating Hindu Masculinity and Femininity: Shuddhi and Sangathan Movements in United Provinces in the 1920s', *Economic and Political Weekly* [henceforth *EPW*], 33 (1998), 727-735; Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903-1908* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1973); K.L. Tuteja, 'Jallianwala Bagh: A Critical Juncture in the Indian National Movement', *Social Scientist*, 25 (1997), 25-61; Taylor C. Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), ch. 2; David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003 [1978]); Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1982]).
[19] 'Statement – 1: Population and Decadal Change by Residence: 2011 (PERSONS)', *Census of India, 2011: Primary Census Abstract* (2011) <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/PCA/PCA_Highlights/pca_highlights _file/India/Chapter-1.pdf> [accessed 20 July 2013].

In 1931, Marathi-speakers comprised 11.1 million of the 26.6 million inhabitants of the Bombay Presidency (including the princely states), primarily residing in the central districts of East and West Khandesh, Nasik, Ahmadnagar, Poona, Satara, and Sholapur; the coastal districts of Thana, Kolaba and Ratnagiri; the city of Bombay; the princely states and tribal chiefdoms of Kolhapur and the Dangs; and the southern district of Belgaum.[20] Besides a common language, the relative homogeneity of these districts was also reflected in terms of caste and, in particular, the exclusive preponderance of the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster, which made up the vast majority of the rural Marathi-speaking community.[21] Another 4.9 million of Bombay province's inhabitants were classified as Gujarati-speakers, and mainly resided in the province's northern districts where the Patidar-Kanbi caste cluster predominated, whilst a further 3.2 million Kannada-speakers were found in the southern districts where the Lingayat caste comprised a large proportion of the population.[22] Muslims, treated as a homogeneous bloc despite their sectarian, linguistic and class differences, constituted only 970,886, or less than eight per cent of the total population in the Marathi- and Kannada-speaking central and southern districts of Bombay.[23] It was language, region and caste which therefore served as the primary means whereby 'everyday' perceptions of citizenship came to be shaped by local state-society interactions in western India.[24]

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[20] A.H. Dracup and H.T. Sorley, *Census of India, 1931: Volume VIII: Bombay Presidency: Part II: Statistical Tables* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1933), pp. 359-369.

[21] Marathas made up approximately 5.8 million inhabitants of Bombay Province, according to the 1931 Census. See, Dracup and Sorley, *Census of India, 1931: Volume VIII: Part II*, pp. 412-443. Schwartzberg argues that, in the case of non-elite peasant castes, *exclusivity* from region to region seems to be the rule. This thesis suggests that his hypothesis holds true in late-colonial Bombay Province. I am not arguing, however, for 'static' peasant castes rooted to the land, but rather that as individuals moved about, in search of new opportunities and higher social status, they would pick up particular caste nomenclature dependent upon the role they performed in the particular linguistic region in which they were found. See, Joseph E. Schwartzberg, 'Caste Regions of the North Indian Plain', in *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, ed. by Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 81-114.

[22] Dracup and Sorley, *Census of India, 1931: Volume VIII: Part II*, pp. 359-369, 412-443.

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 412-443.

[24] This is not to treat linguistic and caste 'communities' as homogeneous and reified entities in some form of 'primordial' competition with one another. Indeed, as much of this thesis demonstrates, language and caste were frequently

A provincial-level analysis of Bombay thereby provides new perspectives upon the construction of citizenship in India during this formative period. It allows this thesis to draw upon materials contained within the Maharashtra (ex-Bombay) State Archives which are demonstrative of both the connections and dissonances between the centre and the locality, between high-level government rhetoric and low-level state actions. And by privileging the province as its point of analysis, this thesis therefore engages with theoretical work on regionalism, as well as its various incarnations and manifestations, such as the demands for linguistic reorganisation (including calls for the creation of Maharashtra) that emerged most vociferously during the late 1940s and 1950s.[25] Regionalism has been conceptualised and studied in a variety of different ways and formats by historians and social scientists interested in South Asia – as ethnicity, as political process, as secessionist movement, as culture, as centre-state relations in a federal context.[26] The demand for Maharashtra has been variously treated as indicative of the 'process of (party political) opposition', the culmination of a complex series of negotiations, machinations and compromises between provincial and all-India politicians, and as evidence of the 'aesthetic, emotive

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cut across by each other and other forms of identity – whether class-based, sub-regional, tribal, or religious.

[25] At this point it is worth nothing that I am aware of the multiple and changeable meanings of the word 'region', although I use it in a specific context to refer to the space between the national and the local on this occasion. See, Bernard S. Cohn, 'Regions Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society', in *An Anthropologist Amongst the Historians and Other Essays*, ed. by Bernard S. Cohn (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), ch. 6.

[26] See, for example, Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage, 1991); Maya Chadda, *Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); Robert W. Stern, *The Process of Opposition in India* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Robert L. Hardgrave, *The Dravidian Movement* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1965); Balraj Puri, *Kashmir: Towards Insurgency* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993); D.W. Attwood, M. Israel and N.K. Wagle, eds., *City, Countryside and Society in Maharashtra* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Ellen E. McDonald, 'The Growth of Regional Consciousness in Maharashtra', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* [henceforth *IESHR*], 5 (1968), 223-243; Madhav M. Deshpande, 'Nation and Region: A Socio-Linguistic Perspective on Maharashtra', in *National Unity: The South Asian Experience*, ed. by Milton Israel (New Delhi: Promilla, 1983), pp. 111-134; Ian Copland and John Rickard, eds, *Federalism: Comparative Perspectives from India and Australia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999).

representations and performances of identity that draw on images from popular history and cultural symbols and are used to mobilise people in Maharashtra'.[27]

More recently, a new crop of scholarship on regionalism has sought to distance itself from much of this older work.[28] Prachi Deshpande, for example, has criticised such research as 'being ... excessively statist'.[29] Having traced the crucial significance of Maratha historical memory to the creation of a modern regional Marathi identity, Deshpande has instead looked to take issue with 'the flat treatment in South Asian historiography of the category of the region and its relationship to the nation'.[30] Deshpande therefore rejects the simplistic representation of regionalisms 'either as local linguistic flavours of an essentially homogeneous Indian/Hindu nationalist discourse or as separatist and oppositional platforms to the homogenising and overcentralised Indian nation-state' and instead draws upon Sanjib Baruah's description of the evolving and 'dialogic relationship' between regionalism and pan-Indianism in his study of regional consciousness in the north-east Indian province of Assam.[31] However, despite noting that regionalism and pan-Indianism are therefore mutually constitutive, Baruah has elsewhere distinguished between the 'obligations of national citizenship [or what he calls "macro-nationalism"] ... as a project of the modern state', and the 'politics of micro-nationalism ... located in the theoretical space

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[27] Stern, *The Process of Opposition*; Y.D. Phadke, *Politics and Language* (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1979); Shreeyash Palshikar, 'Breaking Bombay, Making Maharashtra: Media, Identity Politics and State Formation in Modern India' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007), p. 11.

[28] See, for example, Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Sanjib Baruah, *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, Regional Identity and the Making of Kashmir* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003); Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997); Jayeeta Sharma, *Empire's Garden: Assam in the Making of India* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2011); Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus, 'Introduction', in *Region, Culture, and Politics in India*, pp. 7-23 (p. 13).

[29] Prachi Deshpande, 'Writing Regional Consciousness: Maratha History and Regional Identity in Modern Maharashtra', in *Region, Culture, and Politics in India*, ed. by Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), pp. 83-118 (p. 83).

[30] Deshpande, *Creative Pasts*, p. 208.

[31] *Ibid.*; Baruah, *India against Itself*, p. 14.

that is usually referred to as civil society'.[32] Such a distinction between the state and society, as we shall see in the final section of this introduction, is inherently problematic.

This thesis thus builds upon this recent work on regionalism, but seeks to reapply its arguments about regionalism's constantly evolving relationship with 'macro-nationalism' within the context of the much-maligned state and its interactions with local society. Rather than treating it solely as a site of 'national citizenship', we can trace how the state was itself constituted by ordinary members of the public, and was also implicated in forms of regional consciousness that contradicted the strong and centralised compulsions which presided at the all-India level. The state therefore simultaneously existed as a site of 'regional citizenship', too. As we have already seen and will continue to consider throughout the course of this thesis, appeals on the basis of protecting 'local' rights and status, as well as public notions of regional forms of self-government, democracy, and *swaraj* (such as the Pakistan demand), were frequently conceptualised and articulated through the provincial state.

Indeed, the important question of how state power was constituted, and what that meant for ordinary Indians and their sense of citizenship, has yet to be considered in detail in the context of linguistic reorganisation and regional consciousness during these critical decades. However, a particular subset of scholarship concerned with more contemporary demands for provincial reorganisation during the 1990s can provide us with some more concrete insights into 'a whole range of issues around governance, state and civil society' in India.[33] In her analysis of the demands for the creation of the Himalayan province of Uttarakhand, Emma Mawdsley has demonstrated how 'many men and women spoke not just of a new state but a different state ... a "good" state'.[34] In this regard, 'One of the stated goals of many involved in the demand for a separate state ... is to improve democratic transparency and accountability in the region,

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[32] Sanjib Baruah, '"Ethnic" Conflict as State-Society Struggle: The Poetics and Politics of Assamese Micro-Nationalism', *MAS*, 28 (1994), 649-671 (pp. 651-652); see also, Sanjib Baruah, 'Politics of Subnationalism: Society versus State in Assam', in *State and Politics in India*, ed. by Partha Chatterjee (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 496-520.

[33] Emma Mawdsley, 'Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 40.3 (2002), 34-54 (p. 36).

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 51, fn. 7.

and to involve local people to a greater extent in the development process'.[35] Likewise, the proponents of Samyukta Maharashtra argued that the creation of unilingual provinces with common traditions, affinities and social structures would make the achievement of national developmental objectives both quicker and easier – the state would be more accountable to its citizens if capable of conversing in the regional vernacular.[36]

These perceptions compare favourably with the 'mythic' or 'sublime' perceptions of the state, standing apart as an impartial arbiter and guarantor of social egalitarianism, which will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this introduction.[37] Yet the redrawing of boundaries could also be demonstrative of the state's more 'profane' dimensions and its 'capture' by locally dominant individuals, groups and communities.[38] As Stuart Corbridge has suggested in relation to the movement for the creation of the separate province of Jharkhand, local mobilisations reflected local patterns of domination, 'with little regard for the *adivasi* [tribal] communities so long in the vanguard of the Jharkhand movement'.[39] Similarly, as Chapter Five of this thesis suggests, the linguistic affinities of *adivasis* within Bombay Province became a point of contention between the supporters of Gujarat and Maharashtra, with an ultimately detrimental impact upon the protection of tribal vernaculars. The multiple and ever-changing set of relationships between the state and society, conditioned by 'everyday' interactions between ordinary Indians and local state actors, as well as larger public discourses about the nature of the state, are thus critical for any understanding of the motivations for linguistic reorganisation and its effects upon the conceptualisation and enactment of citizenship.

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[35] Emma Mawdsley, 'A New Himalayan State in India: Popular Perceptions of Regionalism, Politics, and Development', *Mountain Research and Development*, 19 (1999), 101-112 (p. 101).

[36] Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad [henceforth SMP], *Reorganization of States in India with Particular Reference to the Formation of Maharashtra* (Bombay: Topiwalla Mansion, 1954), p. 9.

[37] Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 31-67.

[38] Craig Jeffrey and Jens Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance: Class and State in Uttar Pradesh', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 91-114.

[39] Stuart Corbridge, 'The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Names and Numbers', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 40.3 (2002), 55-71.

1.2 Conceptualising Citizenship

'Citizenship', in a succinct definition provided by Daniel Gorman, is the 'primary means through which societies assert, construct, and consecrate their sense of identity. It is about who belongs to the nation, who does not, and why. Citizenship thus connotes a sense of civic belonging, comprising both social and legal-political identities'.[40] We might add that citizenship is also about rights, to equality, freedom, and against exploitation, as officially enshrined within the 'Fundamental Rights' of Part III of the 1950 Constitution of India.[41] The notion of citizenship arises, as we shall see in greater detail in the next section of this introduction, from a multiplicity of interactions between governments, administrative officials, political interests, and citizens, which coalesce around political mobilisation, electoral and bureaucratic representation, and census enumeration. For this thesis, citizenship serves as the primary paradigm through which to consider the nature of western India's transition from colonialism to independence. Citizenship provides a novel conceptual frame of analysis that departs from existing scholarship and offers new perspectives upon the nationalist movement and the demands for linguistic reorganisation within Marathi-speaking portions of Bombay Province. This thesis thus builds upon recent scholarship on imperial, transnational, and 'everyday' notions of citizenship, which have sought to redefine the parameters through which citizenship is currently conceptualised.

Many conventional theories of citizenship, as Joya Chatterji has recently noted, tend 'to locate the origins of modern notions of citizenship at the conjuncture of political, intellectual, and legal currents in early modern Europe'.[42] In these hypotheses, citizenship is also inextricably linked to, and derived from, the concomitant emergence of nationalism and the modern nation-state. For Rogers Brubaker, citizenship in France and Germany was shaped by their own nationalist movements: generally speaking, French citizenship is deemed 'civic' and 'republican' in nature, as a consequence of the decisive events of 1789-93; whilst German citizenship is 'ethnic', as an upshot of German unification in 1871 around

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[40] Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 1.

[41] 'Part III – Fundamental Rights', Constitution of India, pp. 6-18 <http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-indexenglish.htm> [accessed 20 July 2013].

[42] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 1049-1071 (p. 1049).

a common linguistic medium.[43] The legal status of citizenship has thus come to be approached primarily around the binary of *jus soli* (an inclusive interpretation based upon birth and residence) and *jus sanguinus* (an exclusive interpretation based upon ethnicity and descent), with a nation deemed to either adhere to one principle or the other. *Jus soli* can also be further subdivided into liberal and republican conceptions, whereby the former envisages citizenship as being embodied by individual rights and liberties, whilst the latter emphasises the performance of collective, civic duties.[44] Perhaps the most well known and most extensively critiqued conceptualisation of citizenship is that embodied in the work of T.H. Marshall on post-Enlightenment Britain. Marshall delineated three different facets which, he argued, had developed in distinctive phases: the 'civil' aspect of citizenship, based upon the civil rights necessary for individual freedom and embodied in the 1832 Reform Act; the 'political', which was theoretically based upon political equality and was exemplified by the inclusion of practically all men in the political system under the 1918 Reform Act; and the 'social', whereby citizens were to be provided with certain social rights connected to the emergence of the welfare state and the abolishment of the Poor Law.[45]

Both the works of Brubaker and Marshall have been widely considered and appraised since their original publication. The delineation of two dichotomised approaches to citizenship in Brubaker's thesis has been undermined by the recognition that, 'In practice, however, the pure type of either [the *jus soli* or the *jus sanguinus*] principle is rare, with the rules governing citizenship by marriage or naturalisation complicating this neat delineation'.[46] Patrick Weil, for example, has highlighted how the French government has actually been prepared to deviate and adopt more exclusive policies on nationality and belonging at particular historical moments since 1789.[47] Meanwhile, the sociologist Michael Mann has decried the utilisation of Marshall's hypothesis on citizenship as a template by

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[43] Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[44] Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[45] T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992 [1950]).

[46] Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History* (London: University of Harvard Press, 2013), p. 13.

[47] Patrick Weil, *How to be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789*, translated by Catherine Porter (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008).

noting that 'It is entirely about Great Britain'.[48] Mann has instead suggested five alternative 'strategies of citizenship' that 'deviate from this Anglophile and evolutionary model', and which he argues have been employed by various 'advanced industrialised countries' such as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, and the United States.[49] These theories of citizenship have been considered, applied, and critiqued in the context of the non-Western world, too. For Ornit Shani, citizenship in India is embodied by four main conceptions (liberal; republican; ethnic; and 'non-statist'), which have co-existed within an 'ongoing dialogue and shifting balance ... since independence'.[50] Taken together, these divergent yet overlapping approaches are said to constitute a 'four-fold citizenship regime' or 'mechanism of incorporation'[51], which, whilst 'offer[ing] alternative strategies for diverse people to make sense of their social predicament, as well as to define demands for remedies or change', also 'provided the state with an effective means of (re)positioning its authority and reclaiming legitimacy from its subjects in the context of contestations and dissent'.[52] India's national integrity, then, Shani suggests, owes something to its ability to contain multiple contestations and grievances within the citizenship paradigm. By contrast, Vazira Zamindar has suggested that the imposition of citizenship in South Asia produced 'with some force, bounded citizens of two nation-states', thereby restricting ordinary Indians' previously manifold and changeable affiliations.[53]

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[48] Michael Mann, 'Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship', *Sociology*, 21 (1987), 339-354 (p. 340).

[49] These are 'liberal', 'reformist', 'authoritarian monarchist', 'Fascist', and 'authoritarian socialist'. See, *Ibid.*

[50] Shani, 'Conceptions of Citizenship', p. 150.

[51] The concept of a 'citizenship regime' thus helps to delineate the directives and practices of particular polities at particular moments in time: strategies of inclusion and exclusion; the identification of citizenship with nationality or cultural identity; the unit of citizenship (individuals or groups), etc. It can also, as Shani's hypothesis suggests, seem to encompass multiple modes of relating to and identifying with the state all at once. See, J. Jenson and S.D. Phillips, 'Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada', *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14 (1996), 111-135; Deborah Yasher, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[52] Shani, 'Conceptions of Citizenship', p. 150.

[53] Zamindar, *The Long Partition*, p. 7. For a cogent critique of Zamindar's argument see, Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', pp. 1051, 1063-1064.

Whilst these revisionist approaches have done much to modify our understanding of citizenship, they still, like those of Brubaker and Marshall, position national governments as the essential players in determining its nature. By focusing upon the region as its site of inquiry instead, this thesis suggests that citizenship was actually constructed through mutually constitutive interactions between quotidian state actors and particular elements of local society – it was not an abstract entity without public input. However, in most of the conventional and revisionist approaches which have considered the emergence of African and Asian nation-states after decolonisation, citizenship is considered to have been based around, or to have incorporated a mixture of, models and approaches emanating from the West. Much scholarship on citizenship therefore reflects Benedict Anderson's earlier thesis on colonial nationalism's primarily European origins.[54] In India, this has led some postcolonial critics to reject citizenship entirely as an alien concept, as part of their efforts to outline what they perceive as a broader disjunction between the discourse and practices of the Indian state and that of society. For Partha Chatterjee, 'civil society', on the one hand, belongs to the western educated Nehruvian elites, who 'derivatively' inherited the colonial state's mantle, whilst 'political society', on the other, belongs to those without direct recourse to the state's machinery, who expressed their rights through moments of resistance outside its reach.[55] This thesis will suggest that there are a number of problems with this dichotomy, which will be critiqued in more detail in the next section of this introduction. For now, however, it is important to note the way in which the apparent European origins of citizenship has important implications for our understanding of the processes by which it is formulated in the postcolonial world.

For Marshall, as noted above, citizenship in Britain was seen to emerge as part of a gradual, staged and evolutionary process, which passed from 'civil' liberties, included the achievement of 'political' privileges, and culminated in the provision of 'social' rights for all. By contrast, in many of the former colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, citizenship has been considered in much conventional scholarship as having appeared fully-formed, inclusive, and universal from the outset, at least in theoretical/constitutional intent, as a concatenate of the

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[54] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1982).

[55] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

achievement of independence – a perception that this thesis and others, as we shall see momentarily, have critiqued. Valerian Rodrigues, for example, has suggested that the underlying imperatives of Indian citizenship were based upon 'non-preference to any community and [were] inclusive of all communities. The fact of Partition ... was not allowed to affect the understanding and demarcation of citizenship. If anything, it made the Constituent Assembly deeply sensitive to issues of group affiliation'.[56] In this scholarship, it is only the inability of postcolonial governments to live up to the liberal principles that were supposedly enshrined within their constitutions that has inhibited the enactment of truly universal citizenship practices. James Holston, for example, has criticised 'the substantive distribution of ... rights ... to those deemed citizens' in Brazil, characterising these failures as '*de facto* deprivations of "inclusive" but "inegalitarian citizenship"'.[57] Likewise, Niraja Jayal, despite also tracing the emergence of ideas about citizenship amongst both colonised and coloniser during the early twentieth century in India, has postulated that,

> 'Unlike in countries such as the United States or the United Kingdom, where histories of citizenship had entailed struggles for institutionalizing inclusion, the Indian Republic started life already equipped with it ... [A] radical notion of citizenship held out the promise of transforming a deeply hierarchical society into a civic community of equals'.[58]

In contrast, 'The second half of the twentieth century', Jayal goes on to argue, 'has demonstrated the fragility of that constitutional consensus and a steady erosion of the civic ideal that animated it'.[59] These approaches therefore seem to suggest that 'earlier exclusions [from citizenship are only] ... temporary glitches in a perfectible, ever-expanding pluralist system'.[60] In many ways, Jayal's periodisation is reflective of much writing on the postcolonial state in India, whereby the stability and optimism of the early decades of governance are compared favourably to the difficulties and instability which are seen to characterise the 1970s and 1980s under the premiership of Indira Gandhi. This is

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[56] Valerian Rodrigues, 'Citizenship and the Indian Constitution', in *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution*, ed. by Rajeev Bhargava (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 164-188 (p. 168).
[57] James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 7; Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', pp. 1051-1052.
[58] Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents*, p. 24.
[59] *Ibid.*
[60] Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 18.

something which we will consider in greater detail in the next section of this introduction. For now, it is worth noting how the perceived binary between the governments of Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter have papered over the contests and quarrels over the nature of citizenship in Nehruvian India, which were played out against a backdrop of uncertainty and flux during its first, formative decade. Likewise, the conceptualisation of citizenship as emerging fully-formed at the moment of independence pays scant attention to its steady development in the early twentieth century, especially against a backdrop of increased provincial self-government for Indians under the British Raj. This thesis therefore challenges conventional accounts on citizenship in India in three ways. First, it problematises the depiction of citizenship in India as emerging fully-formed, inclusive and universal, by both tracing the significance of its earlier colonial manifestations, and outlining its exclusions and limitations. Second, and following on from the first, it disputes the embedded proposition within this scholarship that citizenship is thus derived from entirely European origins. And, finally, related to both of the other two points, it ultimately contests the extent to which citizenship has been primarily affiliated with the rise of the nation-state, by approaching its articulation within an alternative, regional milieu.

During the last couple of decades or so, the interest of political and social scientists in citizenship has been reignited by the impact of neo-liberalism and the increasingly interconnected nature of the global economy. Citizenship has been reconceptualised around an international and 'cosmopolitan' framework, which circumvents the efficacy of the nation as the only arena through which citizenship can be enacted. This is not to point towards the demise of the nation-state – indeed, the universalism of global citizenship can serve as a kind of 'Trojan horse' for more selective interests and prerogatives, oft defined on a nationalistic basis[61] – but to note the 'flexible' nature of citizenship, to borrow Aihwa Ong's helpful phrase, in which citizenship can be performed in a variety of different spatial locations, from the local to the transnational.[62] In some ways, then, the increased sense of a global, 'moral' citizenship has served to 'unhinge' it from the nation-state as its most obvious referent. In a colonial/post-colonial setting such as South Asia, the recent focus amongst historians of empire upon formulations of

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[61] Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[62] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999).

'imperial citizenship' is particularly prescient.[63] Focusing on the 'languages of citizenship' invoked in the writings, speeches and petitions of such Indian luminaries as Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjea, Cornelia Sarabji, and M.K. Gandhi, Sukanya Banerjee has demonstrated how 'the British Empire itself provided the ground for claiming citizenship even as the thrust of these claims implicitly critiqued British colonial practices'.[64] This thesis thus draws upon the utility of transnational and imperial approaches to citizenship, noting how this scholarship elucidates its fluctuating nature and its application in alternative spatial arenas.[65]

Scholarship on imperial citizenship is also significant to this thesis's efforts to contest the idea that citizenship emerged inclusive, universal and fully-formed in India at the moment of independence, having traced the earlier manifestations of belonging and membership back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Likewise, some historians of South Asia have started, in the last decade, to resituate the emergence of ideas about citizenship within a colonial setting. Sandip Hazareesingh has explored local demands for civic rights in early twentieth-century Bombay City, 'that accompanied but were by no means identical with, the struggle for national self-determination'.[66] Darren Zook has traced both British and 'nationalist' attempts to construct the model/responsible 'rural citizen' in early twentieth-century southern India through the cooperative movement and agricultural education initiatives.[67] And Eleanor Newbigin has demonstrated the continuities within the debates over Hindu and Muslim personal law under the British Raj and then within a postcolonial milieu, thereby 'question[ing] the degree to which we can divide and treat as separate categories the notion of colonial subject and independent citizenship in India'.[68] The formal codification of citizenship at independence should not detract from the longer

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[63] Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*; Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010).

[64] Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens*, pp. 3-4.

[65] Saskia Sassen, 'The Participation of States and Citizens in Global Governance', *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 10 (2003), 5-28.

[66] Sandip Hazareesingh, 'The Quest for Urban Citizenship: Civic Rights, Public Opinion, and Colonial Resistance in Early Twentieth-Century Bombay', *MAS*, 34 (2000), 797-829 (p. 797).

[67] Darren C. Zook, 'Developing the Rural Citizen: Southern India, 1900-47', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 23.1 (2000), 65-86.

[68] Eleanor Newbigin, 'Personal Law and Citizenship in India's Transition to Independence', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 7-32 (p. 10).

processes through which it was refracted from the late nineteenth century – these works thus amply demonstrate citizenship's colonial antecedents. Perhaps most important for this thesis, however, is the recent work of both Joya Chatterji and Taylor Sherman, who have highlighted how citizenship at independence was not only formulated around the imperatives of the new nation-state, but instead was pervaded and complicated by the messy, *ad hoc* and complicated nature of ordinary Indians' own perceptions, needs and concerns during this decisive period.

Sherman has traced how, in the aftermath of partition and before the enactment of the 1950 Constitution, 'formal legal questions over citizenship and residency' for non-Indian Muslims residing in the princely state of Hyderabad were 'reliant upon more informal, on the ground negotiations over the meaning of nationality and the nature of belonging'.[69] This dependence upon the self-identification of individuals could render those who categorised themselves as 'Afghans' or 'Arabs' potentially 'stateless', as their non-Indian ethnic origins seemingly conflicted with the requirements of the legal regime.[70] But it also provided a space through which official depictions of membership could be circumvented, allowing both those who wished to leave India and those who preferred to remain the opportunity, often with local official collusion, to 'change the way they self-identified in order to secure a better outcome for themselves'.[71] Likewise, Chatterji has described how partition's refugees 'exerted considerable pressure on the functionaries charged with dealing with them, who in turn were members of a bitterly divided society, and whose actions were shaped by their own norms and beliefs'.[72]

Everyday actions of local state actors thus departed significantly from official, legal imperatives and policies, ultimately shaping conceptions of citizenship afresh in relatively novel directions. For Chatterji, this informed 'a *de jure* status of a new and particular kind' which departed from the universal premises which supposedly accompanied the achievement of Indian independence.[73] Building upon this scholarship, this thesis suggests that abstract conceptualisations based around particular paradigms are relatively ineffective in tracing the consistently

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[69] Taylor C. Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 81-107 (p. 83).
[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
[72] Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1051.
[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 1051-1052.

fluctuating nature of citizenship across time and space. Debates about citizenship both in the build-up to and aftermath of independence ensured that it was not enacted in a vacuum free from societal tensions and concerns – rather, ordinary and everyday perceptions effected, moulded, and reconstituted, in entirely novel directions, the universal premises upon which a European-derived citizenship was supposedly based.

1.3 Citizenship, the State and Society

As the recent works of Chatterji and Sherman have therefore started to suggest, a consideration of the multiple actors and varying trajectories of thought and action implicit within dealings between the state and society is critical to any efforts to quantify the nature of citizenship in India. The state-society dialectic provides the context through which this thesis is able to consider how manifestations of citizenship in Maharashtra were developed around local exigencies and concerns, which departed from, overlapped with, and influenced, both all-India and other regional notions of membership and belonging. It thus builds upon existing anthropological literature on the nature of the contemporary state in India, which has qualified older conceptualisations that have posited that the state and society exist as discrete and separate entities. Instead, it highlights how interactions between bureaucrats, powerful individuals or lobbying groups, and the general public, ensured that the state was consistently contested and subverted during this period. This thesis therefore resituates and draws longer connections with scholarship on the 'everyday' state, in the context of both the anticipation and working out of independence and partition during the mid-twentieth century, thereby challenging standard depictions of governance and society under both the British Raj and the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

In the years immediately after independence, work on the state in India inevitably entailed thinking about the extent of its 'stability' in the face of the innumerable perceived threats, challenges and demands of national and territorial integrity, political and economic autonomy, and attempts at poverty alleviation and social egalitarianism. In this context, the 'modernising' imperatives of Nehruvian rule – democracy, development and secularism – received tacit support from many

contemporary academics.[74] This positive perception of the early postcolonial state, and the ideologies and methods it sponsored, was further reinforced by many political and social scientists during the 1970s and 1980s, when this formative period was increasingly contrasted with what was considered to be India's growing crisis of governability under the premiership of Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi.[75] The suspension of elections and civil liberties during the Emergency (1975-77), the emergence of the Hindu Right, the perceived growth in venality and casteism within contemporary politics, and the persistence of slow levels of economic growth, are cited as examples of the state's attempts at 'modernisation' beginning to stutter and stall. Amongst those academics who have sought to ascertain why this has happened, two broadly distinguishable theories have prevailed, which can be split into a political economy approach and a postcolonial perspective. Amongst political economists, Pranab Bardhan has argued that the 'failure' of state-sponsored development is inextricably linked to the complex and interconnected relationship between the three 'dominant proprietary classes' (capitalists and industrialists; rich farmers and agriculturalists; and bureaucrats and professionals) in India who seek to control the state:

> 'When the diverse elements of this loose and uneasy coalition of dominant proprietary classes pull in different directions and when none of them are individually strong enough to dominate the process of resource allocation, one predictable outcome is the proliferation of subsidies and grants to placate all of them, with a consequent reduction in the available surplus for public capital formation'.[76]

When combined with the 'ever-widening circle of democratic awareness and raised aspirations' amongst the lower classes, it is this 'demand overload' which Bardhan and others suggest was to blame for the state's weaknesses.[77] In this

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[74] Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957); Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[75] B.B. Misra, *Government and Bureaucracy in India 1947-1976* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986); Zoya Hasan, S.N. Jha, and Rasheeduddin Khan, eds, *The State, Political Processes and Identity: Reflections on Modern India* (New Delhi: Sage, 1989); Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[76] Pranab Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 61-62.

[77] Pranab Bardhan, 'The State Against Society: The Great Divide in Indian Social Science Discourse', in *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and*

view, therefore, the transformative potentialities of 'modernisation' are still acknowledged, but need to be revivified and shorn of their vested interests to be truly emancipatory for all of Indian society. However, whilst they establish that 'proprietary' elites have generally dominated the allocation of the state's resources, Bardhan and others have persisted with conventional depictions of the state as an autonomous entity separated from society at large.[78] In Achin Vanaik's account of post-independence India, for example, the state is 'an actual organisation with certain interests distinct from those of the dominant classes, controlling real people and territories'.[79] Conventional political economy approaches have thus also neglected the manner in which ordinary Indians perceive of and describe the state. It was partly in response to this ongoing 'focus on large-scale structures, epochal events, major policies and "important" people', through which the contrasting postcolonial perspective on the relationship between the state and society was to emerge.[80] The work of these academics is thus invaluable in bringing ordinary Indians' understandings of the state and their relationship with it to increased scholarly attention.

For a broad cross-section of Indian scholars including Sudipta Kaviraj, Satish Saberwal and Ashis Nandy, the failings of the state in India are attributed to its detachment from either 'traditional' practices or subaltern society.[81] In this scholarship, a small, isolated and primarily English-speaking elite was unable to exercise cultural leadership over society, having 'neglected the creation of a

Politics in India, ed. by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 184-195 (pp. 191-192).

[78] For example, take the following extract from Bardhan: 'There are, of course, serious constraints posed by the imperatives of the dominant proprietary class, but to focus exclusively on them is to ignore the large range of choices in goal formulation, agenda setting and policy execution that the state leadership usually has, and the powerful impulses shaping policies and actions that are generated *within* the state, fuelled not merely by motives of self-aggrandizement but quite often also by what Miliband [1983] calls its "conception of the national interest"'. See, Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development*, pp. 33-34.

[79] Achin Vanaik, *The Painful Transition: Bourgeois Democracy in India* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 15.

[80] Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State', *American Ethnologist*, 22.2 (1995), 375-402 (p. 376).

[81] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), ch. 5; T.N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ashis Nandy, 'The Political Culture of the Indian State', *Daedalus*, 118.4 (1989), 1-26; Satish Saberwal, *Roots of Crisis: Interpreting Contemporary Indian Society* (Delhi: Sage, 1996).

common thicker we-ness (something that was a deeper sense of community than merely the common opposition to the British) and the creation of a single political language for the entire polity'.[82] Broadly speaking, then, this cultural critique of the state rejected both the imposition and transformative impact of Nehruvian 'modernity', deprecated its 'Western' origins, and suggested it had been 'derivatively' applied within an incompatible Indian context.[83] Building upon these approaches and his own previous research, perhaps the most effective and nuanced of this postcolonial scholarship can be found in Partha Chatterjee's *The Politics of the Governed*.[84] Chatterjee begins by refining the dichotomous opposition between 'modernity' and 'tradition' prevalent within liberal, Marxist, and, frequently, postcolonial approaches, too. He rejects what he perceives to be the dominant historiographical motif on modernity, which suggests that it is 'distributed in homogeneous empty time' and thus 'succeeds not only in branding resistances to it as archaic and backward, but also in securing for capital and modernity their ultimate triumph'.[85] Building upon the work of Michel Foucault, Chatterjee instead postulates that '[t]he real space of modern life consists of heterotopia' – with important implications for this thesis's reflection that politics, the state and 'modernity' mean different things to different people at different times.[86] Rather than treating 'these "other" times' as 'mere survivors from a pre-modern past', Chatterjee suggests that we should instead conceptualise them as 'new products of the encounter with modernity itself'.[87]

Chatterjee then goes on to make a distinction between 'civil society' and 'political society', or 'citizens' and 'populations', which forms a central element in his understanding of the relationship between the state and society in India. Upper- and middle-class citizens are part of civil society, carrying 'the moral connotation of sharing in the sovereignty of the state and hence of claiming rights in relation

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[82] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India', in *Rethinking Third World Politics*, ed. by James Manor (London: Longman, 1991), pp. 72-99 (p. 90).
[83] I am aware of the differences, divergences and discrepancies between these political scientists and historians, but *à la* Chris Fuller and John Harriss, I still believe that they can be grouped together under the broad category of 'cultural critique'. See, C.J. Fuller and John Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 1-30 (pp. 9-10).
[84] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*.
[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7; see also, Michel Foucault, 'Different Spaces', in *Essential Works of Foucault, vol. II: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. by James D. Faubion (New York, New York: New Press, 1998), pp. 175-185.
[87] Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed*, pp. 7-8.

to the state'.[88] On the other hand, political society covers, 'Most of the inhabitants of India [who] are only tenuously, and even then ambiguously and contextually, rights-bearing citizens in the sense imagined by the constitution'.[89] Members of 'political' society are unable to become fully paid-up citizens of the Indian Union because the only mechanisms through which they are able to influence the state utilise illegitimate means – sit-ins, strikes, violence, and the violation of laws governing property and squatting. Their *political* relationship with the state, Chatterjee argues, is one in which they are looked after and controlled, based upon state representatives' political calculations about the potential costs and benefits of mobilisation. In this interpretation, therefore, the rights of these 'populations' to make claims upon the state are mediated 'through the moral context of "community" by high level observers, government and the media'.[90] In fact, 'Late colonial political leaderships based their strategies on the same assumptions, and the official historical archives in India are littered with commentaries on the religious sentiments aroused by the soap box'.[91] By suggesting that the state mobilises and deals with 'populations' on the basis of 'community', Chatterjee inadvertently perpetuates colonial and national elite stereotypes which can be traced back to prevailing notions of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century govermentality.

The work of Chatterjee is thus particularly useful for highlighting the problems inherent within the idea of an indefatigable march towards universal 'modernisation' and state representativeness, and aids our efforts to contest older portrayals of other 'ways of being' as pre-modern. Yet, despite using a slightly different conceptual framework in his analysis, he continues to depict a binary distinction between the state (and its elite representatives) and the rest of society in India, 'in which "bourgeois politics" follows a particular modality and the politics of the underprivileged follows another'.[92] '[C]riminality and violence were by no means the prerogative of the deprived', and appeals to the state's supposed impartiality and legal-juridical frameworks 'in the language of

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[88] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[90] William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 30.

[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

[92] Howard Handelman, 'Review: The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World by Partha Chatterjee; Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey by Esra Özyürek', *Perspectives on Politics*, 5 (2007), 382-384 (p. 383).

supplication and concession, grants and demands, charters and petitions, grievances and repression' could emerge, at particular moments, from broad cross-sections of Indian society.[93] This thesis instead utilises the theoretical frameworks employed by anthropological work on the nature of the 'everyday state' in contemporary India to challenge this rather abstract notion that the state and ('political') society, or 'citizens' and 'populations', exist as discrete units of analysis. As Chris Fuller and John Harriss have demonstrated, the state is not an exotic entity to which society has no recourse, but for many ordinary Indians is 'banal, mundane and routinised'.[94] Likewise, Akhil Gupta, in trying to collapse the distinction between the state and society in their local-level encounters, has described the likelihood of finding bureaucratic officials at roadside tea-stalls and at their homes, rather than in their offices.[95] Ordinary Indians' perceptions of the state and their claims upon it are thus constructed, at least in part, in their 'everyday' interactions with these local state agents.

Nevertheless, in Gupta's analysis of the state at least, Chatterjee's ideas about 'community' continue to have some theoretical purchase. Like Chatterjee's more recent concept of 'political society', Gupta's perception of 'the public', 'the people' or 'plebeians' actually 'cross-cuts class divisions' within these categories and thus homogenises 'community' – in doing so, it fails to take into account 'oppositional class strategies and demands' and the variety of different 'community' interests that exist within society.[96] In this sense, the state can actually perpetuate local class and 'community' advantage, because civil servants are drawn from amongst the very same public which they are expected to impartially preside over, and are often subject to the same beliefs, concerns and exigencies. They can be put under pressure by certain sub-sections of local society, whose members might cajole, influence and threaten these officials to come to particular administrative decisions, or redirect resources in their favour. In the process, local bureaucrats frequently contravene (ostensible) central directives and principles of accountability, democracy, development and secularism, and are often liable for ensuring that they, their kin, or their

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[93] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance: Colonialism and Democracy in Twentieth-Century India', *MAS*, 41 (2007), 441-470 (pp. 447, 448).
[94] Fuller and Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', p. 26.
[95] Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries', p. 384.
[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 392, 393, 394; Jeffrey and Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance', pp. 93-94, 108.

'community' are able to co-opt, or even colonise, certain elements or spaces within the state in their own interest.[97]

This depiction of a blurred relationship between the state and society at the local level has two important implications for this thesis.[98] First, it demonstrates that the difficulties in presenting and inculcating a single shared sense of 'Indian-ness' owed nothing to the inapplicability of 'derivative' models from the West, but rather was conditioned by the state's own structural complexity – its multiplicity of actors situated in a variety of localised settings.[99] Citizenship, whether conceptualised as an assertion of identity or the performance of rights, is frequently formulated and enacted in these mutually constitutive, 'everyday' encounters between the state and society (rather than emerging solely in a discrete 'bourgeois' public sphere or being based solely on legal/rational frameworks). Its construction is not, therefore, related only to the elites who constitute and control the central state, but could also be developed and asserted by different elements amongst the rest of society who influence and negotiate the state's localised actions. Second, and following on from the previous point, this thesis therefore suggests that ordinary members of society in western India were able to make reference to their 'community' identities on their own terms, too. Instead of caste, language and religion serving solely as a means through which elites could mobilise the 'primordial' sentiments of the 'masses', they also provided paradigms through which to challenge and contest the dictates of the central state, thereby asserting their own citizenship claims, rights, and particularised notions of belonging.

This thesis, by tracing the applicability of ideas about 'community' in the local machinations of the state, does not, however, attempt to draw upon a broad theoretical disjunction between corrupt, nepotistic, and community-oriented lower level bureaucratic customs and the aloof, impartial and ultimately accountable practices supposedly embodied by the higher echelons of the

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[97] Jeffrey and Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance'.

[98] Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 23.

[99] See Thomas Blom Hansen's depiction of the state in western India as representing a 'fractured ensemble of institutions, whose relative incoherence makes it impossible to "conquer" or control'. Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 26-27.

services.[100] As William Gould has demonstrated, these perpetuate older colonial assumptions about the 'corruptibility' and untrustworthiness of the 'inferior', Indian-manned levels of the administration in direct comparison to the European governmental traditions of the 'heaven-born' all-India Indian Civil Service (ICS).[101] Rather, this thesis employs some of the later path-breaking work of Rajnarayan Chandavarkar on state-society relations in the late colonial/early independence period, which was concerned with the construction and endurance of colonial 'customs of governance'. As Chandavarkar argues, 'The colonial state tolerated, even helped to create, local domains of power from which it averted its gaze and in which dominance was asserted, contested and sometimes perpetuated with some degree of freedom from the systematic operation of the rule of law'.[102] Rather than a manifestation of 'primordial' sentiment or the essential corruptibility of the lower levels of the bureaucracy, the relevance of 'community' in the mediation of citizenship was instead a product of modern colonial and postcolonial customs of governance at the everyday level. However, there was certainly nothing fixed about these strategies – they could be shaped by interactions and influences emanating from local society, and reinterpreted and utilised for particular group interests, thereby diverging and shifting accordingly between different spatial and temporal settings. Meanwhile, the self-association of the central state with secularism, cosmopolitanism and modernisation, as Chapter Six will reveal, was often actually a means of consolidating more parochial group interests. This thesis therefore corroborates Gupta's argument,

> 'that lower-level officials are only one link in a chain of corrupt practices that extends to the apex of state organisations and reaches far beyond them to electoral politics ... The difference is that whereas higher-level state officials raise large sums from relatively few people who can afford to pay it to them, lower-level officials collect it in small figures and on a daily basis from a very large number of people. It is for this reason that corruption is so much more visible at the lower levels'.[103]

And yet, despite the increasingly frequent revelations of malfeasance at the apex of governance in contemporary India, ordinary members of society have

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[100] This is a trap fallen into by Sudipta Kaviraj and Satish Saberwal. See, Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India'; Saberwal, *Roots of Crisis*.

[101] William Gould, 'The Dual State: The Unruly Subordinate", Caste, Community and Civil Service Recruitment in North India, 1930-1955', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 20.1-2 (2007), 13-43 (pp. 13-16).

[102] Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance', pp. 447-448.

[103] Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries', p. 384.

continued to appeal to what Thomas Blom Hansen has called the state's 'mythic' or 'sublime' dimensions, whether these are represented by its supposedly liberal constitutional premises, its secularism and communal impartiality, or its 'accountability' in its conduct towards the Indian public.[104] The state is thus often held to account for not living up to its stated morals and principles. Likewise, although the boundaries between state and society are 'blurred or porous or contextually shifting', Fuller and Harriss argue, 'they are nonetheless perceived as boundaries so that the threshold of government office symbolises an internal boundary – a "wall of separation" ... by which the state is ideologically parted from the society that it governs'.[105] Ideas about citizenship amongst ordinary Indians are thus not only conditioned by their interactions with local administrative officials, but by larger discourses about the nature of the state which they, alongside state representatives, political parties, and the media, imagine and articulate. As all of the chapters of this thesis will demonstrate, at important moments it serves the interests of particular groups of people in western India to imagine what Gupta has called a 'hierarchical vision of the state', in which 'corrupt' local representatives are contrasted with 'benevolent' and 'charitable' elements within the higher echelons of the services, which these groups are then able to appeal to for the redress of their grievances and the protection of their rights.[106]

An analysis of citizenship in western India between the 1930s and 1950s, this thesis therefore suggests, is perhaps best conducted by taking note of these recent anthropological critiques, frameworks and studies. These reveal the multiple actors and shifting trajectories of thought and action implicit within dealings between the state and society within particularised regional settings, and therefore the 'situated knowledges' through which citizenship is variably visualised. By resituating and applying this work in the context of the formative decades of late colonial/early independent India, this thesis joins a still relatively embryonic body of historical scholarship which has begun to contest the supposed pervasiveness of Nehruvianism during this period.[107] However, by

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[104] Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State'; see also, Gould, 'The Dual State'.
[105] Fuller and Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', pp. 23-24.
[106] Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries', p. 390.
[107] For example, the work of Joya Chatterji, Taylor Sherman, William Gould and Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, already considered in more detail above, as well as that of Eleanor Newbigin, Ian Talbot, Yasmin Khan and Vazira Zamindar. See, Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter'; William Gould, *Bureaucracy,*

focusing upon a region hitherto neglected in much of the literature on the transition from colonial subjecthood to independent citizenship, it looks to broaden the implications of this work by applying its paradigms in a contextual arena where migration, refugee rehabilitation and Muslim 'minorities' were relatively less significant.

The next chapter of this thesis, however, contextualises and qualifies this research by demonstrating how, by the late colonial period, Maharashtra had already existed for a number of centuries as a space of historical imagination and political mythology. It reveals that the development of this historical regional consciousness was a matter of constant contestation and negotiation between diverse groups and divergent interpretations, an 'arena for the expression of conflicting political and social identities'.[108] Regional sentiments did not emerge amongst a Maharashtrian public only through conflicts over access to the late colonial and postcolonial state's resources, but were embedded in linguistic and cultural worlds of considerable depth, duration and contestation, worlds and horizons that had already been invented, and reinvented several times over since the late seventeenth century. At the same time, this chapter suggests that these older notions of regional consciousness came to be shaped and redirected in novel ways by the larger historical transformations between the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. In the nineteenth century, for example, the increased recognition accorded to ethnography amongst British colonial administrators and Indian ideologues was to link caste, language and region to race and ethnicity. These identities were then to inflect ideas about citizenship in the later transition towards *swaraj*.

Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s-1960s (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Gould, 'The Dual State'; Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance'; Eleanor Newbigin, 'The Hindu Code Bill and the Making of the Modern Indian State' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Trinity College, University of Cambridge, January 2008); Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition*; Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship'; Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad'; Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation'; Khan, *The Great Partition*; Yasmin Khan, 'Performing Peace: Gandhi's Assassination as a Critical Moment in the Consolidation of the Nehruvian State', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 57-80; Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.

[108] Rosalind O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [1985]), p. 66.

The remaining chapters, which form the central component parts of this thesis, thus generally begin during the interwar period, where the gradual devolution of power had increased expectations about forms of self-determination and, ultimately, independence. The historical background of regionalism thus came to be reconfigured by the 'provincialisation of politics' and sub-national autonomy, raising questions about the nature and structure of the future state as well as the place of Maharashtrians as citizens within it. Chapter Three focuses in particular upon the choice of Congress Party candidates ahead of elections in 1937, 1946 and 1951. It suggests that the selection of candidates by Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) was often made on the basis of both their 'community' background – particularly in relation to the selection of candidates from locally dominant caste groups – and their ability to 'plug in' to, and extract state resources from, networks of influence and patronage. The regional imperatives of electoral politics based around caste and community diverged noticeably from the ostensible principles of the Congress High Command (CHC), who had paradoxically presented the party as a secular and egalitarian organisation. The right to vote, a fundamental privilege of citizenship, therefore came to be performed locally on the basis of community networks and affiliations, ensuring 'everyday' notions of membership and belonging came to be configured by discourses relating to regional indigeneity and demography. And yet, despite these imperatives, local Congressmen who had been rejected as potential party candidates still appealed to the higher echelons of the party on the basis of its lofty values and their long history of Congress service, whilst deprecating the apparent communalism and corruption of others.

The state, in a similar way to how slippages had permeated the various structural levels of the Congress organisation, was also marred by inconsistencies and contradictions in the implementation of policies of affirmative action for bureaucratic employment. This forms the basis of analysis for the fourth chapter of this thesis. First, there were obvious discrepancies in the categorisation of those 'communities' worthy of reservation by the provincial Government of Bombay (GOB) and the central Government of India (GOI). But, in an era of (relative) autonomy of action for the provinces, legislation on affirmative action also diverged from province to province, conditioned by particular regional concerns and exigencies. Therefore, whilst northern and all-India policy implicitly privileged religion as the key category in affirmative action for Muslim

'minorities', in western India reservation revolved primarily around caste instead. Second, colonial and nationalist elite theories regarding the inherent nature and temperament of different levels of the administration within Bombay Province conditioned the extent to which reservations were introduced within the bureaucratic hierarchy. Whilst the highest-level Provincial Services were governed by the rhetoric of state objectivity and non-interference in appointments, Subordinate and Inferior Services in Bombay were subjected to checks, balances and percentages so that all 'communities' received their 'proper share' of government jobs. And as it was these local-level civil servants through which the majority of ordinary society encountered the state, their recruitment on the basis of their right to community-defined reservations helped further shape how citizenship was conceptualised and enacted on an 'everyday' level.

Chapter Five of this thesis focuses upon the everyday enumerative and classificatory practices of local census officials. It examines in particular the critical nature of the collection of data on citizens' mother tongue at the 1951 Census ahead of linguistic reorganisation in western India during the forthcoming decade. Representations and petitions from ordinary members of society sent to the GOB and the GOI regarding the census often appealed to the state's supposed impartiality and unimpeachable integrity in the collection of data, emphasising the enumerator's role as one of hypothetical detachedness and disinterestedness. Indeed the collection of the vast majority of statistics on caste and religion in the census had been discontinued by the Congress government after independence, shifting instead (at least theoretically) to the gathering of class-based economic statistics. However, it was local census officials, often drawn from amongst ordinary members of the public, who acted as the intermediaries of the state in collecting and classifying this data. By focusing upon the manipulation of statistical and classificatory information in a number of contentious localities, situated in borderline areas between Gujarati-, Marathi-, and Kannada-speakers, this chapter demonstrates how local census officials often sought political, social and material advantage for themselves or their community in the returns. This had important implications for 'minority' interests and concerns at the census. The tribal communities of the Dangs, for example, saw their linguistic affinities become sites of contestation between proponents of Gujarat and Maharashtra, ensuring that the recording of their own tribal vernaculars in the record were to suffer as a result. Ordinary Indians' ideas about citizenship were thus formulated

in the nexus between these local social tensions, which mapped on to the 'everyday' machinations of the state, and appeals to its conjectural values and ideals.

Despite appeals to the ultimate objectivity, egalitarianism and accountability of the upper echelons of the state, this thesis does not suggest that, at this level, the state was any less impervious to the interests of faction, group and community. Chapter Six of this thesis demonstrates the ways in which a north Indian majoritarianism pervaded the rhetoric and actions of leaders of the CHC and the GOI during this period, regardless of the egalitarian and secular principles upon which, they otherwise emphatically asserted, both the Indian state and their own values were theoretically predicated. Concentrating in particular upon Jawaharlal Nehru's history of India, *The Discovery of India*, originally published in 1946, the chapter demonstrates how Nehru, as a Kashmiri Brahman residing in UP, approached the history of India from a particular regional perspective.[109] It then goes on to interrogate the implicit dominance of a north Indian agenda in the efforts to introduce Hindustani (a language spoken across the north Indian Gangetic plains) as the *lingua franca* of the Congress organisation and the state. It suggests that whilst this was couched in the rhetoric of greater accountability on the part of the Congress towards the 'masses', the introduction of Hindustani within Bombay had the opposite effect. The rest of the chapter focuses upon the responses of both local state actors and the public in Bombay Province to these efforts. In these responses, much was made of the provincial state's apparent obligations to privilege 'locals' in recruitment to the services. Newly conditioned by the gradual realisation of forms of self-government, they also came to be constructed in the language of local citizenship rights and interests.

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[109] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004 [1946]).

2: Caste, Language and the State in Maharashtra

'It is obvious that for the working of the democratic process a minimum degree of homogeneity must exist in the primary units. Without such homogeneity the emotional response to a unit-area would be lacking, and in that event democratic forms must fail. It is necessary to insist on this great difference between the formation of administrative and regional units under non-democratic and under democratic forms of government'.

Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, *Reorganization of States in India with Particular Reference to the Formation of Maharashtra* (Bombay: Topiwalla Mansion, 1954), pp. 1-2.[1]

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This chapter provides a broad synopsis of the larger historical socio-political contexts and processes through which various constructions of citizenship developed in Maharashtra between the 1930s and 1950s. It suggests that the meaning of such regionally evocative terms as 'Maratha', 'Marathi' and 'Maharashtrian' underwent decisive transformations in the transition between pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial states, and were variously transmitted, contested and claimed by different groups and 'communities'. These developments served as the background against which Maharashtrians conceptualised and articulated their rights and sense of belonging in their interactions with local manifestations of the state. The chapter thus highlights the ways in which caste and language became intertwined with and central to expressions of ethnicity in the late nineteenth century, and then citizenship during the twentieth century, as control of the state in Maharashtra was transformed. The first section considers the development of a particular sense of place, patriotism or attachment to the locality during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In doing so, it looks to circumvent the implication that it was the British colonial state's structures and customs of governance alone that shaped 'community' consciousness in Maharashtra. It focuses in particular upon the development of ideas about who comprised the 'Marathas' or 'Marathi-speakers', and notes the shift from its relative inclusivity under Shivaji's Maratha

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[1] Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad [henceforth SMP], *Reorganization of States in India with Particular Reference to the Formation of Maharashtra* (Bombay: Topiwalla Mansion, 1954), pp. 1-2.

polity to a more hierarchical and reified 'system' under the eighteenth-century Peshwa.

The second section begins with the formal annexation of the Maratha polity's territories by the British East India Company (EIC) in 1818. It demonstrates the manner in which colonial and elite Brahman interests in Maharashtra coalesced around particular forms of colonial knowledge during the early nineteenth century. Brahmans thus came to dominate the growing notions of 'Maharashtrian-ness', articulated through a novel Marathi-speaking public sphere linked to vernacular newspapers and publishing and, after the 1857 Mutiny/Rebellion, early forms of oppositional politics. But this shift towards opposition amongst Brahmans in the aftermath of 1857 also encouraged the British Raj to look beyond the EIC's erstwhile allies in an effort to reassert their authority. The idea of inherently loyal 'martial races' (such as the Marathas) as potential collaborators, was partly inspired by the rising tide of ethnography in the late nineteenth century. In the process, this section reveals how caste and language in Bombay came to be increasingly assimilated to ethnicity and race. This was not solely the preserve of British administrators. The section also touches upon similar invocations of race and nationality evident in the writings of Brahman Congressmen like M.G. Ranade and B.G. Tilak, and non-Brahman ideologues like Jotirao Phule. The emergence of a strong non-Brahman movement under Phule and then Shahu Maharaj, which contested the socio-political hegemony of Brahmans and their dominance over the articulation of a sense of Maharashtrian consciousness, forms the final point of analysis within this section.

The third section (in tandem with the first two sections of Chapter Three) demonstrates how this Maharashtrian identity was further altered and modified in the context of the gradual devolution of power and the eventual achievement of independence during the twentieth century. In this sense, it focuses upon demands for linguistic reorganisation as a manifestation of this regionalism and provides the circumstantial backdrop against which the rest of this thesis's chapters play out. The section begins by demonstrating the shift within Indian National Congress circles from support for linguistic reorganisation before independence to hesitation and avoidance of the issue in the aftermath of partition. This had much to do with the stress on national and developmental ideals. It then moves on to consider how both proponents and detractors of reorganisation framed their arguments in the context of citizenship rights and

notions of belonging, as is evident in the quotation drawn from the memorandum of supporters of Samyukta ('united') Maharashtra with which this chapter began. For these supporters regional consciousness became increasingly imbued with ideals of autonomy and democracy, as they anticipated *swaraj* (self-rule) and held provincial and national governments to account as rights-bearing citizens.

2.1 The Pre-Colonial Maratha Polity

The political and social horizons within which Marathi-speaking people acted, imagined their own possible freedom and contemplated their sense of belonging between the 1930s and 1950s, were embedded in linguistic and cultural worlds of considerable depth, duration and contestation. As Chris Bayly has pointed out, early Indian patriotisms were 'active forces' in the construction of later nationalisms, rather than simply 'symbols to be reinvented at will' by late colonial Indian nationalists.[2] This section of the chapter will examine the creation of a conceptual realm of Marathas and Marathi-speakers during the pre-colonial period. This is not to argue that Maharashtra had a 'natural' unity or intrinsic 'nationhood', or to anachronistically trace an unchanging and homogenised regional consciousness from the seventeenth century to the present day.[3] Rather, by placing later claims and conflicts over access to state resources and citizenship rights within this wider context, this section seeks to avoid the argument that it was the British colonial state's structures and its forms of recognition and adjudication alone that ultimately determined and constituted a sense of regional consciousness in Bombay Province.[4]

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[2] C.A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 2.

[3] This chapter will refer to 'Maharashtra' when talking about the area or region in which the Marathi-speakers of western India resided. This is not to suggest that a sense of Maharashtra was a primordial 'given', but is primarily utilised in the interests of readability and convenience.

[4] This is an older, much maligned form of reasoning synonymous with what became known as the 'Cambridge' school. See, for example, Anil Seal, 'Imperialism and Nationalism in India', in *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940*, ed. by John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 1-27; in response see, Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Indian Nationalism as Animal Politics', *Historical Journal*, 22 (1979), 747-763.

2.1 Meanings of 'Maratha' under Shivaji's 'Swaraj'

In the mid seventeenth-century, Marathi-speaking portions of the Indian subcontinent were under the control of various Muslim kingdoms with differing, contending, and often overlapping spheres of influence. In the south, east and west of the region, Sultanates based around the towns of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda presided, paying nominal homage to the Mughal Empire in distant Delhi through an annual tribute, but continuing to act as independent kings within their own territories. In the northern domains of what would become Maharashtra, which constitute modern-day Khandesh and Vidarbha, the Mughals asserted a more direct authority from their Hindustan heartland. Both Sultan and Mughal, however, were reliant upon local elites in the countryside to buttress their power, as these *deshmukhs* (headmen of a group of villages) and *patils* (village headmen) became 'middlemen' tasked with maintaining the peace, collecting the state's revenue and providing manpower for the kingly and imperial armies.[5]

In the service of these kingdoms, these local intermediaries were able to advance through loyalty and military expertise or, conversely, factionalism and collaboration with an opposing power, depending upon the particular exigencies of the time.[6] It was in such circumstances that Shivaji Bhosale (1630-1680), who had inherited his father's rights at the behest of the Bijapur government in 1640, was able to begin to create an area of influence of his own.[7] Over the next thirty years, Shivaji consolidated his own authority beyond his hereditary lands at the

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[5] The nature of the state in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century India has been a matter of intense debate in South Asian history, between the Aligarh school and 'revisionist' historians. See, M. Athar Ali, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Mughal Empire', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1 (1978), 38-49; John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980); C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[6] This is an early example of what André Wink has termed '*fitna*', the drawing away of allegiance or sedition. See, André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Svarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); see also, Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 5-8.

[7] His father was at this time imprisoned by the Bijapur government for being a 'rebel' in league with the Sultanate of Golconda.

expense of other landed families in the central plateau regions of western India known as the Deccan, and through skirmishes and battles with Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and the Mughals. In 1674, he was able to pronounce himself an independent ruler, and was crowned Chhatrapati (literally 'paramount sovereign'). By the time of his death in 1680, Shivaji had left a 'Maratha' kingdom with a full treasury, and rights to revenue (albeit some rather tenuous) extending east and south into the Karnatak.

There has been much debate on the kind of polity that Shivaji was creating in Marathi-speaking portions of western India over this half-century. Most notably, André Wink and Stewart Gordon have stressed the continuities between Mughal/Sultanate and Maratha policies, in an attempt to overcome the predilections of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hindu nationalist writers and historians such as V.K. Rajwade, who have preferred to emphasise Shivaji's role in creating a Hindu state as 'something fundamentally different and in opposition to the Muslim states that surrounded it'.[8] Instead, Gordon and Wink point to the similarities in administration and tax collection and continued Muslim employment at the court, as well as in Shivaji's administration and army. For them, Shivaji, was not attempting to create a universal Hindu rule, nor did he 'represent "proto-nationalism"'.[9] Meanwhile, whilst noting the validity of their evidence on administrative and governmental continuities, Chris Bayly has suggested Gordon and Wink have gone too far the other way in downplaying the 'ideological and affective components and context' of state formation in seventeenth-century western India:

> 'To Wink, the idea of swarajya, "self-rule", which in the nineteenth century was interpreted as Maratha "freedom", is simply a technical Mughal revenue term meaning the home fiefdom of Shivaji and his successors. No greater ideological charge is inherent in it, and certainly not a popular one'.[10]

By contrast, Bayly suggests that an early sense of patriotism coalesced in the seventeenth century around the establishment of a Maratha 'patria' and 'memorialised homeland'.[11] The implication of Bayly's argument (which also drew

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[8] Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 65.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 80; see also, *Ibid.*, p. 66; Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*.
[10] C.A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality*, p. 22.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

upon the contentions of his previous article on 'The Pre-History of "Communalism"'), is that a variety of 'identities' – national, communal, caste, class and linguistic – did not simply emerge as consequences of the colonial encounter.[12] Simultaneously, however, Bayly went on to suggest that moments of state transformation were critical in explaining the consequent shifts in the nature of these 'identities'. This sub-section likewise uses the background of the rise of a Maratha military service elite closely intertwined with the Maharashtrian land and the rural peasantry, as well as the particular case of Shivaji and the controversial matter of his coronation, to consider the stirrings of emerging ideas about who constituted the 'Marathas' or 'Marathi-speakers'. But at the same time it avoids drawing too firm an analogy between these earlier notions of belonging in the pre-colonial seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and their colonial and then postcolonial incarnations. Although these 'patterns of social relations, sentiments, doctrines and embodied memories' were not akin to 'nationalism' as we know it today, they could be, at least to some extent, constructed around a particular sense of place or attachment to the locality.[13] This starts to become apparent when we consider the manner in which the term 'Maratha' first emerged and was applied in western India.

Since the fourteenth century, local military servicemen were frequently drafted into the armies of the Muslim dynasties in the Deccan. With only a small population of Muslims in the region, the Sultanates were reliant upon local elites to mobilise native Marathi-speaking military units, which were kept separate from 'Dakhani' (Muslims born in India) and 'Afagi' (Muslim immigrants from Central Asia or Arabia) groups. The term 'Maratha' probably became the name of designation for these military servicemen gradually over time, and represented an amalgam of families from several artisanal and agricultural occupational statuses, many of which were considered socially low in status and esteem.[14] Like the terms Rajput and Sikh in the north, Marathas came to be distinguished and differentiated from both 'native' and 'foreign' Muslims, stimulating the growing

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[12] C.A. Bayly, 'The Pre-History of "Communalism"? Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 19 (1985), 177-203; in this regard, see also, Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chs 1-2.

[13] C.A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality*, p. 1.

[14] Gordon, *The Marathas*, pp. 14-17; S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, pp. 57-58.

perception that they entailed a homogeneous 'community' fighting as a group inside, and increasingly against, the Sultanates and Mughals.[15]

By the seventeenth century, the term 'Maratha' had also come to signify the loose distinction of a military elite standing apart from those ordinary peasants from whence they had come, invoked most emphatically through *patil* and *desmukh* rights to shares in the revenue of the land. However, the ongoing conflicts and intrigues between different states and their local revenue-extracting intermediaries always provided opportunities for new headmen to emerge throughout this period, who were then able to lay claim to greater social worth and status. This continued to confuse any strictly delineated distinction between rights-holding Marathas and cultivating Kunbis or artisanal groups. As the colonial ethnographer R.E. Enthoven was to note at the beginning of the twentieth century,

> 'The differentiation between Marathas and Maratha Kunbis appears never to have become so complete as to result in two distinct castes. At present the terms Maratha and Kunbi, in many cases, are used synonymously ... Instances are not wanting, in which Kunbi families, owing to a fortunate turn in their circumstances, have formed connections with poor Maratha families and ultimately become absorbed into the general Maratha community'.[16]

Whilst in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'caste' had not yet become the reified, Brahmanic (i.e. dominated and defined by the 'high-caste' practices of the Brahman priestly elite) and hierarchical 'system' that was to emerge under the British Raj, much of western Indian society was becoming more 'caste-like' than in earlier times.[17] This was a distinctively Maharashtrian process, which often came to be replicated in other regions of the subcontinent at a later date under

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[15] D.H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[16] R.E. Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay. Volume II* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1922), p. 286.

[17] For many years, the question over whether the British colonialists 'invented' caste was a matter of heated intellectual debate. More recently, a consensus has seemingly been reached which suggests that whilst the British did not 'invent' caste, they redefined it (like regional patriotisms) in diverse ways, in conjunction with indigenous Brahman elites. See, Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*; Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

colonial rule.[18] It was linked to the rise of Shivaji as a 'royal man of prowess', who 'made a conscious decision to use caste as a strategic asset, garbing himself in the trappings of Kshatriya [i.e. the 'traditional' ruling and martial elite] kingship as a means of stabilising his fortunes and those of his client groups'.[19] At the same time, however, high office was offered to men of skill and loyalty, with little regard to their faith or formal 'caste' backgrounds – it was not, therefore, totally exclusionary. It is this relative openness that distinguishes these 'caste-like' forms and practices from later manifestations and developments beginning under the Peshwa and culminating in British colonial rule, whereby caste identities were conceptualised as hereditary and became linked to ethnicity and race.

Bonds of affinity between leaders of warbands did not conform to priestly Brahmanic concepts of purity, those that criticised the shedding of blood and the veneration of warlike deities. Even into the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, early Orientalist observers of the Marathas noted their distinctly un-Brahmanical qualities. In 1798, the Irish soldier William Henry Tone argued that Brahmanical notions of caste purity 'trespass[ed] upon convenience' and 'in a military point of view may be productive of the worst effects: from all these observances the Maratta is happily free'.[20] Caste for the Maratha warrior and landholder in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was instead embodied within what Nicholas Dirks has seen in another context as the politics of kingship and service, with fluctuations in 'caste-like' identities prevalent amongst those

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[18] See, C.J. Fuller, 'Review: *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* by Susan Bayly', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6 (2000), 546-547: 'Arguably anyway, Shivaji and the later Peshwa rulers in Maharashtra are exceptional, rather than paradigmatic, for in much of India in that era, it appears, a "Brahman Raj" was scarcely visible or even actively being rejected' (p. 547).

[19] S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, p. 56. For more on this kingly ideal in the writings of social anthropologists, see, J.C. Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship and Society* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982); Richard Burghart, 'For a Sociology of Indias', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 17 (1983), 275-299.

[20] William Henry Tone, *A Letter to an Officer on the Madras Establishment: Being an Attempt to Illustrate some Peculiar Institutions of the Maratta People, Principally Relative to their System of War and Finance. Also an Account of the Political Changes of the Empire in the year 1796, as Published in the Bombay Courier* (Bombay: Courier Press, 1798), pp. 11-12. See also Thomas Duer Broughton, *Letters from a Mahratta Camp: During the Year 1809: Descriptive of the Character, Manners, Domestic Habits and Religious Ceremonies of the Mahrattas* (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi and Company, 1977 [1813]), pp. 71, 104-105.

who fell in and out of royal favour.[21] Notions of belonging to a community of Marathas were therefore augmented by the inclusive nature of Shivaji's rule, in which careers were open to loyalty and talent – technically anyone could become a 'Maratha'.

Ultimately it was his coronation in 1674 which provided Shivaji with the authority of a thread-wearing Kshatriya king.[22] It seems one of Shivaji's foremost concerns in having himself crowned was to portray himself as a rightful ruler and forge his legitimacy in the eyes of other large landowning families in Maharashtra – hence the title 'Chhatrapati'. This is corroborated by André Wink's translation of the *Sivdigvijaya* (a chronicle of Shivaji's life) on the coronation:

> 'Shivaji was unwilling to share the leadership of the Marathas with others, and although he had formerly been on one level with many other Maratha sardars as (mere) servants of Bijapur, he could justify his new claims to pre-eminence amongst them by pointing out that this dependence, through his efforts, no longer existed'.[23]

Emphasising his 'Kshatriya-ness', then, was a means of augmenting his local fortunes. But it was also a mechanism through which Shivaji could distinguish himself and his Maratha polity from the Muslim Sultanates and Mughals that had come before. Shivaji clearly existed in an Indo-Islamicate world, which influenced his style of dress, infused his language with Persian terms, and ensured that he patronised all religious traditions. He continued, then, many of the forms of Mughal rule and the symbols of Mughal office.[24] Yet, whilst it is necessary to note that the 'exaggerated hostility to Islam' that both nineteenth-century and present-day Hindu nationalist advocates have ascribed to Shivaji is profoundly ahistorical, his coronation did provide an alternative image of resistance to Mughal authority. Cloaked in the regalia of a Hindu Kshatriya king, Shivaji

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[21] Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of a South Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
[22] For detailed analyses of the coronation, see, Gordon, *The Marathas*, pp. 86-89; Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, pp. 34-49; Rosalind O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 edn [1985]), pp. 20-21; S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, pp. 58-60.
[23] P.R. Nandurbarkar and L.K. Dandekar, eds., *Sivdigvijaya* (Pune: 1895), pp. 406-407. Cited and translated in Wink, *Land and Sovereignty*, pp. 35-37.
[24] Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 239-240. See also, David Gilmartin and Bruce Lawrence, eds, *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 2000).

abandoned references to lineages stretching back to Timurid, Chinggis Khan, and Muhammad, which had been important Mughal and Indo-Islamic legitimising idioms over the past few centuries.[25] Instead, he declared himself as a descendant of Rajput forebears, who had migrated south to escape Muslim invasion in the thirteenth century. This then was a novel realm, a Marathi-speaking realm, which developed over the next 144 years until the capitulation of the Maratha polity in 1818.

2.2 Patriotism in the Peshwa Period

Shivaji's coronation, however, brought other issues and concerns to the forefront of Maharashtrian politics and society. In Maharashtra, local Brahmanic 'tradition' held Kshatriya lineages had been destroyed by Parashurama, a warrior Brahman avatar of Vishnu, who had sought to avenge the death of his father at the hands of a Kshatriya king. This 'tradition' was accorded contemporary reality by local Brahmans, who saw in the Muslim rule over the Deccan from the fourteenth century evidence that Hindu kingly lineages had died out and lapsed, as Kshatriyas had been either killed in battle or emigrated further south.[26] This was the 'kaliyuga', the 'Age of Kali', referring to the final of the four ages in Hindu cyclical time, a degenerate and corrupt age, in which dharma (religious and moral 'natural' law) was at its lowest ebb. It was often associated with 'foreign' (i.e. Muslim and later, British) rule, in which 'traditional' hierarchical social patterns were said to be inverted.[27] In this context, Shivaji's claims to Kshatriya status came under intense scrutiny from local Brahmans. He was perceived as merely a Shudra, meaning there could be no grounds for investing him with the sacred thread and ritual devices of a Kshatriya. Instead, Shivaji was to utilise pandit (Brahman scholar) networks from further afield, employing a Maharashtrian Brahman residing in Banaras, known as Gaga Bhatta, whose family had an all-India reputation for religious scholarship and public debate. The Bhattas had a long history of emphasising the social worth of the upwardly mobile and successful in

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[25] Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 16-17; Lisa Balabanlilar, 'Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent', *Journal of World History*, 18 (2007), 1-45.

[26] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'The Social Worth of Scribes: Brahmin, Kayasthas and the Social Order in Early Modern India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* [henceforth *IESHR*], 47 (2010), 563-595 (p. 568).

[27] For a thorough explication of the concept of *kaliyuga* in the context of nineteenth-century Bengal, see, Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 186-215, 282-357.

contemporary Indian society, and Gaga was able to 'locate' a Rajput lineage for Shivaji.[28]

Shivaji's coronation therefore also points towards the increased significance of Brahmans in legitimising kingly rule, especially as it came to encompass Hindu connotations with its linkages to Kshatriya genealogy. This sub-section will explore how Brahmanic conceptions of 'rank and purity' gradually came to the fore in Maharashtra, first by considering the rise of a Brahman service elite under the Sultanates and Mughals. It will touch upon the mechanisms and rhetorical tropes Brahmans used to maintain their elite social status, whilst they purged and refined the boundaries of Brahmanism itself. With temporal control coming to be vested ultimately in the figure of the Peshwa (the Brahman 'prime minister') by the early eighteenth century, a reified and hierarchical conception of 'caste' society was increasingly privileged at the expense of previously inclusive interpretations. The increased significance of Brahmans within the Maratha polity was to reshape and transform the transmission of patriotism in western India during this period, through which a growing emphasis upon Hinduism (with Marathas as 'defenders of Hindustan' against Muslim 'outsiders'), and Brahmanism (as having a greater impact on state policy than non-Brahman 'upstarts'), progressively defined its character and scope. This is not to argue that the vision of a Kshatriya king determining the local social order was entirely overwhelmed: patriotism within the Maratha polity became a site of contestation during this period, broadly defined by two major divergent interpretations, based around contrasting social relations, sentiments and doctrines.[29]

The recent works of Sumit Guha and Rosalind O'Hanlon have highlighted the processes by which the ascendancy of Brahmanism in western India was beginning to be firmly established through their roles as service elites under the Sultanates and Mughals in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, simultaneous to

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[28] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Cultural Pluralism, Empire and the State in Early Modern South Asia – A Review Essay', *IESHR*, 44 (2007), 363-381 (pp. 371-372); O'Hanlon, 'The Social Worth of Scribes', p. 588.

[29] Obviously, there were subtleties and overlaps between these two interpretations, across a spectrum of different patriotic viewpoints invoked by different individuals, groups and communities within the Maratha polity. However, these two divergent conceptualisations of patriotism are perhaps the most apparent and well recorded.

the rise of the Marathas.[30] The Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan inaugurated complex systems of governance which relied upon pre-existing literate members of the local population, employed to keep records of land 'ownership' and tax collection. Brahmans, as priests trained in the reading and writing of religious texts, occupied a position of key advantage to undertake these roles. The enticement of socio-economic opportunities meant Brahmans justified their service to *mlecchas* ('foreigners') and their abandonment of priestly occupations by inventing suitable textual authorities. Arguing that Brahmans of sufficient worth still existed in the *kaliyuga* to receive alms, and presenting the concerns of this world as part of their *dharma* as well, it was declared that Brahman's highest destiny in this degenerate time was to be working within the administration, where they could still access pious gifts in the form of rights to substantial hereditary livings and lands (*inams*).[31] From an early stage, Maharashtrian Brahmans therefore came to dominate the administration in the Deccan, providing a model to be emulated across southern India.[32]

In a fluid and open pre-colonial setting, in which subordinate groups could claim superior status through administrative service, the Brahman literati sought to protect their interests and use their position for their own ends. Guha has documented how Brahmans had developed, from the fifteenth century onward, a priceless advantage as a barrier to any upwardly mobile scribal group in the Deccan, by writing all accounts and records in the Modi script, which was 'impenetrable to anyone not trained in it'.[33] The theory that no Kshatriyas could exist in the *kaliyuga* was also employed by local Maharashtrian Brahmans as a mechanism to protect their administrative positions and deny ritual entitlements to the upwardly mobile scribal caste of Kayasthas, who had migrated into the Deccan from the north to serve Mughal and Sultan rulers.[34] Those who held

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[30] Sumit Guha, 'Serving the Barbarian to Preserve the Dharma: The Ideology and Training of a Clerical Elite in Peninsular India, c.1300-1800', *IESHR*, 47 (2010), 497-525; O'Hanlon, 'Cultural Pluralism', pp. 371-372.

[31] Guha, 'Serving the Barbarian', pp. 515-522.

[32] David Washbrook, 'The Maratha Brahmin Model in South India: An Afterword', *IESHR*, 47 (2010), 597-615.

[33] Guha, 'Serving the Barbarian', p. 513.

[34] O'Hanlon, 'The Social Worth of Scribes'.

administrative power thus sought to develop a homogenised image of the Brahman as a 'cultivated administrator and dignified intellectual'.[35]

After Shivaji's death, the next forty years of the Maratha polity were wracked by familial disputes over his successor, as the court and landowning families with rural power-bases of their own divided amongst themselves.[36] This was an era of increased Mughal influence in the Deccan, as Emperor Aurangzeb moved his capital south to Aurangabad, fought relentless campaigns and exhausted vast amounts of Mughal military and economic resources until his death in March 1707.[37] These years of conflict and intrigue were only ended with the consolidation of the Maratha polity under Shahu (r.1707-1749), Shivaji's grandson, who filled the vacuum left by the decline of ephemeral Mughal authority. To aid the securing of his power, Shahu had appointed Balaji Vishwanath (Peshwa 1713-1720), a Chitpavan Brahman from the coastal Konkan region as his Peshwa, the first of what would become a hereditary title, and entrusted him with control of the Maratha army. By the 1720s, Balaji's son Bajirao I (Peshwa 1720-1740) had become *de facto* ruler of the polity from his base in Pune, with Shahu's authority confined solely to his palace at Satara. The most profound effect of the rise of the Peshwa 'was widespread, rapid social mobility for Brahmins somehow connected to the polity. They became the administrators of the newly conquered regions as well as in the expanding bureaucracy at the centre'.[38] Whilst these men were mainly Chitpavans, other Brahman communities such as Gaud Saraswats (originally from Goa) and Deshashtas (Deccan Brahmans) were often pressed into service too.[39] It was Chitpavans, however, who were most obviously patronised, as the Peshwa made use of kin and caste networks to form the core of an administrative and tax-collecting elite, as well as promoting

[35] Rosalind O'Hanlon and Christopher Minkowski, 'What Makes People Who They Are: Pandit Networks and the Problems of Livelihoods in Early Modern India', *IESHR*, 45 (2008), 381-416 (pp. 411-412).

[36] Gordon, *The Marathas*, pp. 91-113.

[37] John F. Richards, 'The Imperial Crisis in the Deccan', *Journal of Asian Studies* [henceforth *JAS*], 35 (1976), 237-256; M.N. Pearson, 'Shivaji and the Decline of the Mughal Empire', *JAS*, 35 (1976), 221-235.

[38] Gordon, *The Marathas*, p. 185; See also, *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113, 130-131, 144-145, 166; V.D. Divekar, 'The Emergence of an Indigenous Business Class in Maharashtra in the Eighteenth Century', *MAS*, 16 (1982), 427-443; Laurence W. Preston, *The Devs of Cincvad: A Lineage and the State in Maharashtra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[39] Frank F. Conlon, *A Caste in a Changing World: The Chitrapur Sarawat Brahmans, 1870-1934* (Delhi: Thomson Press, 1977), pp. 26-27.

Chitpavan banking families whose credit was crucial for funding Maratha military campaigns and the effective functioning of government.

The increased prominence of Brahmans also lent a new conservative tone to the Maratha polity. Brahmans increasingly saw the state as representing their own community's 'Raj', as the new central government in Pune sought to define and regulate the region's Brahman communities in contradistinction to other social groups. As O'Hanlon and Minkowski have noted, the Peshwa 'sought to shift the terms in which Maharashtra's Brahmins were discussed, away from debates about the relative status of different Brahmin communities regionally defined, and towards a single and monolithic model of ideal Brahmin social practice'.[40] Supposedly rustic and plebeian countryside customs were to be prohibited, and individual Brahman identities (i.e. Chitpavan/Deshashta/Saraswat), whilst not suppressed, were to be potentially subsumed, particularly in relation to other castes, within an overarching and unitary Brahman identity.[41] A 'List of orders to establish dharma', issued under Peshwa Balaji Bajirao in 1735, laid down 51 central stipulations which sought to emphasise Brahmanic unity and their concomitant separateness from other castes. These included restrictions on inter-dining, the prohibition of hard labour, and rules relating to female comportment.[42] Simultaneously, Pune increasingly asserted its authority in the adjudication of 'everyday' ritual disputes and the maintenance of caste discipline, replacing independent neighbourhood assemblies with new *panchayats*, whose decisions needed verifying by the local Peshwa-employed state official.[43] It was becoming increasingly commonplace for the Peshwa to demand that notions of loyalty and belonging be directed exclusively towards the central state, in preference to local allegiances and alliances.

A sense of belonging to place in Maharashtra, in conjunction with eighteenth-century Peshwa expansionism, thereby frequently became caught up with the

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[40] O'Hanlon and Minkowski, 'What Makes People Who They Are?', p. 410.

[41] This was particularly important in the context of older disputes over whether the Chitpavans themselves constituted an acceptable Brahman community, having engaged in small-scale agriculture whilst residing in the Konkan. See, Maureen L.P. Patterson, 'Changing Patterns of Occupation among Chitpavan Brahmans', *IESHR*, 7 (1970), 375-396 (pp. 376-378).

[42] O'Hanlon and Minkowski, 'What Makes People Who They Are?', pp. 410-412.

[43] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Narratives of Penance and Purification in Western India, c.1650-1850', *Journal of Hindu Studies*, 2 (2009), 48-75 (p. 65); Hiroshi Fukazawa, 'State and Caste System (Jati) in the Eighteenth Century Maratha Kingdom', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Economics*, 9.1 (1968), 32-44.

expansion of a Brahmanic Hinduism. Bajirao and his successors presided over a period of territorial expansion which culminated in the polity reaching its greatest territorial extent in 1798, reaching beyond Marathi-speaking portions of the Indian subcontinent to incorporate regions as distant as Delhi in the north, and Cuttack in the east. The Maratha state could be seen as a protector of *dharma* and Brahmans, with expansion and warfare justified on the basis of the Maratha 'defence' of Hindustan from the depredations of Muslim 'invaders'.[44] This was part of a wider notion of national belonging to a 'common realm of India' – Maratha documents of the 1750s, for instance, 'stated that the Persian and Afghan invasions of India were illegitimate because the kings of Iran and Turan "have never held dominion within Hindustan"'.[45] Likewise, during the eighteenth century, the Chitpavan Peshwas marked themselves out as patrons of supra-local Brahmanical worship and learning, sponsoring the building of temples, bathing ghats and rest houses in Banaras and embarking upon supra-regional pilgrimage.[46]

Such patronage, however, was not linked solely to Brahmans. From her seat of authority in Indore, the Maharashtrian Dhangar queen Ahilyabai Holkar also sponsored festivals and gave pious donations to many Hindu temples all the way from the Himalayas to the southern peninsular. As the Maratha polity expanded, the Peshwas became increasingly reliant on military middlemen, such as the Holkars, the Shindes at Gwalior, the Bhonsles of Nagpur, and the Gaikwars of Baroda. These elite Maratha and Dhangar families had been granted land amongst the newly-annexed territories, and had gradually built up large local power bases and resources through regular administrations, which included tax collection and judicial functions. By the late-eighteenth century, shifts in power from the Peshwa court at Pune to the peripheries ensured that 'the tail was wagging the dog'.[47] Many of these leaders opposed Chitpavan dominance of the governmental apparatus, and made conscious efforts to avoid employing them in their services. In Indore and Gwalior, the Holkars and Shindes utilised Saraswats as their administrators, a Brahman sub-caste who did not intermarry with

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[44] Sumit Guha, 'Transitions and Translations: Regional Power and Vernacular Identity in the Dakhan, 1500-1800', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 24.2 (2004), 23-31 (p. 29).

[45] 'Raghoba's letter from Lahore', quoted in C.A. Bayly, *Origins of Nationality*, pp. 43-44.

[46] C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, p. 137; Gordon, *The Marathas*, pp. 146, 161-162.

[47] Gordon, *The Marathas*, p. 167.

Chitpavans. In Baroda and Nagpur, the Gaikwar and Bhonsle rulers preferred Kayasthas.[48] They could also, and frequently did, ally with alternative powers, such as the Nizam of Hyderabad and the EIC based at Bombay. Whilst these autonomous dynasties did on occasions make use of Hindu legitimising strategies, such as the sponsoring of temples and pilgrimages, they were therefore often avowedly anti-'Brahman Raj'.

Rather than treating the eighteenth century as a period of uncontested Brahman supremacy within the Maratha polity, it might be more worthwhile to consider it as an era of conflicting, overlapping spheres of authority. This complexity is mirrored in the 'looser, cascading political structures' of the Maratha polity, in which the concept of boundaries proves to be of little utility.[49] In a system where rights over revenue interpenetrated, and rulers' legitimising strategies diverged depending upon their particular context, notions of allegiance and belonging could differ, but also intermingle and blur. On occasions, the Marathas emerged as 'defenders' of Hindustan. At other times a sense of loyalty and belonging to a Marathi-speaking community could retreat into more localised understandings, or be related to the particular concerns of non-Brahman Marathas in opposition to Brahmanic hegemony. A sense of patriotism in western India had therefore begun to develop in the interstices between antagonistic segmentary states and competition for control within them, in which distinctions made on the basis of 'caste' often proved critical.

2.2 The Colonial State, Caste and Language in Maharashtra, 1818-1918

The advent of British rule in 1818 had a transformative impact upon patriotism, caste and language in western India, widening competition to control their meanings in the context of colonial forms of knowledge and governance. This section begins by considering how the extension of EIC control across much of western India and their preference for particular understandings of Indian society initially consolidated the power of Maharashtra's Brahmans. As the primary indigenous clients through which the colonial state was able to engage with the wider public, Brahmans were to promote depictions of Maharashtrian society

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 145; O'Hanlon, 'The Social Worth of Scribes'.
[49] The phrase is borrowed from Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 70.

which emphasised caste's hierarchical and reified nature. Yet colonial knowledge was neither monolithic nor static. Particularly in the aftermath of 1857, Brahmans were disparaged and described as the subversive element behind the Uprising. Colonial attentions shifted towards venerating the martial and kingly prowess of the Marathas as a potentially 'loyal' community, culminating in an alliance with the non-Brahman princely ruler of Kolhapur, Shahu Maharaj. In many ways, these colonial preferences mapped onto older antagonisms within Maharashtrian society. But in the context of the growing efficacy of ethnographical classifications for colonial knowledge in India, they also came to be increasingly refracted through the paradigms of 'race' and ethnicity. In the process, Marathi-speaking patriotisms were transformed into Maharashtrian nationalisms.

2.2.1 The British and the Brahmans in Bombay

As the British EIC attained political ascendancy in western India in the early nineteenth century, the new imperatives of internal pacification and revenue extraction required a greater knowledge of local Indian societies. Preferences for particular interpretations of Indian society and the search for potential collaborators drew upon both the necessities of control and early articulations of the 'civilising mission' ideology. Whilst, as we shall see, colonial understandings of Indian society were never monolithic, there was a distinct tendency to privilege what Susan Bayly has defined as 'exalted qualities of industry, sobriety and thrift' which were found within Brahmanic 'caste-based' norms.[50] This promoted an ordered and settled society, to be controlled and taxed through indigenous high-caste intermediaries, in preference to the insecurities and practical difficulties that accompanied attempts to control itinerant arms-bearing groups. These Brahman collaborators, then, acted as the primary clients through whom the EIC was able to engage with the wider Indian public. Concerned with protecting their own privileged positions, many were to promote depictions of Maharashtrian society that emphasised caste's hierarchical and reified nature.[51]

The framing of codes of Hindu civil law serves as one such example. Thought to be congruent with indigenous traditions and institutions, they also simultaneously took into account British ideas of 'justice', 'proper discipline' and correct judicial

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[50] S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, p. 83.

[51] David Washbrook, 'Economic Depression and the Making of "Traditional" Society in Colonial India', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6.3 (1993), 237-263.

procedure.[52] However, the British presumption that supposedly pre-existing Indian 'codes' could be readily extrapolated into the colonial legal apparatus proved problematic. For example, Arthur Steele's *The Law and Custom of Hindoo Castes*, first published in 1826, suggested a primarily textual basis for Hindu law within the Deccan. These works and their interpretations were authored almost entirely by learned Brahman pandits (scholars with knowledge of the classical Hindu scriptures), and it was therefore almost inevitable that for Steele the law would be based around a 'caste system', which 'was founded on the supremacy of the Brahmun Caste, and the ignorance and dependence of the others'.[53] Local customs and traditions that diverged from the supposed Brahmanic textual 'orthodoxy' were to be disregarded.

Brahman ascendancy existed behind a smokescreen of British liberalism – seemingly providing equal access to education, whilst widening opportunities for administrative and political power amongst previously marginalised social groups, in reality it created prospects primarily for those who could already read and write.[54] The Bombay Government's implicit stress on a Brahmanic Hinduism, coupled with, 'The old association of the higher castes with the skills of literacy[,] gave them a much greater flexibility and readiness to exploit these new possibilities than was possessed by any of western India's agricultural or urban lower castes'.[55] In 1884, for example, out of 109 students in the Deccan College at Poona, 107 were Brahmans, despite the fact they constituted only four per cent of the population in the region.[56] Similar statistics reflected the composition of the provincial administrative services. In 1887 the Public Services Commission found that 41.25 per cent of the deputy collectors, 75.5 per cent of the *mamlatdars*

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[52] Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 57-75.

[53] Arthur Steele, *Summary of the Law and Custom of Hindoo Castes within the Dekhun Provinces subject to the Presidency of Bombay, Chiefly Affecting Civil Suits, etc* (Bombay: Courier Press, 1827), pp. viii-x.

[54] This is not to say that the decline of direct Brahman patronage by the state was not seized upon by subordinate castes who sought to contest and alter the existing socio-political order. See, for example, N.K. Wagle, 'A Dispute Between the Pancal Devajna Sonars and the Brahmans of Pune Regarding Social Rank and Ritual Privileges: A Case Study of the British Administration of Jati Laws in Maharashtra, 1822-1825', in *Images of Maharashtra: A Regional Profile of India*, ed. by N.K. Wagle (London: Curzon Press, 1980), pp. 129-159.

[55] O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, p. 7.

[56] Ravinder Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in the Social History of Maharashtra* (London: Routledge and Kenan Paul, 1968), p. 283.

(administrative heads of sub-districts), and 70 out of 104 subordinate judges were Brahmans in the Bombay Presidency.[57] As Veena Naregal has succinctly put it, 'The reification of group boundaries under colonial influence counteracted the transfer of modern egalitarian possibilities through pedagogy'.[58]

Under British colonial rule, Marathi was homogenised and systematised by missionaries, orientalists, and their indigenous informants, who sought to remedy what they saw as a complete dearth of suitable reading material in the vernacular. A unified, standard Marathi promised much for the growing reception of Maharashtrian patriotism. Through the patronage of institutions such as the Bombay Native Education Society, a standardised grammar, syntax and style for Marathi was developed during the early nineteenth century, and embedded within a bilingual educational policy. A distinctive Marathi 'public sphere' emerged, in which 'vernacular intellectuals' such as Krishnashastri Chiplunkar (1824-1876) and Balshastri Jambhekar (1812-1846) 'were engaged in rendering important texts and ideas of political economy into Marathi'.[59] Yet initial access to these 'modern' ideas and discourses was dependent upon an individual's proficiency in English, and hence it was educated Brahmans who controlled and directed the attendant growth in Marathi prose and patriotic cultural productions. By the 1870s, the Brahman intelligentsia was 'articulating a collective self-identity of the Marathi people', in which only they would have the right to 'speak on behalf' of the entire Marathi-speaking community.[60] The monthly *Nibandhmala* ('A Garland of Essays'), for example, edited by Krishnashastri's son, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar (1850-1882), asserted an exclusive upper-caste claim to define the boundaries of vernacular textuality.

Despite the initial preference shown towards Brahmans by the colonial state in Maharashtra, the British also worried about their previous loyalties towards the recently deposed Peshwa. Before 1857, the growing influences of utilitarianism and Protestant evangelicalism had allowed the concept of a seditious, immoral and oppressive Brahmanism to gather increased favour, linked to Western ideas 'of a priest-ridden, tyrannised papist Europe awaiting liberation by the triumph of

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[57] Quoted in Ian Copland, 'The Maharaja of Kolhapur and the Non-Brahmin Movement, 1902-1910', *MAS*, 7 (1973), 209-225 (p. 214).
[58] Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India under Colonialism* (London: Anthem, 2002), p. 62.
[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.
[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 214-215, 231-254.

the Reformation spirit'.[61] In the aftermath of the 1857 Uprising, British perceptions of Brahmans in Maharashtra shifted further – they became the 'seditious nationalists' who were 'to be neutralised through the patronage of client "non-Brahman" political collaborators'.[62] Sir Richard Temple (Governor of Bombay, 1877-1880), for example, was to argue that Maharashtra's community of Chitpavan Brahmans shared 'a national and political ambition' that it was impossible, whether 'by way of education, emolument, or advancement in the public service' for the colonial authorities to satisfy.[63]

Partly in response to this shift in colonial rhetoric, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the progressive rise of early assertions of oppositional politics in western India. Indigenous organisations which aimed at directing and influencing the British government now began to contest the legitimacy and actions of the colonial state.[64] The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (People's Service Society), founded in the early 1870s, petitioned the Bombay government on a number of issues, including reforming the legislatures and the widening of Indian access to the civil service. But it also took up subjects that were related more directly to an older Maharashtrian patriotism, being organised originally to lobby for the reform and replacement of the supposedly corrupt and inefficient management of the Parvati temple at Poona, which had strong historical connections with the Peshwa rulers.[65] However, these early upper-caste reformist organisations, founded on their control over sites of cultural production and their

[61] S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, p. 110; see, for example, James Grant Duff's stark dichotomy between Shivaji's Maratha state and Brahman Peshwa rule in his history of the Maratha polity. James Cuninghame Grant Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1826) 2 vols.

[62] Susan Bayly, 'Caste and "Race" in the Colonial Ethnography of India', in *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, ed. by Peter Robb (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 165-218 (p. 179). For more on the emergence of non-Brahman collaborators in opposition to increased Brahman political assertiveness and growing nationalistic tendencies, see the next section of this chapter.

[63] 'Sir Richard Temple to Lytton, 9 July 1879', quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 234; see also, Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism: Bombay and the Indian National Congress, 1880-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 53-54.

[64] M.L. Apte, 'Lokahitavadi and V.K. Chiplunkar: Spokesmen of Change in Nineteenth-Century Maharashtra', *MAS*, 7 (1973), 193-208.

[65] James Masselos, *Towards Nationalism: Group Affiliations and the Politics of Public Associations in Nineteenth-Century Western India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974), pp. 95-122.

pre-eminence within spheres of representative political association, had a limited ability to enunciate an inclusive discourse: two out of every three of the 125 people who served on the Sabha's management committee between 1878 and 1897 were Chitpavan Brahmans.[66]

In its early years, the Sabha was associated in particular with the jurist M.G. Ranade (1842-1901), who was at the forefront of attempts to invoke a liberal, all-Indian interpretation of a united Maharashtrian past. As noted in the first section of this chapter, in the pre-colonial period the term 'Maratha' could be applied narrowly, referring to an exclusivist interpretation which defined a military/administrative elite. But we also considered how it could be applied more flexibly, to all Marathi-speakers who fought in Sultanate, Mughal and Shivaji's armies. Under the British, these coterminous, yet ambiguous meanings were now 'ethnicised', and linked to colonial ideas of heredity and 'race', thereby transforming a patriotism based primarily around language into an ethno-linguistic nationalism instead. Many nineteenth-century colonialists were prone to describing the Marathas more broadly in such racial language, particularly in the context of growing interest in ethnological race science both at home and in the 'Indian laboratory'.[67] Classificatory and enumerative procedures introduced under Victorian-era imperial rule came to define Marathas afresh as a caste of the 'national' type. Likewise, in an attempt to diminish contemporary caste antagonisms and questions over Brahman dominance of the political and administrative scene, Ranade was to pick up on this language in his own discourse on the cohesive and harmonious nationhood achieved by the Maratha 'race'. This was a result of an alliance between Brahmans, Marathas, and other regionally-based *jatis* throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

> 'The foundation was laid broad and deep in the hearts of the whole people. Unlike the *Subhedarships* of Bengal, Karnatak, Oudh, and Hyderabad, the rise of the Maratha Power was due to the first beginnings of what one may call the process of nation-making ... It was the upheaval of the whole population, strongly bound together by the common affinities of language, race, religion and literature, and seeking further solidarity by a common

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[66] Gordon Johnson, 'Chitpavan Brahmins and Politics in Western India in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', in *Elites in South Asia*, ed. by E. Leach and S.N. Mukherjee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 95-118 (p. 109).

[67] For the increased efficacy of ethnological race science, see S. Bayly, 'Caste and "Race"'; Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, pp. 125-227.

independent political existence ... It was a national movement, or upheaval in which all classes co-operated'.[68]

The period of Maratha suzerainty thus foregrounded Ranade's own personal predilections as a reformist Brahman with strong loyalties to both Maharashtra and a wider Indian nation. Other interpretations also emphasised the importance of 'Maharashtra desh [i.e. native land]' through a nationalist idiom, but chose to place greater emphasis on Brahman power to counter growing low-caste critiques of Brahman dominance.[69] Brahmanic assertiveness in the writing of Maharashtrian history was embodied most emphatically in the works of V.K. Rajwade (1863-1926) and the 'Poona School' of Marathi political history during this period. Rajwade, inspired by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar's call for a history of Maharashtrian power and national pride, was to give to Marathi historiography a 'modern philosophical basis and method', based upon European models.[70] His interpretation of the Maratha polity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emphasised an active, anti-Muslim and orthodox Hinduism based around Brahman precepts and concerns:

> 'If truth be told, during Aurangzeb's reign ... like the Marathas, other regions of Hindustan too should have rebelled, established Swarajya and protected cows and Brahmans. But this did not happen because these people did not embody the necessary and exalted qualities of unity and leadership ... so the leaders in Maharashtra sought to liberate [other regions of India] from Muslim clutches ... This was the principal motive underlying the Maratha expansion across India after 1720'.[71]

Marathas, under the influence of Brahmans and providing plentiful illustrations of pious religiosity, were an example to be emulated by the rest of the subcontinent. Just as Brahman-dominated Marathi historiography emphasised regional imperatives for all-India contexts, the early Indian National Congress was

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[68] M.G. Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power* (Bombay: Punalekar and Company, 1900), pp. 6-7.

[69] Prachi Deshpande, 'Writing Regional Consciousness: Maratha History and Regional Identity in Modern Maharashtra', in *Region, Culture, and Politics in India*, ed. by Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), pp. 83-118 (pp. 95-96).

[70] Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 104-118; Sumit Guha, 'Speaking Historically: The Changing Voices of Historical Narration in Western India, 1400-1900', *American Historical Review*, 109.4 (2004), 1084-1103; Prachi Deshpande, 'The Making of an Indian Nationalist Archive: Lakshmibai, Jhansi, and 1857', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 67 (2008), 855-879.

[71] Cited in Deshpande, *Creative Pasts*, p. 132.

dominated by Brahman leaders from Marathi-speaking Bombay, whose 'regional alignments affected their national strategies'.[72] Nowhere was this more evident than in factional disputes between Maharashtrian 'Moderates' and 'Extremists', which pervaded the annual Congress sessions during the 1890s and 1900s. Founded in 1885, throughout this formative period many of the Congress's most important leaders came from either Bombay City or nearby Poona – the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha now operated as a provincial wing of the Congress organisation. At first, under the tutelage of Ranade and his successor, G.K. Gokhale (1866-1915), the Sabha was a paradigm of 'Moderate' opinion, mirroring the Congress' early concerns to extract greater shares in government for an educated Indian elite. Gokhale came to be recognised by the British as an important Congress spokesperson, cultivating a position as perceived broker between government and people by acting as Lord Minto's confidante ahead of the 1909 Morley-Minto reforms.[73] By 1895, however, the Sabha had been 'captured' by B.G. Tilak (1856-1920), who had consolidated 'anti-reform' Brahman opinion in Maharashtra during the 1880s by denouncing government interference in indigenous social and cultural issues.[74]

As Vishnushastri Chiplunkar's ideological successor, Tilak was to combine Brahmanic social conservatism, radical anti-colonial nationalism and popular appeals to Maharashtrian patriotism through his *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Mahratta* (English) newspapers. Generally credited in nationalist historiography as India's first 'popular' national leader, Tilak recognised 'the decisive importance of the symbolic manipulation of the avenues for publicity within modern politics'.[75] Besides newspapers, the *Ganapati utsava* (a festival in honour of the Hindu deity Ganesh celebrated with particular vigour in Maharashtra) and *Shivaji jayanti* (birth anniversary celebrations of Shivaji) 'captured' the 'imagination' of Tilak, who saw the 'potential' of the festivals for stimulating mass national consolidation through symbols of regional unity and belonging.[76] The performative spectacles (songs,

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[72] Johnson, *Provincial Politics*, pp. 2-3.

[73] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

[74] Richard Tucker, 'Hindu Traditionalism and Nationalist Ideologies in Nineteenth-Century Maharashtra', *MAS*, 10 (1976), 321-348 (pp. 347-348).

[75] Naregal, *Language Politics*, p. 263.

[76] Raminder Kaur, *Performative Politics and the Culture of Hinduism: Public Uses of Religion in Western India* (London: Anthem, 2005), pp. 3-4, 32-69; see also, Richard I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975); Daniel Jasper, 'Commemorating the "Golden Age" of Shivaji in Maharashtra, India and

dramas and dances) that encompassed these festivities from the 1890s encouraged Maharashtrians beyond the high-caste, middle-class dominated literary spheres and debating chambers of the Congress to take part in celebrations of their heritage and display an active interest in contemporary political themes and nationalist rhetoric.

2.2.2 Phule's *Bahujan Samaj* and Shahu's Non-Brahmans

Yet for these subaltern groups, their participation in such festivities may have invoked patriotic longings far removed from the prerogatives of educated Brahman elites. Lower-castes in Maharashtra did not easily identify with either the 'public' as defined by upper-caste vernacular intellectuals, nor early assertions of Congress nationalism linked to Brahman privilege and concerns.[77] Awareness of Brahmanic hegemony over indigenous cultural spheres and institutions, political associations, and the low-level governmental apparatus of the colonial state, combined with emphasis on Shivaji's non-Brahman status as a Kshatriya warrior-king, to invoke a Maharashtrian patriotism far removed from the Brahman-inspired stress on national unity. This sub-section traces these ideas in the writings and actions of two prominent non-Brahman ideologues, Jotirao Phule (1827-1890) and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (1874-1922).

From the late eighteenth century, as the EIC re-invented itself as a patron of indigenous learning, European Orientalists such as William Jones (1746-1794) and Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837) began to learn Sanskrit and access Brahmanical tradition. These administrators-cum-scholars were to 'discover' in Brahmanic textual sources a common cultural heritage between European and Indo-Aryan 'races', who had spread from an ancient Central Asian homeland into Europe, Persia and South Asia.[78] Jones, for example, was to delineate from his reading of the Vedas a history of the penetration of Brahmanism into India. His writings therefore 'gave rise to the powerful and far-reaching myth of an ancient invasion of the subcontinent by "tribes" of the so-called Aryan race', who brought with

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the Development of Maharashtrian Public Politics', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 31 (2003), 215-230.

[77] S.J.M. Epstein, *The Earthy Soil: Bombay Peasants and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1919-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 2-3, 37-38.

[78] Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, pp. 57-75; Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1997).

them the fourfold *varna* scheme embedded within the laws of Manu (a 'divine' legislator).[79] The descendants of these ancient 'fair-skinned' Aryans in India, linked as they were in historic kinship with Europeans, were to be deemed heirs to a civilisational 'golden-age' in the subcontinent.[80]

Orientalist thinking on the philological antecedents of Sanskrit provided the historical context for the increased ethnicisation of caste and language with the advent of a new 'scientific' and evolutionary anthropology in India towards the end of the nineteenth century. Under the work of Herbert Hope Risley (1815-1911), Aryans were classified at the top of a hierarchy of seven racial 'types' as the most 'advanced' of Indians, with 'pre-Aryan' aboriginals and Dravidians as the most 'primitive'.[81] A hierarchical and stratified caste 'system', in this particular interpretation (albeit one of many), was an 'evolutionary weapon' to maintain racial 'purity' through processes of exclusion and ritual distance.[82] Caste and *varna* distinctions were thereby linked to racial and ethnic differences, as pre-Aryan Indians were primarily incorporated into the 'system' as lowly Shudras or left outside as 'untouchables'. The ideological content of patriotism was thus transformed anew in this period, as more intrusive analyses and 'surveys' of Indian society on the basis of ethnography and linguistic geography were introduced, and as state institutions were developed and reformed within a 'nationalist' framework.

Indians themselves soon came to employ and express various interpretations of the Aryan race theory, perhaps most famously in the formation and growth of the Hindu 'revivalist' Arya Samaj, which sought to restore a 'fallen' Hinduism to its ancient purity through reform. In Maharashtra, Bal Gangadhar Tilak focused on the vitality and strength of the Aryans in invading and conquering India from what he perceived to be their 'Arctic homelands', as an example of vigour, virility and

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[79] S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, p. 114.

[80] The British, however, were often to set themselves apart as superior to 'Aryan' Indians by noting how through the ages, Hinduism's 'purity' had been degraded and corrupted by accretions and interpretations which had reduced India into a state of permanent decline. It was the 'benevolent' purpose of western civilisation to put India's Hindus back in touch with their ancient glory.

[81] H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1901. Volume I, part I: Report* (Calcutta: Government Central Press, 1901), pp. 508-509.

[82] S. Bayly, 'Caste and "Race"', p. 201. Elsewhere in this chapter, Bayly notes that far from representing a 'monolithic consensus on caste', this racial vision was only one of many interpretations amongst colonial administrators – others linked caste identity to occupation and could stress its fluid and malleable nature.

superior 'nationhood'.[83] However, a polemical *pavada* (ballad) by Jotirao Phule entitled 'A Ballad of the Raja Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosale' and published in 1869, was to turn Brahman pride in their perceived Aryan heritage on its head. Phule a low-caste reformer from the Mali (gardener) caste, had been enrolled at a school in Pune run by missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland during the 1840s. In 1847, influenced by the lives and writings of Shivaji, George Washington and Thomas Paine, as well as Brahman critiques of British rule, Phule and some friends had become involved in anti-British activity. By the following year, however, Phule's emphasis had shifted away from confrontation with the colonial authorities to indigenous social and religious reform, particularly on attitudes towards low-castes and women. His biographers put this shift down to a closer reading of Paine's work, and his removal from a Brahman friend's marriage procession by other guests on their realisation that he was a lowly Mali.[84]

In 'A Ballad of the Raja Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosale', Phule inverted late nineteenth-century British and Brahman interpretations of the racial and ethnic ascendancy of descendants of high-caste 'Aryans'.[85] In this interpretation, India's civilisational 'golden age' was re-envisaged as occurring in an idyllic pre-Aryan period of Kshatriya supremacy, under the rule of the mythical King Bali. 'Phule supported this interpretation by deriving the term *Kshatriya* from the Marathi word *kshetra*, a field or place', in which Kshatriya 'denoted all those living peaceably together on the land before the arrival of the Brahman invaders'.[86] 'Kshatriya-ness' was thus delinked from its religious connotations, in which Brahman priests and scholars were necessary in the bestowing of such status. In this context, Phule could invoke Shivaji's own struggle to be recognised as a Kshatriya kingly-warrior in the seventeenth century, both as a mechanism through which the lower castes could claim their old identity as Kshatriyas, and as an inheritance of King Bali's leadership of the lower castes and protection of the land

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[83] Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas, Being Also a New Key to the Interpretation of Many Vedic Texts and Legends* (Pune: Messrs Tilak Bros, 1903).

[84] Much of this information has been garnered from, O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, pp. 105-113; Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India, 1873 to 1930* (Bombay: Scientific Socialist Education Trust, 1976), pp. 98-122; Uma Chakravarti, *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 1998), pp. 64-78; M.S. Gore, *The Non-Bramhan Movement in Maharashtra* (New Delhi: Segment Book Distributors, 1989).

[85] O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, p. 170.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

from foreign 'invaders'. Shivaji, Bali, and more generally the Kunbi/Kshatriyas, in Phule's interpretation, became the paradigmatic symbols of Maharashtra's rural and martial culture and tradition.

Rather than emphasising Shivaji's role as the protector of cows and Brahmans (like Rajwade), or as the creator of an independent and unified 'Hindu' kingdom (in a similar way to Ranade), the ballad prefers to concentrate on the glorious military past of Maharashtra's lower castes. Phule's interpretation then, was to foreground the patriotism of non-Brahmans who as 'the common man, the soldier and the tiller of the soil' could legitimately express real loyalty and devotion to Maharashtra 'as the original master[s] of the land'.[87] This discourse, as we will see, fed into ideas about citizenship in Maharashtra during debates over the linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries.[88] The Aryan invasion myth was now invoked by Phule to downplay the affinities of Brahmans to Maharashtra as 'aliens' who had subjugated the indigenous natives. But it also served to establish an ethno-linguistic base for the unity of Maharashtrians (excluding Brahmans), evident in the phrase 'Bahujan Samaj' ('people in the majority') as it was popularised in the early twentieth century under the auspices of the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society).[89]

The Satyashodhak Samaj, formed by Phule in 1873, was to become the premier non-Brahman social-religious reform organisation in western India during this period. Its emergence coincided with the formation of the Pune Sarvajanik Sabha and the Marathi literary renaissance, whilst the next forty years of its history existed parallel to the rise of the Congress in Maharashtra's urban centres and the

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[88] It also pre-dated the 'Dravidian' discourse of non-Brahman movements in the south of India and the 'adi-Dharm' discourse of parallel movements in the Gangetic and Punjabi north. See, Eugene Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1969); Eugene Irschick, *Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s* (Madras: Crea Publications, 1986); Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[89] Notably, Phule avoided the use of the word 'Maratha', which he feared might place too much emphasis on noble Maratha status and set up barriers between Maratha-Kunbis and other lower castes. It also was suggestive of a process of 'Sanskritization', in which Kunbis sought Maratha status, and hence emphasised a Brahmanic interpretation of Indian society. For more on the importance and implicit meanings of terms such as 'Maratha', 'Bahujan Samaj', 'non-Brahman' and 'Kshatriya', see, O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, pp. 140, 162; Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*, pp. 3-8.

advent of Tilak's mass nationalist politics. Its history, and its invocation of regional patriotism, must therefore be considered in the context of growing nationalist demands amongst an English-speaking, middle-class Brahman elite. The Samaj's support at this time was concentrated amongst peasants and cultivating tenants in the Maharashtrian *mofussil* (the rural hinterland), who it put forward as the true inheritors of Maharashtra's traditions and cultures. It used popular forms like *pavadas* and *abhangs* (hymns) to universalise Phule's non-Brahmanism, and made efforts to encourage the undertaking of religious ceremonies without the intercession of the *bhats* (a derogatory term for Brahman priests).

The Samaj, however, was to bifurcate into two distinctive ideological/social strands within its organisation during this period, which reflected this chapter's earlier emphasis on the ambiguous meanings of the term 'Maratha'. One, considered by historians as ideologically 'anti-Brahman' because of its rejection of caste in its entirety, continued to foreground 'Phule's assertion of mass equality and brotherhood of indigenous non-Aryan peoples'; the other, described instead as 'non-Brahman' because of its implicit support for a hierarchical, and reified caste 'system', involved elite Marathas claiming Kshatriya status to distinguish themselves from the Kunbis as Shudras.[90] Krshnarao Bhalekar, an active participant in the Satyashodhak Samaj, was to comment on this 'chaotic variation' within the non-Brahman movement in the *Din Mitra* newspaper in July 1888:

> 'Some claim that we all have a right to wear the sacred thread; others dispute whether it should be worn around the neck or the loins; some say, we do our marriages with Vedic rituals, and others say we should use puranic texts; others still condemn both as just another excuse for Brahmans to fatten themselves. Some ask what is the use of sacred verses and the sacred fire in the marriage rite, and say that it is all an empty game [etc] ... '.[91]

Historians have tended to personify these two strands within the non-Brahman movement through the lives of two prominent Maharashtrian individuals – first with Phule, and then corresponding to the later emergence of the Indian ruler of

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[90] Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*, pp. 137-138; Gore, *Non-Bramhan Movement*; Rosalind O'Hanlon, ed., *A Comparison Between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India* (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 4-5; see also, Enthoven, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay. Vol. II*, p. 286.

[91] Cited in O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, p. 302.

the princely state of Kolhapur, Shahu Maharaj (r.1894-1922).[92] Shahu, as a direct descendant of Shivaji, had become increasingly involved in the non-Brahman movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of his own personal troubles regarding his claims to Vedic rights as a Kshatriya king during religious ceremonies. At first, Shahu was primarily concerned with emphasising the 'purity' of his own lineage, but the course of events was to radicalise his thinking. Unlike Phule, however, he sought to concentrate upon the 'Kshatriya-ness' of Marathas as evidence of their 'Aryan' descent. Simultaneously, Shahu's emphasis was more firmly upon providing avenues for non-Brahmans to access the resources of the state, rather than socio-religious reform.

In July 1902, Shahu introduced an ordinance which reserved at least half of the bureaucratic posts within the state for non-Brahmans, paving the way for him to preside over a complete change in the caste composition of his services.[93] Upon Shahu's accession in 1894, 85.5 per cent of the 124 administrators were Brahmans. By 1922, however, at the time of Shahu's death, 71 per cent of the 238 administrators were non-Brahmans.[94] This was to embitter relations between the Maharaja and Brahmans not only within his state, but more widely across western India. Antagonism between nationalist Brahmans and Shahu also emerged in the context of the support Shahu received from the British government, as a potential shield against the mounting and more militant Indian nationalism in western India under the auspices of B.G. Tilak. The Raj sought to hijack non-Brahmans' sense of patriotic loyalty to the Maharajah as a direct descendant of Shivaji and thereby circumvent Tilak's populist appeals. The alliance also provided immense benefit to Shahu in his efforts to overcome Brahmanic dominance within his state, a matter which the British watched with interest and were to emulate with the introduction of reservations in the administration for 'Backward' classes in 1925.[95]

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[92] Compare, for example, the chapters on Phule and Shahu in Gore and Omvedt's works. See, Gore, *Non-Bramhan Movement*; Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*.

[93] Copland, 'The Maharaja of Kolhapur', p. 218.

[94] Figures from A.B. Latthe, *Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati, Maharajah of Kolhapur* (Bombay: The Times Press, 1924), volume II, p. 132. Cited in Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*, p. 126.

[95] Copland, 'The Maharaja of Kolhapur', pp. 209-215.

2.3 Linguistic Reorganisation and the Transition from Subjecthood to Citizenship, 1919-1956

The last paragraph of the preceding section of this chapter begins to hint at another period of historical transformation in Maharashtra, which had already begun to emerge in the late nineteenth century but was to accelerate in the aftermath of the Great War. This was the shift towards greater rights and representation for Indians within the colonial bureaucracy and the electoral arena which, although tied into colonial efforts to bolster their dwindling authority and counteract growing support for the anti-colonial nationalist movement, was (at least rhetorically) justified in the language of greater 'self-governance'. As the subcontinent inched towards *swaraj* (self-rule), Indian subjects became increasingly interested in anticipating their potential rights and statuses within a variety of differently defined state spaces. And after independence in 1947, newly defined citizens looked to hold postcolonial provincial and all-India governments to account for their ostensible commitments and principles. The construction and anticipation of citizenship thus came to inflect a whole host of older regional, caste and other 'community' identities in novel ways. How these developments played out will be dealt with in much greater detail in the rest of this thesis. This section, however, looks to focus upon the shifting context in which provincial forms of self-government linked to linguistic reorganisation were anticipated and achieved, and around which the selection of Congress candidates for election (Chapter Three), state recruitment to the bureaucracy (Chapter Four), classificatory and enumerative procedures at the decennial census (Chapter Five), and the reaction to efforts to introduce Hindi/Hindustani as an official provincial language in Bombay (Chapter Six) now coalesced.

2.3.1 The Congress, Independence and Reorganisation

British Bombay was a polyglot province, broadly split into Gujarati-speakers residing in the northern districts, Marathi-speakers in the central districts, and Kannada-speakers in the southern districts. At its Nagpur Session in December 1920, the Congress had gone some way towards attempting to rectify this perceived problem by reorganising its Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) on the basis of language, as a precursor to an analogous commitment to the reorganisation of the state's provincial administrative boundaries after the

achievement of independence.[96] These organisational changes were justified on the basis of the Congress's greater 'representativeness' and 'accountability' in comparison to the Raj. Such rhetoric also shaped the recommendations contained within the Nehru Report of 1928, the first Indian effort at a potential constitution drafted by two eminent lawyers from the United Provinces (UP), the Liberal T.B. Sapru and the Congressman Motilal Nehru. The Report suggested a number of problems inherent within multilingual and multicultural provinces where English also served as the language of administration:

> 'As long as provincial legislatures consist of representatives of different cultures, races with their different viewpoints and interests and carry on their deliberations in a language which most of the people outside do not understand, responsible Government must necessary be a farce'.[97]

Simultaneously, however the Report also warned about the potentially divisive effects of the further devolution of power to the provinces, which threatened to tamper with the growth of an Indian 'national' consciousness. The influence of Motilal's son, Jawaharlal, can be seen in the fresh emphasis also placed upon economic considerations, whereby reorganisation was seen to potentially menace 'the organic cohesion of an economic area by dividing it according to lines of language'.[98] These two contradictory constituents of nationalist thought in relation to regional sentiments continued to exist in an uneasy relationship for the remainder of the colonial period. In October 1937 the Congress reiterated its commitment to linguistic reorganisation in an AICC resolution calling upon the Bombay and Madras Governments to consider the formation of separate Karnataka and Andhra provinces.[99] But in January 1939, responding to the 'Bengali-Bihari controversy' over the delineation of administrative boundaries, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) emphasised that 'the idea of a common nationality and the common background of our cultural and historical inheritance must always be encouraged, so that India should become a free and strong nation

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[96] Bombay Province was thus constituted into four separate PCCs – one for each linguistic zone; and a further PCC for Bombay City on account of its 'cosmopolitanism' and multilingual nature.

[97] New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], All India Congress Committee [henceforth AICC] Papers, Part I, File G-72 (1928), 'Redistribution of Provinces in India', n.d.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] AICC Papers, Part I, File 70, 'Redistribution of Provinces on Linguistic Basis, AICC Calcutta, Resolution Eighteen', 29-31 October 1937.

built upon a unity of purpose and aim'.[100] It was necessary in the circumstances to 'discourage all separatist tendencies and narrow provincialism'.[101]

In the aftermath of independence and partition, it was the concern over the divisive tendencies perceived to be inherent within demands for provincial reorganisation that achieved ascendancy over all other interpretations amongst the Congress High Command (CHC) at the centre. Partition ensured that for the next thirteen years the increasingly vociferous demands for the creation of a unilingual Maharashtra were rejected as damaging to Indian unity. So, for example, in July 1948 the Indian Minister for Industry and Supply, Syama Prasad Mookerjee, sent a letter to the Home Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel, in which he commented,

> 'It is tragic to find that in various parts of India a wave of provincialism is moving the minds of many people. This has to be immediately put down, for this contains the germs of our destruction. This will be worse than communalism. History will repeat itself and we shall lose our country if we allow disruptive tendencies to become powerful and block the road to national unity'.[102]

From this perspective, partition and the Pakistan demand can be seen as part of a much broader trend towards regional mobilisation and sub-national autonomy across South Asia during this period (see Chapter 1.1). Ahead of independence and partition, for example, most Congressmen outside the CHC supported linguistic reorganisation and a federal take on a future Indian state. In December 1946 a Convention on Linguistic and Cultural Provinces in India was held in which Pattabhi Sitaramayya, a prominent Congress proponent of the Telugu-speaking Andhra Pradesh province, presided. Sitaramayya called for the Indian Constituent Assembly to 'constitute a sub-committee for considering the question of linguistic provinces ... which should be taken note of before provincial constitutions are framed'.[103]

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[100] *Ibid.*, 'Bengali-Bihari Controversy, Working Committee, Bardoli (Gujarat)', 11-14 January 1939.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] 'From S.P. Mookerjee', 17 July 1948. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50, vol. VI*, ed. by Durga Das (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 320-323.

[103] AICC Papers, Part I, File 37 (1946), B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 'Presidential Address', at *Convention on Linguistic and Cultural Provinces in India, Delhi, 8th December 1946* (Delhi: Delhi Printing Works, n.d.).

In response to these increased demands for reorganisation, the Constituent Assembly's President Rajendra Prasad convened the Linguistic Provinces Commission (LPC) in June 1948. The Commission was tasked with looking into the potential formation of the linguistic provinces of Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra in the south and west of India. Reporting back in December, after receiving written deputations and touring the country, the LPC proclaimed:

> 'India has, in the words of its Prime Minister, just survived a major operation. It is in the midst of an undeclared war with Pakistan. It has still to settle its refugee problem and the problem of feeding its teeming millions and as a result of British withdrawal it is working and must work for some time to come with a depleted and over-strained administration'.[104]

The LPC ultimately recommended that no new provinces should be formed. With regards to Maharashtra, the LPC argued that the coastal Konkan region had 'not become thoroughly Maharashtrian in political outlook, language and culture'.[105] Marathi-speaking portions of Madhya Pradesh (MP), known as Vidarbha, were said to 'have lived a separate life of their own, which has given them characteristics and outlook different from Deccan Maharashtra'.[106] Meanwhile Bombay City, which 'stands in special relation to Maharashtra, Gujarat and to India as a whole' was accorded its own separate chapter in the report on account of its 'cosmopolitan and multi-lingual' nature.[107]. If the Constituent Assembly decided to go against their advice and reorganise provincial boundaries, the LPC counselled that Bombay City and Vidarbha should be kept apart from Maharashtra as entirely separate entities.

The LPC's recommendations were given further accord in December 1948 after the Congress appointed its own Linguistic Provinces Committee, consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. More popularly known as the JVP Committee after this triumvirate of Congressmen, proponents of linguistic reorganisation hoped that it might reach more favourable conclusions on account of the fact Sitaramayya was one of its members. However, the JVP

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[104] *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission* [henceforth *LPC*] *1948* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1948), p. 2; Robert King has suggested that it was actually Prime Minister Nehru himself who drafted the Report, rather than one of the members of the Commission. See, Robert King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 107.
[105] *Report of the LPC*, p. 10.
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Committee supported the conclusions of the LPC. Whilst in the past the Congress Party had supported reorganisation, the Committee argued it had not been 'faced with the practical application of this principle and hence it had not considered all the implications and consequences that arose from this'.[108] A composite sense of Indianness needed to be further developed and cherished before reorganisation could be even contemplated – between Sitaramayya's December 1946 demand for a sub-committee on linguistic reorganisation, and his role in rejecting its suitability as part of the JVP Committee 24 months later, the repercussions of division had become manifestly apparent.

After independence and partition, the new Indian Government was tasked with dealing with the fall-out from mass genocide, violence and displacement, the matters of refugee rehabilitation and resettlement, and the definition of both territorial boundaries and citizenship rights and statuses.[109] Meanwhile, the new Indian Government had also the small matter of integrating hundreds of semi-autonomous princely states, an anomaly of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British pattern of conquest, into the Union. Indeed, the princely states of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir had to be assimilated by force of arms.[110] The integration of the latter provoked armed conflict with Pakistan, who also claimed Kashmir as part of its territory, culminating in the First Indo-Pakistani War (1947-48) and an uneasy ceasefire brokered by the United Nations. Partition was not a contained historical event, but was rather a deeply ambiguous and transitional phenomenon. The scale of the disruption even threatened the collapse of the new postcolonial governments.

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[108] *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Committee appointed by the Jaipur Congress, December 1948* (New Delhi: Indian National Congress, 1949), p. 2.

[109] Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in Indian's Partition* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Ian Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonances', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 109-130.

[110] V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1997 [1956]); Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2007), ch. 3; Taylor C. Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 81-107.

In these circumstances, the Congress moved swiftly to try and consolidate the authority of the new postcolonial Indian state. Particularly emblematic in this context was the assassination of M.K. Gandhi, the 'father of the nation'. Murdered in June 1948 by Nathruam Godse, a Marathi-speaking Brahman with links to the right-wing Hindu Mahasabha, Gandhi's death allowed the Congress to triumph over its political rivals and challengers on the right, whilst strengthening Nehru's own authority within the party. In doing so, it 'guaranteed the ascendancy of secularism and democracy as the legitimate ideological foundation of the Indian state'.[111] Gandhi's death also had particular significance for the demand for a unilingual Maharashtra. Antipathy towards Marathas (owing to initial confusion as to Godse's caste identity), and then Marathi-speaking Brahmans emerged.[112] The LPC, for example, was to accuse 'the Poona school of thought' (a broad catch-all phrase applied to Marathi-speaking, Brahman Hindus residing in Poona) of not seeing 'eye to eye with the rest of India as to the future destiny of this country'.[113]

Meanwhile, in response to Gandhi's death, anti-Brahman rioting broke out across Maharashtra, thus highlighting the continuing tensions between Brahmans and non-Brahmans despite efforts by the proponents of Samyukta Maharashtra to focus upon Marathi-speaking solidarity.[114] Anti-Brahman violence was particularly noteworthy in the princely state of Kolhapur, where an enquiry was convened with the aim of ascertaining whether the disturbances occurred as a result of 'popular feelings on the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi or the result of communal propaganda in the press and on the platform carried on in the State,

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[111] Yasmin Khan, 'Performing Peace: Gandhi's Assassination as a Critical Moment in the Consolidation of the Nehruvian State', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 57-80 (p. 60).

[112] Initially it was thought to be a Maratha who had assassinated Gandhi, provoking a petition from the Kshatriya Maratha Association to the AICC protesting their community's innocence. See, AICC Papers, Part I, File G-17 (1946-49), 'Letter from Y.R. Tawde, President, Kshatriya Maratha Association, Maratha Colony (West), Dahiwar, Borivil, Bombay Suburban District, to the President, AlCC, "Re: Marathas and the New Constitution"', 2 March 1948; Shreeyash Palshikar has also noted how when Gandhi's assassination was first reported on All-India Radio, his assassin was mistakenly identified as a Maratha, rather than a Maharashtrian Brahman. See, Shreeyash Palshikar, 'Breaking Bombay, Making Maharashtra: Media, Identity Politics and State Formation in Modern India' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007), p. 41, n. 12.

[113] *Report of the LPC*, p. 10.

[114] Maureen Patterson, 'The Shifting Fortunes of the Chitpavan Brahmins: Focus on 1948', in *City, Countryside, and Society in Maharashtra*, ed. by D.W. Attwood, Milton Israel and N.K. Wagle (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Centre for Asian Studies, 1988), pp. 35-58.

indicating a pre-arranged plot'.[115] For the Congress, the expression of anti-Brahman sentiment was linked to efforts by the Maharaja of Kolhapur to oppose the integration of the Marathi-speaking princely states into what was perceived to be the Gujarati-dominated Bombay Province. In early 1948, a resolution was passed by the Kolhapur Government stating that they 'wanted merger with a separate Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra but not with the Bombay state that existed. Until Maharashtra was created [they] called for the retention of Kolhapur's distinctiveness as a political unit'.[116] By connecting the issue of integration with the anti-Brahman riots after Gandhi's assassination, the Congress was able to generate propitious circumstances to impose central control.

In the context of partition, the princely states' integration and the need to consolidate the authority of the new state, it is no wonder that the postcolonial Indian Government sought to postpone provincial reorganisation. But besides these practical considerations, ideological imperatives emerged too. Although eventually conceding to the groundswell of public opinion insisting upon reorganisation, Nehru and other all-India leaders continued to depict regional sentiments as 'parochial', 'fissiparous' and potentially dangerous to India's national integrity, unity and stability.[117] These 'primordial' forms of identity were perceived to obscure Indians' 'true' class-based interests and concerns. '"Communalism", by this definition, was both a false nationalism and a false consciousness'.[118] For Robert King, Nehru was right to be wary of the more malignant implications of regionalism, and by vacillating and deferring decision-making on unilingual provinces for the first five years after independence he ensured that reorganisation was ultimately undertaken in a more reasoned and objective environment. If it had not been for Nehru, King asserts, 'we should have today not a unified India with a strong government at the centre but an India

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[115] Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Political and Services Department File 2745/46 I, 'Letter from the Kolhapur Residency, to B.G. Kher, the Prime Minister, Government of Bombay', 8 April 1948.

[116] Donald B. Rosenthal, 'From Reformist Princes to "Co-operative Kings": I: Political Change in Pre-Independence Kolhapur', *Economic and Political Weekly* [henceforth *EPW*], 8 (1973), 903-910 (p. 909).

[117] See, for example, Jawaharlal Nehru, 'To the Premiers of Provinces', 1 July 1948, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* [henceforth *SWJN*], *vol. VIII*, ed. by S. Gopal (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1988), pp. 326-327; Nehru, '"Danger of Disunity": Speech at Puri, Orissa', 12 March 1949, in *SWJN, vol. X* (1990), pp. 20-22.

[118] Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 144.

weakly divided along linguistic and cultural lines'.[119] In a similar vein Ramachandra Guha has argued that linguistic reorganisation, as an example of Nehruvian 'unity in diversity' in action, 'seems rather to have consolidated the unity of India'.[120]

Both King and Guha therefore suggest that the policy decisions of Nehru ultimately eased the threat of India's 'Balkanisation'. However, whilst the demand for Samyukta Maharashtra and other forms of reorganisation were never secessionist in intent, if we look towards the nature of contemporary Indian federal politics, a rather different picture of their historical impact emerges. In a special report on Indian federalism in March 2012, the *Times of India* noted that

> 'In the 1990s the Mandal upsurge … threw up fragmented yet powerful regional entities which transformed Indian Parliament's character. The emergence of regional stalwarts – Lalu Prasad, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati in north India – tipped the scales against the Congress which, till then, had been firmly in charge. Meanwhile, in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu a strong anti-Congress sentiment had already been present for decades. These developments made complicated coalition politics a reality of Indian polity'.[121]

Likewise, rather than treating the acceptance of reorganisation as an example of the Nehruvian Congress's ideological commitments to 'accommodationism' and inclusivity, after an initial 'cooling-off' period in which to soothe linguistic passions, in reality Nehru and other members of the CHC ultimately 'acceded to this process with extreme reluctance'.[122] In Maharashtra, it was only after the Congress's electoral defeat at the hands of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (henceforth SMS, a coalition of opposition parties supporting the Maharashtra demand) that the CHC was prepared to change course and accept the linguistic principle. As Katherine Adeney has pointed out, 'The initial rejection of linguistic reorganisation after independence, despite Congress's previous commitment to it, was precisely because of the unwillingness to bring these identities into the decision-making process at the centre and politicise them'.[123]

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[119] King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India*, p. 22.

[120] Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, p. 200.

[121] 'Point of Departure: Special Report', *Sunday Times of India* (New Delhi), 25 March 2012.

[122] Ian Talbot, *Inventing the Nation: India and Pakistan* (London: Arnold, 2000), p. 179.

[123] Katherine Adeney, 'Constitutional Centring: Nation Formation and Consociational Federalism in India and Pakistan', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 40.3 (2002), 8-33 (p. 25).

To understand why this was the case, it is necessary to think about the Congress's 'constitutional preferences' before independence, and to broaden out the implications of the machinations over partition and the Pakistan demand: 'Nehru's rejection of the confederal form of the Cabinet Mission Plan [of 1946] is indicative of the fact that he was prepared to concede the two-nation theory [i.e. Pakistan] in order to create a centralised state to carry out his aims of social and economic reconstruction'.[124] Partha Chatterjee, for example, has noted how 'the very institution of a process of planning became a means for the determination of priorities on behalf of the "nation"'.[125] For Nehru development, rather than forms of consociationalism, was *the* crucial prerequisite to social egalitarianism and communal harmony, in which antiquated 'primordial' identities would be overcome by the impact of 'modernisation'.[126] Reorganisation was thus undertaken slowly, and begrudgingly.

2.3.2 The Proponents of Samyukta Maharashtra

Before independence, the contrasting elements within the Congress's discourse on reorganisation ensured that both those in favour and against reorganisation, whether members of the public, lower-level civil servants, or local Congressmen, could frame their arguments in anticipation of the ideals that the postcolonial Indian nation-state was expected to represent. In April 1941, for example, the Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan (All-India Marathi Literary Conference) passed a resolution which argued it was 'essentially necessary to form a separate Province of tracts containing a majority of Marathi-speaking people' to ensure 'the due protection of the interests of the Maharashtrians'.[127] Likewise during the debates within the Constituent Assembly in November 1946, the Maratha Congressmen B.S. Hiray sponsored a resolution calling for the appointment of a Boundary Commission, so as 'to afford ... satisfaction of natural aspirations and consciousness of self-rule and self-determination and establishment of happy

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[124] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[125] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 202.

[126] For example, Nehru argued that the social basis of caste organisation was threatened by 'basic economic changes' that accompanied the 'modernisation' process. See, Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London: Penguin, 2004 [1946]), p. 264.

[127] New Delhi, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], Reforms Office File 2137/41-R, 'Resolution no. 11 passed at 25th Session of the Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan held at Sholapur in April 1941'.

relations among the different classes inhabiting the various provinces'.[128] Those that supported provincial reorganisation in Bombay thus couched their demands within the language of self-government and the protection of the interests of a homogenised ethno-linguistic community.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, however, prominent Brahman and non-Brahman figures in the Maharashtra PCC such as Shankarrao Deo, B.S. Hiray and Y.B. Chavan were pressed by the CHC to adhere to the party's official position on reorganisation. Yet at the same time, these provincial Congressmen were also subject to increasing demands from their affiliates within the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad (henceforth SMP), a conglomerate of politicians from parties across the political spectrum, to endorse direct agitational methods in the fight for the creation of a unilingual Maharashtra. During the 1950s, the calls for reorganisation in western India also became more broadly based amongst society at large, more forthright, and more violent. Maharashtrian Congressmen thus struggled to reconcile 'national' and 'provincial' prerogatives, and ultimately failed to convince the CHC of the viability of a unilingual Maharashtra. By early 1956, they were to cede control of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement to the opposition parties.

Whilst the JVP Committee of 1948 had endorsed the recommendations of the LPC it had also, under the influence of Pattabhi Sitarammaya, accepted the future prospect of the creation of Andhra Pradesh. During the early 1950s demands for the formation of a Telugu-speaking province became increasingly vocal and insistent, and in October 1952 one advocate of Andhra, Potti Sriramalu, went on hunger strike in a bid to force the central government's hand. With Nehru initially adamant that he would not 'proclaim any decision because somebody is fasting to death', Sriramalu's demise on 15 December was met with three days of rioting and violence across Telugu-speaking areas.[129] On 19 December it was finally proclaimed that a new Telugu-speaking province would be formed – Andhra was formally inaugurated in October 1953. For India's Congress President, Rajendra Prasad,

> 'Sriramulu's death only is a burst-up of something that has been brewing for
> a long time. I am afraid the question will have to be tackled and our hope

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[128] NAI, Reforms Office File 22/5/46-R, 'Sreejut B.S. Hiray', n.d.

[129] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'To C. Rajagopalachari', 7 December 1952, in *SWJN, vol. XX* (1997), p. 237.

that by putting it off, we might make things subside, at any rate for some time, has not been fulfilled … My fear is that the agitation for linguistic provinces will not remain confined now to Andhra but will assume more acute form in other parts of the country also'.[130]

As Prasad's letter to Nehru suggests, the creation of Andhra had two major effects. First, despite Nehru's emphasis upon keeping the 'Andhra issue quite separate and not mix[ing] it up with others', a States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) tasked with looking into the feasibility of reorganising other provincial boundaries was formed in December 1953 under the chairmanship of the Governor of Orissa, Fazal Ali.[131] Second, it became an increasingly common observation amongst proponents of reorganisation that it would be difficult for the central government to ignore the movements if they were 'more active, popular, rhetorically vitriolic, and eventually violent'.[132] The SRC spent the majority of the next two years touring the country, conducting interviews, and receiving written memorandums from interested individuals, organisations and parties. At the same time, the Samyukta Maharashtra movement became increasingly widespread, popular and vocal. In this context, the Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) in Bombay were asked to submit memorandums to the SRC, representing their opinions on the subject of reorganisation.

In the Marathi-speaking regions of Bombay Province, most of the members of the MPCC were agreeable to having the SMP draft a joint memorandum to the SRC on their behalf.[133] The SMP had been formed after an all-party Maharashtra Unification Conference in Bombay in July 1946. It existed as a conglomerate of different political interest groups and parties, who all came together on a common platform to support Samyukta Maharashtra in the context of India's impending independence, and the Constituent Assembly debates on the nature of the new state. The SMP aimed to popularise and politicise what had previously been primarily an elite demand emerging out of the Marathi literary sphere, and

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[130] Rajendra Prasad, 'To Jawaharlal Nehru', 17 December 1952, in *Rajendra Prasad, Correspondence and Select Documents, volume XV*, ed. by Valmiki Choudhary (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Limited, 1991), pp. 146-147.

[131] Nehru, 'To Rajendra Prasad', 17 December 1952, in *SWJN, vol. XX*, p. 254.

[132] Palshikar, 'Breaking Bombay, Making Maharashtra', p. 47.

[133] Four members of the Maharashtra PCC, T.R. Deogirikar, D.M. Gupte, M.D. Joshi and Vyankatrao Pawar, however, did submit a separate memorial under the PCC's name, despite pressure from Shankarrao Deo and other prominent Maharashtrian Congressmen to desist. See, Y.D. Phadke, *Politics and Language* (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1979), p. 86.

was dominated by both Brahman and Maratha Maharashtrian Congressmen such as Shankarrao Deo, Keshavrao Jedhe, B.S. Hiray, Y.B. Chavan and N.V. Gadgil.[134] It also included independent politicians and activists such as P.K. Atre and D.R. Gadgil, as well as representatives of opposition parties such as S.M. Joshi of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and S.A. Dange of the Communist Party of India (CPI).[135]

The SMP's memorandum to the SRC was drafted by the renowned Poona-based economist Professor D.R. Gadgil. As is evident from the quotation with which we started this chapter, the SMP embedded its arguments for the creation of a unilingual province of Maharashtra in the language of democracy, national cohesion and social egalitarianism. The Indian state's constitutional commitments were thus reinterpreted to apply to exigencies arising from a particular provincial context. So, for example, the memorandum suggested that 'the recognition of the importance of regional societies is as helpful to the growth of the sentiment of All-India Unity as the growth of civic consciousness is to the working of national democracy'.[136] The creation of unilingual provinces with common traditions, affinities and social structures would make the achievement of national developmental objectives both quicker and easier. 'True' democracy would only

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[134] The Maharashtrian Brahman Shankarrao Deo, served as the first Secretary of the MPCC in 1920, was General Secretary of the Congress (1946-50), and the President of the SMP; Keshavrao Jedhe was a non-Brahman politician who had joined the Congress during the 1930s and served as the President of the MPCC . He left the party during the early 1950s as a result of what he perceived to be its continued Brahman dominance, and formed the Maharashtrian branch of the Peasants and Workers' Party. He returned to the Congress fold in 1957; B.S. Hiray was a Maratha Congressman who served as leader of the MPCC during the early 1950s and as Minister for Revenue and Agriculture in the Government of Bombay (1952-56); Yaswantrao Chavan was a young Maratha Congressman, who had risen to local prominence during the 1942 Quit India Movement in Satara, served in various ministerships in the Bombay Provincial Government during the early 1950s, and would become Chief Minister of the bilingual Bombay State between 1956-60, and the unilingual Maharashtra State thereafter; The Maharashtrian Brahman N.V. Gadgil had been a prominent figure within the provincial Congress since the late 1920s, and was of a socialist political orientation. He served as the Union Minister for Works, Production and Supply (1947-52).

[135] P.K. Atre was a prominent Maharashtrian Brahman and former teacher based in Bombay. He was well known for his literary works in Marathi; D.R. Gadgil was a renowned Brahman economist working in Pune; S.M. Joshi was a Brahman Congressman jailed in 1930 during the Civil Disobedience movement, and involved in local manifestations of the Congress Socialist Party later on in that decade. After independence he left the Congress and joined the PSP; S.A. Dange was a founding member of the CPI and prominent in Bombay's trade union movements during the interwar period.

[136] SMP, *Reorganization of States in India*, p. 9.

be possible when the state's interactions with local society were conducted in the vernacular, which all citizens would be able to understand – 'even local government areas must be endowed with meaning to their inhabitants and evoke spontaneous loyalty'.[137] Meanwhile, in response to those that claimed demands for reorganisation strained ethno-linguistic relations, the SMP argued that this was 'to reverse the actual causal relation'.[138] Instead it was multilingual provinces that were disparaged for fomenting suspicions of favouritism and impartiality in the allocation of resources. The SMP thus couched its claims to reorganisation in the ideals of the postcolonial state, but reoriented them to apply to their specific line of reasoning in support of a unilingual Maharashtra.

The SRC finally announced its recommendations on reorganisation in October 1955. It noted the efficacy of the linguistic principle, but also 'a growing realisation of the need to balance it with other factors relevant to the reshaping of the political geography of India, such as national unity and administrative, economic and other considerations'.[139] Much of the south and west of the subcontinent was to be reorganised into linguistically 'homogenous' units: new provinces for Kannada-, Malayalam-, and Tamil-speakers were thereby created to complement the Telugu-speaking province of Andhra Pradesh. Marathi-speakers, however, were to be divided. Those residing in Marathi-speaking portions of Madhya Pradesh were organised into a new province called Vidarbha. Meanwhile, Bombay was to be retained as a composite state, minus Kannada-speaking districts in the south, but with the addition of the Gujarati-speaking former princely states of Saurashtra and Kutch in the north. Bombay Province's 'special position' as an example of 'one of the best-administered States of the Indian Union' and 'a great co-operative venture' were cited as contributory factors in this decision.[140]

Amongst the MPCC, all agreed that the report 'showed a feeling of suspicion and distrust against the people of Maharashtra' and 'that the Commission singled out Marathi-speaking people as the only people who should have no linguistic State of

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[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[139] States Reorganization Commission [henceforth SRC], *Report of the SRC, 1955* (Delhi: The Manager, Government of India Press, 1955), pp. 10, 45-46.
[140] SRC, *Report of the SRC*, pp. 112, 116, 120.

their own'.[141] Yet the Maharashtrian Congressmen deviated amongst themselves on the correct methods through which to continue to press the Samyukta Maharashtra demand. During October 1955, representatives of the Bombay, Gujarat and Maharashtra PCCs were to meet with Nehru, the Home Minister G.B. Pant, and the Congress President U.N. Dhebar, in an effort to thrash out an acceptable compromise. Ahead of the talks, Shankarrao Deo promised to 'maintain a firm stand' on Samyukta Maharashtra, emphasising that the Maharashtrian Congressmen were not going to 'get convinced about the need for having a bilingual State of Bombay'.[142] During the course of the meetings Nehru suggested a 'three-state formula', in which the SRC's recommendations for a composite Bombay would be disregarded, and separate provinces of Bombay, Gujarat and Maharashtra constituted instead. He included the option for Bombay City's legislature to, at the end of a five-year period, decide whether to merge with Maharashtra. Yet this plan was still unacceptable to the representatives from Maharashtra as it left open the possibility of their separation from Bombay City.

It was in response to this impasse that Deo contradicted his earlier public statements, now proposing a bigger bilingual Bombay Province including Vidarbha, with Gujarat having the option to secede after five years. This proposal was unacceptable to the BPCC and GPCC. But it also provoked consternation amongst a separate faction represented by T.R. Deogirikar and Y.B. Chavan within the MPCC, who 'were baffled by this unexpected move. Chavan lost his temper and accused Deo of betraying them'.[143] As well as disagreeing on the extent to which the Samyukta Maharashtra demand should be modified, the MPCC also experienced 'serious differences ... on deciding the course of action to be taken against the CHC ... They appeared bewildered, divided, vacillating and unprepared for the coming struggle'.[144] Over the course of the winter of 1955-56, the political leadership of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement thus rapidly shifted from the MPCC to the opposition parties within the province, as local Congressmen from Maharashtra tried to reconcile their allegiances to both the Congress and the SMP.

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[141] AICC Papers, Part II, File G-20(ii) (1955-1956), 'Minutes of the meetings with the representatives of the MPCC, New Delhi', 17-20 October 1955.

[142] 'Reorganisation of States: Maharashtrians' Demand', *The Hindu* (Madras), 17 October 1955.

[143] Phadke, *Politics and Language*, p. 121; D.B. Karnik, *Y.B. Chavan: A Political Biography* (Bombay: United Asia Publications, 1972), pp. 48-49.

[144] Phadke, *Politics and Language*, p. 94.

2.3.3 Reorganisation's Detractors – National 'Unity in Diversity' and 'Minority' Rights

Part of the reasoning behind the successive rejections of the Samyukta Maharashtra demand by the Government of India and the CHC was the potential threat of provincial majoritarianism. The LPC's members, for example, were apprehensive that 'the moment a province is allotted a majority linguistic group ... it begins to regard the area as exclusively belonging to that particular linguistic group, and to treat all persons not belonging to the majority linguistic group as ... outsiders and aliens'.[145] Superior rights and statuses for 'natives' neither accorded with the stress on Indian 'unity in diversity', nor the commitment laid down in Article 19 of the 1950 Constitution that 'All citizens shall have the right ... to move freely throughout ... [and] ... to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India'.[146] In the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province, then, the introduction of democracy was perceived by some as a potential harbinger for a provincial Marathi majoritarianism (thereby ignoring/overcoming, depending upon the individual's perspective, internal antagonisms on the basis of caste, class and sub-region), which could coalesce around the idea of the 'Marathi manus' or Marathi man.[147] In such circumstances, those that felt threatened by plans for unilingual provinces could invoke the goals of national solidarity to buttress their arguments against reorganisation. For the BPCC, for example, the retention of a multilingual Bombay Province would serve as a fine example and experiment in secularism and unity in diversity:

> 'No part of the world has witnessed such unique and close cooperation amongst its residents, drawn from a number of communities and nations, to build it to as pre-eminent a position and prosperity like Bombay in history. Trade, industry and commerce, which contributed to Bombay's prosperity could be described as the outcome of the united efforts of the cosmopolitan population of Bombay, capital, labour, artisans, traders, Gujerathis, Maharashtrians, South Indians [etc] ... '.[148]

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[145] *Report of the LPC*, p. 25.

[146] 'Articles 19(d) and 19(e)', The Constitution of India, pp. 8-9 <http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-indexenglish.htm> [accessed 6 July 2013].

[147] Deshpande, *Creative Pasts*, pp. 195-197.

[148] Bombay Provincial Congress Committee [henceforth BPCC], *Hands Off Bombay: A Plea for National Unity and 'First Things First'* (Bombay: BPCC, 1954), pp. 15-16.

A similar stress on 'national' objectives was evident in the supposed perspectives of both the Bombay Citizens' Committee and the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) in their memorandums on reorganisation presented to the SRC. The Bombay Citizens' Committee, for example, argued that their arguments reflected

> 'the views of responsible leaders of public opinion, who have no provincial or sectarian bias in their approach to the problem ... They have been unanimously of the view that unless the people are infused with the spirit of national consciousness and rise above regional or sectarian interests, it would not be possible to consolidate the forces of national unity, for economic reconstruction, essential for the maintenance of our hard-won freedom'.[149]

However, despite the emphasis upon communal impartiality, national unity and Bombay City's 'cosmopolitanism', these petitions often obscured 'community' interests. All of these organisations, despite presenting themselves as encompassing public opinion from a cross-section of the city's population, were dominated and controlled by Gujarati-speaking political and industrial elites. Statistics on membership of Bombay's various commercial organisations, accumulated in June 1947 in an effort to 'show that Bombay is an all-India city which is not a natural part of any particular province and must therefore be an independent unit in India', actually revealed the primarily Gujarati-speaking interests of these groups.[150] The IMC, for example, out of a total of 1,858 members, was made up of 1,602 Gujarati-speakers, 74 Marathi-speakers, and 10 Kannada-speakers.[151] Likewise the Seed Traders' Association had 252 Gujarati-speaking merchants and brokers, 31 Marwaris, 9 Muslims, and only 1 'Deccani' (probably Marathi-speaking).[152] In a note on the various alternative plans for any potential reorganisation of provinces, contained within the private papers of the

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[149] Bombay Citizens' Committee, *Memorandum Submitted to the States Reorganization Commission by Bombay Citizens' Committee* (Bombay: n.p., 1954), pp. iv-v (Preface); see also, M.L. Dantwala, C.L. Gheewala, and C.N. Vakil, *Future of Bombay – A Rejoinder to B.R. Ambedkar* (Bombay: Bombay Chronicle, 1948); Indian Merchants Chamber [henceforth IMC], Bombay, *Memorandum Submitted by the Committee of the Chamber to the SRC* (Bombay: India Printing Works, 1954), pp. 12-13.

[150] NMML, Purushottamdas Thakurdas Papers, File 383, Part I (1947-1956), 'Strictly Confidential Letter of Purushotamdas Thakurdas to Ratilal M. Gandhi, President, IMC, et al', 29 June 1947.

[151] There were 172 speakers of 'other' languages. See, *Ibid.*, 'The IMC, Bombay, Particulars Re: membership as on 30 June 1947: Classified according to regional denomination', n.d.

[152] *Ibid.*, 'Strictly Confidential Note on Communal Composition of the Seed Traders' Association Ltd', n.d.

prominent Bombay businessman, Purushottamdas Thakurdas, it was asserted that Gujarat and the Gujarati-speaking people were 'closely and inextricably interwoven with the life of the City of Bombay', had made a large 'contribution to the growth and development of Bombay … of a very special and substantial nature', 'and even today in the various spheres of economic activity as also the cultural life of the City Gujarati-speaking people have a vital and important stake'.[153] Gujarati-speakers could thus protect their community's interests by couching their memorandums in the language of national objectives.

Simultaneously, however, it could also serve the interests of Gujarati-speakers residing in Bombay City to present their arguments against reorganisation through the idiom of the extra guarantees and privileges the state was expected to provide for 'minority communities'. This shifted the context of the debates on unilingual provinces away from the Nehruvian national and developmental prerogatives and towards 'community'-based interests and forms of consociationalism instead. Universal forms of individual citizenship were not felt to be protection enough from the superior rights that would be accorded to 'majorities' in democratically-elected provincial administrative arenas. The BPCC, for example, also argued that, 'In a purely linguistic state there is bound to be preference or partiality in the service and other things for those who speak the language of that state and discrimination against others. Naturally this would not be tolerated by linguistic minorities'.[154] The practical application of democracy and universal citizenship was therefore perceived to potentially accord superior rights to communal 'majorities' in ethno-linguistic provinces. In such circumstances, Gujarati-speakers could present themselves as a beleaguered 'minority' threatened by a Maharashtrian majoritarianism and in need of the state's special protection.

This discourse of 'community'-based interests ahead of reorganisation was not the sole preserve of Gujarati-speakers in Bombay, but could also be invoked by other linguistic groups in a similar manner, albeit inverted in an altogether different local context. In the last section we saw how Marathi-speakers in Bombay presented their demands for reorganisation on the basis of local and more effective forms of self-government. But the Marathi-speaking 'minority' of

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[153] *Ibid.*, 'Points on Various Alternative Schemes Likely to be Proposed: Scheme No. II: A', n.d.
[154] BPCC, *Hands Off Bombay*, pp. 27-28.

Karwar District, which would go on to form part of Karnataka, felt sure they were to be overrun by a Kannada majoritarianism if reorganisation went ahead. In a memorandum sent to the Lok Sabha Select Committee tasked with considering the States Reorganisation Bill, they claimed it would,

> 'be nothing short of cultural tragedy for these major Marathi areas of Karwar to be forced into an ethnologically alien Kannada language State, to be compelled to rest content with so-called "minority mercies" and thus be perpetually deprived of all the good things of life which can be theirs by right in Maharashtra, with whom they share their language, culture and traditions'.[155]

Neither was the emphasis upon 'minority' rights ahead of reorganisation limited exclusively to ethno-linguistic communities. Caste, class, religion and sub-region could cut across any homogenous depictions of Maharashtrian interests.[156] In 1948, the renowned Maharashtrian Dalit (the preferred nomenclature of the ex-untouchable/Scheduled Caste 'community') politician B.R. Ambedkar had supported the demand for the creation of Maharashtra in his statement submitted to the LPC. Here, he had invoked the commonalities amongst the Marathi-speaking working classes in Bombay City, which connected them across caste divides and in opposition to the 'vested interests' of Gujarati-speaking industrialists.[157] Simultaneously, he railed against the introduction of group-differentiated rights for Gujarati-speakers within a potential Maharashtra on the basis that 'citizenship will be common throughout India. There is no provincial citizenship. A Gujarathi in Maharashtra will have the same rights of citizenship in Maharashtra as a Maharashtrian will have'.[158]

By 1955, however, Ambedkar had reformulated his commitment to a unilingual Marathi-speaking province and instead reasserted an earlier position in which he

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[155] C.D. Deshmukh Papers, File 68 (January-July 1956), 'Memorandum Submitted to the Members of the Select Committees (S.R. Bill) on behalf of Karwar, Haliyal, Supa – a Tract in which Marathi has been Recognised as a Regional Language by the Bombay Government', 12 May 1956.
[156] Whilst there is not scope to go into detail on all these different perspectives on reorganisation within Maharashtra, these included distinct interests related to the sub-regions of the Konkan, Marathwada and Vidarbha, as well as fears about the potential for Marathas (as the numerically preponderate caste) to dominate the new province emanating from a variety of caste-based groups.
[157] B.R. Ambedkar, *Maharashtra as a Linguistic Province: Statement Submitted to the LPC* (Bombay: Thacker and Company Limited, 1948).
[158] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

expressed his concern over the impact of reorganisation upon 'minorities'.[159] As we shall see momentarily, this had a lot to do with his perception of the potential problems that Dalits were likely to face within Maharashtra at the hands of both Maratha and Brahman dominant interests within provincial society and politics. Whilst Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) joined up with the SMS shortly before his untimely death in 1956 to advocate for the creation of Maharashtra, the party did so primarily to counter the threat of being decimated by the wave of popular support for Samyukta Maharashtra at the forthcoming elections.[160] SCF politicians always remained wary of their fellow coalitionists within the SMS – they perceived the CPI and PSP as being led by Brahmans whose primary focus was upon class rather than caste identities; meanwhile, the Hindu Mahasabha represented the enslaving politics of Hindu nationalism – Ambedkar led a mass Maharashtrian Dalit conversion to Buddhism in one of his final acts before his death.[161]

Shortly after the SRC Report was published, Ambedkar penned his own *Thoughts on Linguistic States*. Within it, he reiterated his commitment to 'a separate Maharashtra, separate from Gujarathis and separate from Hindi speaking people. But [he was] unable to understand why a free Maharashtra should be made into one single State'.[162] Whilst supporting the idea of one language within one province, he suggested that people speaking one language could be grouped in a number of separate administrative arenas. With regards to Marathi-speaking areas, for example, Ambedkar proposed the formation of four new provinces: Bombay City (which he renamed 'Maharashtra city state'); 'Western Maharashtra'; 'Central Maharashtra'; and 'Eastern Maharashtra'.[163] The reasoning

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[159] NMML, U.N. Dhebar Papers, File 4, Part VII, 'Forwarded with the Compliments of the P.M.: Copy of Telegram from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to the P.M.', 20 November 1955; Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Bombay City), 4 April 1938. *BLA Debates*, vol. III (18-34) (March-April 1938), pp. 1722-1723.

[160] Robert W. Stern, *The Process of Opposition in India* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 37; Commenting on the 1957 elections, the Bombay weekly *Blitz* commended the SMS coalition on putting up SC candidates from general rather than reserved seats, something which they suggested the Congress was not even prepared to do. See, 'Bombay Turns a Problem State', *Blitz* (Bombay), 23 March 1957.

[161] Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: Tracts for the Times/8* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1995), p. 51.

[162] B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States* (Delhi: Anand Sahitya Sadan, 1955), p. 27.

[163] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

behind his recommendations was coined in the rhetoric of 'minority' caste-based interests: 'As the area of the State increases the proportion of the minority to the majority decreases and the position of the minority becomes precarious and the opportunities for the majority to practice tyranny over the minority becomes greater. The States must therefore be small'.[164] Smaller provinces would thus serve as a potential safeguard, limiting the ratio of majority to minority castes.

Linguistic reorganisation's detractors thus drew upon a range of rhetorical devices linked to ideas about citizenship rights and statuses to highlight the negative consequences emerging out of the potential formation of a unilingual Maharashtra. Like the proponents of reorganisation considered in the previous sub-section of this chapter, these could be framed in terms of the ideals that the newly independent nation-state was supposed to encompass. This section of the chapter has thus traced a variety of perspectives on citizenship whilst delineating the history of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement up to 1956. It has highlighted how CHC and GOI perspectives on these rights and statuses were shaped by the events of independence and partition, and has looked into how older notions of caste, language and region within Maharashtra were redefined in the context of new constitutional obligations and full democratic representation. It is these larger historical processes which form the backdrop against which the rest of this thesis considers the construction and articulation of citizenship in a number of quotidian state-society interactions.

2.4 Conclusion

In February 1956, the opposition party elements within the SMP broke away to form a new organisation known as the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (SMS). The SMS looked to adopt more direct agitational methods, including strikes, satyagrahas and public rallies, after becoming disillusioned with the slow progress of the petitioning advocated by the MPCC. Whilst the CHC sought to bring closure to the debate on reorganisation after the ratification of the States Reorganization Act on 31 August 1956 (which created a bigger bilingual Bombay Province of Gujarati- and Marathi-speakers), the SMS continued to campaign for the creation of a unilingual Maharashtra in the build-up to the 1957 elections. Whilst Chief

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[164] *Ibid.*, p. 30; see also, pp. 34-35.

Minister Y.B. Chavan retained his seat (touted 'as a "clear verdict" on the issue of the bigger bilingual Bombay State and a "triumph" for the Congress organization and its ideals' by *The Hindustan Times*),[165] Congress came out of the elections with only 33 out of 136 seats in the legislative assembly from Maharashtra.[166] The SMS, meanwhile, won 100 seats. This pattern was repeated in the twelve by-elections between 1957 and 1960, when the Congress won only three seats. The party thus needed to urgently review its decision on bilingual Bombay, or face potentially catastrophic political consequences in Maharashtra.[167] Consequently, by 1 May 1960 Bombay had been bifurcated into the two separate linguistic provinces of Gujarat and Maharashtra (including Bombay City), amidst scenes of great public fanfare and acclaim.[168]

This chapter has looked to analyse the emergence of these notions of regional belonging which culminated in the formation of Maharashtra Province in 1960, as well as the ways in which they were inflected, cross-cut and contested by the politics of caste, class, language, race and nation. It has suggested that there is a longer, pre-colonial history to notions of and contestations over place and belonging in western India, but that these came to be shaped in novel directions by larger historical processes linked to state transformation. During the nineteenth century, under the growing influence of ethnographic race science both in the metropole and the Indian 'laboratory', a number of both British colonial administrators and Indian ideologues were to treat caste, language and region in Maharashtra as embodiments of distinct, reified and 'ethnicised' identities. In the twentieth century, these identities served as the medium through which to articulate ideas about citizenship rights and status, as Maharashtrians became increasingly interested in the forms that self-government and democracy were to take ahead and in the aftermath of independence and partition. This history of a changing and contested sense of region thus serves as the backdrop against which the rest of this thesis looks to analyse the

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[165] 'Triumph for Bilingual Bombay', *The Hindustan Times* (Delhi), 5 March 1937.

[166] Of the 33 seats that the Congress Party won, nearly all of them were located in Vidarbha and Marathwada, where support for the SMS was more ambivalent because of the perceived threat of western Maharashtra's dominance within a unilingual province.

[167] 'Bombay Turns a Problem State', *Blitz* (Bombay), 23 March 1957.

[168] Director of Publicity, Government of Maharashtra, *Maharashtra State is Launched: An Artist's Review of the Events that Marked the Formation of the State April 27-May 1, 1960* (Bombay: Rekha Publications, 1960); 'Maharashtra Resurgent', *Blitz* (Bombay), 23 April 1960.

development of citizenship in the quotidian interactions between the local state and 'everyday' society.

3: Region, Nation, Election: Politics, Government and the Selection of Congress Candidates in Bombay

'I find it difficult to become enthusiastic about large numbers of people whom we are likely to set up as our candidates. Many of them are third-rate from any point of view – Congress, education, intellect, service of any cause or any other record. Then their behaviour in many cases has been little short of scandalous ... The whole thing turns round caste divisions ... I have felt recently as if I was in a den of wild animals. This is the background of our candidates. We can hardly talk of any high principle'.

Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Morarji Desai, 27th October 1951.[1]

Over the course of the winter of 1951-52, India held its first general elections since independence from the British Raj. The introduction of universal adult suffrage and the creation of an electorate of 176 million Indians would see candidates elected to both the all-India Lok Sabha (India's national legislative assembly) and to the various provincial legislatures in the regions. The Indian National Congress, as the premier political organisation in the country, and credited as the major force behind the achievement of independence, was expected to win comfortably. The results supported the predictions. In the Lok Sabha, the first-past-the-post system saw Congress secure 45 per cent of the total votes polled, and gain a huge majority of 364 out of 489 seats. In the provincial assemblies, 42.4 per cent of the vote for the Congress won them 68.6 per cent of the seats, or 2,247 out of the 3,280 available.[2] Yet, despite the standing and prestige of the party, which led to their eventual success, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister and the President and leader of the Congress, remained apprehensive in the build-up to the elections about the quality of the party's nominees. Nehru's letter to Morarji Desai, the Chief Minister of Bombay Province, from which the comment quoted above is taken, hints at a divergence, between Nehruvian thinking at the centre, which believed in the eradication of 'primordial' identities through the consolidation of a plural all-Indian

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[1] New Delhi, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], Morarji Desai Papers, File No. 2 (1952), 'Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Morarji Desai', 27 October 1951.
[2] These statistics have been culled from Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2007), pp. 133, 146.

consciousness based on secularism, democracy and development; and the regional imperatives of electoral politics based around caste and community.

This chapter explores these conflicting approaches in the context of citizenship. It suggests that the centrality of 'community' in how the Congress perceived of and conducted local political practices within Bombay was imperative to the ways in which ideas about membership and rights amongst ordinary civilians in western India came to be mediated, imagined, articulated and enacted during this formative period. But it also demonstrates how recourse to the ostensible Congress principles of secularism and egalitarianism could also be made by these same members of the public when the need arose. The first section of this chapter looks to contextualise these political principles and practices by focusing upon the nature and impact of interwar constitutional reforms introduced by the colonial state. It suggests that the gradual introduction of limited forms of democratic self-government during this period encouraged embryonic ideas about the rights and status of Indian citizens, which were oft articulated through political parties reorganised as quasi-state alternatives. However, the colonial state simultaneously divulged this partial governmental autonomy to the various provinces of British India on the basis of communal representation. This had important implications for the Congress's own mobilisational strategies, which forms the subject of analysis for this chapter's second section. Of critical importance here were the Congress's claims to all-India representativeness. To substantiate these declarations, the Congress had to rely upon local powerbrokers to organise popular support behind its anti-colonial protests and election campaigns. But by doing so overarching Congress principles were mediated and re-contextualised to fit with local concerns and political contingencies – the kind that Nehru deprecated in the quotation cited above.

The third section demonstrates these discrepancies between the principled secular rhetoric of the Congress and its privileging of 'community' in the selection of potential party candidates ahead of the 1937 and 1946 provincial assembly elections in Bombay. But it also begins to highlight the manner in which these discrepancies influenced curiously hybridised notions and performances of citizenship amongst the public, which were re-contextualised to fit with their particular exigencies and concerns. Whilst members of society and local Congressmen suggested that the process of selecting Congress candidates should take account of their representativeness and accountability, this was frequently

mediated through 'community'-based paradigms rather than on an individual basis. The final two sections of this chapter also demonstrate how citizenship was formulated in the contested terrain of Congress candidate selection ahead of the 1951 elections. But by focusing upon notions of rights and status in the context of demands for the linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries the sections also place emphasis upon a concurrent trend that runs throughout the rest of this chapter. Whilst linguistic reorganisation was welcomed by some members of the public as a mechanism through which to guarantee the interests of their particular 'community', for others who mobilised on the basis of their minority 'community' status, reorganisation potentially threatened to diminish their ability to access citizenship's privileges. The chapter therefore also demonstrates that the politics of 'community' were subject to fluctuations dependent upon the particular spatial and temporal location of the individual concerned.

My arguments might in some ways seem to corroborate the arguments of Partha Chatterjee who, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis, has suggested that citizenship developed within a discrete and European-derived bourgeois public sphere. For Chatterjee, although vast swathes of contemporary Indian society participate in their right to vote, this is a product of their treatment by politicians as 'populations' rather than 'citizens', whereby westernised elites have mediated the community-based sentiments of the 'masses' for their own political benefit.[3] This notion of the efficacy of 'community' identities amongst the poor and low in status grew out of one particular early aspect of the highly influential Subaltern Studies literature and the idea of the 'autonomy of peasant insurgency'.[4] However, in doing so, it repeats the widespread assumption of both colonial administrators and nationalist politicians that, 'Political messages to the

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[3] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); see the 'Introduction' to this thesis for more information on this.

[4] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Ranajit Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 1-8 (pp. 3-4); Partha Chatterjee, 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-35', in *Subaltern Studies I,* pp. 9-38; Partha Chatterjee, 'More on Modes of Power and the Peasantry', in *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 311-350.

uneducated … are … most effectively delivered with reference to their "own" ethnic or religious traditions'.[5]

In one sense, Chatterjee's hypotheses are accurate – elite politicians did often seek to manipulate the politics of 'community' for their own more parochial interests, thereby undermining the party's ostensibly secular and egalitarian principles.[6] However, the political treatment of 'community' by elites also begins to weaken Chatterjee's distinction between the particular modalities of politics of an upper-caste, upper-class and English-speaking elite and the rest of society, whereby recourse to the politics of 'community' no longer serves solely as the prerogative of the deprived.[7] Equally, when 'community' was utilised in the interests of electoral allegiance amongst those outside of the bourgeois leadership, it provided members of the Marathi-speaking public with agency in the articulation and practice of their citizenship, allowing them to circumnavigate and contest elite hegemony over its articulation and practice. As the penultimate section of this chapter demonstrates in the context of the 1951 elections, the demand for the creation of a semi-autonomous and unilingual province of Maharashtra serves as one such example – Maharashtrians hoped that state resources would be distributed more effectively and provincial politics would be more representative as a result of reorganisation.[8] This, then, was the protection of particular communities' rights and privileges as citizens, in which their preferred Congress party candidate ahead of elections would exist as 'an extractor of State resources for their constituencies'.[9] As these politicians were also members of local society, who were subject to the same pressures and exigencies

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[5] William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 30.

[6] The manner in which these principles actually served to obscure the more parochial and communal concerns of a national political elite will be considered in more detail in Chapter Six.

[7] Howard Handelman, 'Review: The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World by Partha Chatterjee; Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey by Esra Özyürek', *Perspectives on Politics*, 5 (2007), 382-384 (p. 383); Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance: Colonialism and Democracy in Twentieth-Century India', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 41 (2007), 441-470 (pp. 447-448).

[8] Emma Mawdsley, 'A New Himalayan State in India: Popular Perceptions of Regionalism, Politics, and Development', *Mountain Research and Development*, 19 (1999), 101-112 (p. 101).

[9] Mukulika Banerjee, 'Democracy', *India: The Next Superpower?*, SR010 (2012), 45-49 (p. 47) <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR010/banerjee.pdf> [accessed 6 July 2013].

as the local electorate, they could be subject to the influence of ordinary citizens themselves.

However, preference in the selection of candidates on the basis of 'community' also hints at the ways in which the provincial Congress organisation became a site to be 'captured' by locally dominant factions and groups. This chapter therefore also seeks to refine Chatterjee's perception of the homogenised vernacular-speaking 'masses' by demonstrating their conflicting interests and concerns.[10] By focusing upon the ability of the Maratha caste to assert their dominant and numerically preponderate position in rural Marathi-speaking society through the co-option and colonisation of the local Congress organisation, this chapter highlights the tensions and contestations, rather than any overarching unity, amongst vernacular-speaking society. In fact, it explores how those outside of this dominant caste group frequently appealed to the ostensibly impartial and egalitarian values of the party, by analysing the emphasis upon discourses of public service, merit, corruption, and communalism used in representations and petitions to the higher echelons of the Congress organisation. It was in this intersection between the quotidian political practices of the Congress in selecting and rejecting its candidates as it encountered the vicissitudes and influences of local society, and public perceptions of its supposed overarching morals and values, that a multitude of 'everyday' ideas about citizenship came to be conceptualised.

3.1 Community Classifications in an Era of Political 'Provincialisation'

In order to understand how and why the Congress came to perceive of the centrality of 'community' in their local political practices, as well as its impact upon notions of belonging and rights amongst subjects/citizens in Bombay Province, it is first essential to consider in more detail the political adjustments of the interwar period. In the aftermath of the Great War, the British Government had been forced to concede a greater degree of political power to Indians, both in

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[10] For a critique of this tendency towards homogenisation see, Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 305-306; and, Craig Jeffrey and Jens Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance: Class and State in Uttar Pradesh', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 91-114.

recognition of their contribution to the war effort, and in an attempt to dampen down heightened disaffection caused by high prices and the extension of repressive wartime legislation.[11] The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, or Government of India (GOI) Act of 1919, introduced for the first time the principle of diarchy, or partial provincial self-government. Whilst the most important provincial portfolios of police, justice and finance were 'reserved' in the hands of nominated British officials, for the first time elected Indian politicians were now able to take control of such subjects as agriculture, education, and public works at the provincial level. In Bombay Province, 86 members (or 75 per cent) of the new provincial legislature were to be elected, the remaining 28 members nominated. Approximately 500,000 of the 19 million civilians within Bombay were enfranchised on the basis of the amount of tax they paid.[12]

Further constitutional reforms were enacted under the GOI Act of August 1935, which extended the principle of autonomous provincial power beyond diarchy's limitations to make Indian ministers responsible for all branches of provincial government. Such autonomy was given additional credence by an increase in the province's financial resources. The 1935 Act also significantly extended the Indian franchise, with about thirty million Indians now having the right to vote.[13] Yet despite being couched in the rhetoric of gradual self-government this was no announcement licensing independence, no intended relaxation of British control of the nature and pace of constitutional change. Like the 1919 Act, the British still hoped to divert attention towards opportunities for provincial power and prestige – no control was devolved at the centre. However, although the Acts were limited in the extent of real representation and power they granted to Indians, they did help arouse (as much through anger and disappointment at their checks and constraints) new incentives to rearrange political organisations and bodies as potential quasi-state alternatives.[14] The growing demands for full autonomy and

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[11] John Gallagher and Anil Seal, 'India Between the Wars', *MAS*, 15 (1981), 387-414; John Gallagher, 'Nationalisms and the Crisis of Empire', *MAS*, 15 (1981), 355-368.

[12] Judith Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 205-208; Peter Robb, *The Government of India and Reform: Policies Towards Politics and the Constitution, 1916-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 112-113.

[13] Brown, *Modern India*, pp. 283-288.

[14] Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Sovereigns Beyond the State: On Legality and Authority in Urban India', in *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the*

self-government during the interwar period encouraged the reorganisation and building of political parties as 'national' institutions in anticipation of independence. As a result, they began to serve as sites through which ideas about citizens' statuses and rights could be constructed before 1947. As we shall see later on in this chapter, there has been a large amount of literature that has considered the emergence of a 'Congress system' of political mobilisation that replicated the organisational structure of the state (see sections 3.2 and 3.3). However, almost none of this literature has been framed in terms of citizenship.

Simultaneous to this 'provincialisation' of politics, both GOI Acts also saw the Raj distribute the novel modicums of provincial political power on the basis of communal representation – something Steven Wilkinson has described as a form of 'consociationalism'.[15] Significantly, these drew upon older forms of colonial knowledge based around caste and religious community, through which the state could plug-in to locally significant patterns of dominance and influence and attract 'collaborators' to buttress its own authority.[16] In the writings of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century colonial ethnographers like H.H. Risley and W.W. Hunter, the collection and classification of data on Indian society, and particularly caste, was 'subsumed' within 'theories of biologically determined race essences', where 'political allegiance [was] mapped in the physiognomy of the citizen' as 'a sociological form of fingerprinting'.[17] At one level, the colonial government thus 'equated representation with recognition' – specific ethnic communities were provided with reservations in return for professions of loyalty and allegiance.[18] At another, reservations or separate electorates within the political arena were also

Postcolonial World, ed. by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 169-191.

[15] Steven I. Wilkinson, 'India, Consociational Theory and Ethnic Violence', *Asian Survey*, 40 (2000), 767-791.

[16] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance'.

[17] Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 127; Christopher Pinney, 'Colonial Anthropology in the "Laboratory of Mankind"', in *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, ed. by C.A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990), pp. 252-261 (pp. 257-258).

[18] Farzana Shaikh, *Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 211; William Gould, 'Muslims in India: Secularism and its International Preconditions', in *India in the World since 1947: National and Transnational Perspectives* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 35-59 (pp. 40-41).

often represented as a necessity for the state to protect beleaguered, backward and minority 'community' interests. In this setting, loyalism frequently came to be constructed around the opportunities for democratisation, social mobility and justice that the British liberal 'civilising mission' had ostensibly promised to provide.

However, being by nature subject to practical exigencies on the part of the colonial state, whilst it remained often ignorant of the competition and differences likely to surface within these homogeneously-defined community groupings, the basis of communal representation was also highly liable to fluctuations across time and space. So whilst Muslims were provided with separate electorates across all of British India, continuing the precedent set by the 1909 Morley-Minto Reforms and the 1916 Lucknow Pact, these forms of religious representation were likely to have much more political purchase in provinces across north India with large Muslim populations than in the peninsula provinces of Bombay and Madras. Of seemingly greater significance in Bombay were the seats reserved within the general (or 'Non-Muhammadan') constituency for 'Marathas and Allied Castes' in 1919. The Award of Sir John Heaton, a former judge in the Bombay High Court, had accepted the necessity of allotting to the Marathas seven reserved seats within the Bombay Legislative Council (BLC) as 'a device or abnormality' on the basis of their 'ignorance ... , their want of power of cooperation and their susceptibility to outside influence'.[19] Representatives of the newly-formed and Maratha-dominated Non-Brahman Party, established to demand and exploit these structures of separate representation in Bombay, also championed their interests on the basis of the Marathas' loyal service during the Great War, and their backwardness and weakness in the face of local Brahman socio-political ascendancy.[20] However, in an era of expanding electoral

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[19] Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Reforms Office File 142 I, 'Sir John Heaton's Award', 28 April 1920.

[20] The Maharaja of Kolhapur, for example, compared the military service of the Marathas in the Great War favourably to the Muslims, who had received separate electorates. He also described 'five great monsters' who did 'much damage' to rural agricultural society – the Kulkarni (village record-keeper); the Brahman Sawkar (moneylender); the school master; the Brahman civil servant; and the village priest. See, New Delhi, NAI, Government of India [henceforth GOI], Reforms Office File 130-148 B (June 1920), 'Private. Note by His Highness the Maharaja of Kolhapur on the Necessity of Separate Communal Electorates for the Mahrattas, etc., for Electing Members to the New Councils under the Reforms Scheme', n.d.

democracy, reservations gave the Marathas, as the renowned Dalit (traditionally 'untouchable', or in the language of the state, 'Scheduled Caste') politician Dr. B.R. Ambedkar explained, a double advantage:

> 'They will thus have an assured chance in these areas (where they have seats reserved) and an equally certain prospect of returning their representatives in other areas where seats are not proposed to be reserved for them but where, owing to their numerical strength they will be in a position to win'.[21]

The term 'Maratha' had always had a rather ambiguous meaning, and had been applied to identify both particular and more broadly-based social groups in a variety of different contexts. During the late nineteenth century, 'the caste-based register of "Maratha"', as it 'was shaped through a complex, interactive process both by colonial policies of classification and representation, as well as Maharashtrian attempts to engage with new vocabularies of identity', had come to contest alternative notions which linked the term to the entire Marathi-speaking 'polity' or 'nation'.[22] These conflicting interpretations and status claims continued to condition 'the confusion among colonial ethnographers about the exact nature of "Maratha"' into the inter-war period.[23] This classificatory uncertainty coincided with a notable demographic increase in the number of Marathi-speakers stating their caste as 'Maratha' at the decennial all-India census. According to the 1901 census, 2.3 million persons residing in the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province (excluding Bombay City) returned themselves as Marathas (a grouping which had been subdivided into Maratha 'Proper', Maratha 'Kunbi' and Maratha 'Konkani'), whilst 987,722 returned themselves as Kunbis.[24] However, by the 1931 Census, of the 5.8 million 'Mahrattas and Kunbis' residing in

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[21] B.R. Ambedkar, quoted in NAI, Reforms Office File 5-36 F, 'Written Stattement containing the representation to the Indian Delimitation Committee with reference to the final proposals of the Bombay Provincial Delimitation Committee and of the Government submitted through the Chief Secretary to the Government, Political and Reforms Department, by Mr. A.N. Surve, Member of Legislative Council [henceforth MLC]', n.d.

[22] Prachi Deshpande, 'Caste as Maratha: Social Categories, Colonial Policy and Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Maharashtra', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* [henceforth *IESHR*], 41 (2004), 7-34 (pp. 8, 23); See also the discussion of the interpretations of Maratha history by M.G. Ranade and Jotirao Phule in the previous chapter.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[24] Collated from, 'Table XIII: Caste, Tribe, Race or Nationality', in *Census of India 1901: Volume IX-B, pt. III: Bombay: Provincial Tables*, ed. by R.E. Enthoven (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1902), pp. 168-243.

the entire Bombay Presidency (including the Bombay States and Agencies), 4.2 million returned themselves as Marathas, whilst 833,542 declared themselves to be Kunbis. Between 40 and 50 per cent of the entire population in the Maharashtra area of the province had now come to use the term 'Maratha' to identify themselves.[25]

On one level, this was undoubtedly about the possibilities of representation in the legislative assembly through access to reserved seats. In January 1920 the GOI received letters from representatives of both the Yadav Gavlis and Ramoshis, who petitioned for their inclusion on the list of 'Marathas and Allied Castes' for franchise purposes. Both looked to quote back to the Raj supporting evidence about their ethnic background, drawn from imperial gazetteers and census reports, whilst also invoking histories of loyalty and martial service towards the British Government and Crown during the Great War.[26] Nonetheless, there was nothing fixed about these strategies and communal groupings – 'Allied Caste' political organisations quickly began to claim that they were unable to benefit from the reforms because of Maratha dominance *within* this caste-based category. Of the 21 reserved seats contested in elections to the BLC in 1920, 1923 and 1926, 18 were won by Marathas and only 2 by 'Allied Castes'.[27] It was against this background of Maratha dominance of the reservations that an Allied Castes Conference held in Poona in November 1932 petitioned the state for a further seven separate seats to be reserved for the 'Allied Castes' alone.[28] For A.N. Surve, who chaired the Conference, the Marathas' demographic preponderance in

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[25] The other 800,000-odd 'Mahrattas and Kunbis' returned themselves as either 'Leva Kunbis of Khandesh' (87,050); 'Mahratta-Kunbis' (545,766); or 'Tirole Kunbis of Khandesh' (108,091). See, 'Imperial Table XVII: Caste, Tribe, Race or Nationality', in *Census of India 1931: Volume VIII, pt. II: Bombay Presidency: Statistical Tables*, ed. by A.H. Dracup and H.T. Sorley (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1933), pp. 412-443; H.T. Sorley, *Census of India 1931: Volume IX: The Cities of Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1933), pp. 39-40.

[26] NAI, Reforms Office File 4-8, 'Letter from R.V. Khedkar and others, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Political Department', 21 January 1920; *Ibid.*, 'Letter from Anaji Kushaba Chavan Mokashi and others, to the Honourable Sir William Sinclair Marris, Reform Commissioner, Secretariat, Delhi', 29 January 1920.

[27] One seat became a general seat 'because no Maratha candidate came forward'. See, NAI, Reforms Office File 5-36 F, 'Written Statement to the Indian Delimitation Committee by Mr. A.N. Surve, Member of Legislative Council [henceforth MLC]'.

[28] MSA, Reforms Office File 142 II, 'Resolutions passed by Allied Castes' Conference, Bombay Presidency, in second session held at Poona', 20 November 1932.

Maharashtra was nothing but a 'false picture presented by combining together the total population of the Kunbi caste (which is one of the Allied Castes) and the Maratha caste'.[29] Demands about weightage in the legislative assemblies were thus related to the political circumstances of the locality, and could serve the interests of particular, regionally located communities. This, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter, had important repercussions upon the mobilisational strategies employed by local Congressmen, as allegiances shifted towards the party and it began to replicate colonial governmental customs.

It is clear that the Non-Brahman Party's efforts to promote non-Brahman representation in the BLC mainly worked in the interests of Maratha urban and landed elites.[30] This is not to suggest, however, that poorer non-Brahmans were disinterested in forms of community identity assertion. In the 1920s the Jotirao Phule-inspired Satyashodhak Samaj continued to invoke the degradations of the *bahujan samaj* at the hands of Brahmans during its tours of the Maharashtrian countryside through popular performative forms.[31] The Samaj also provided the Non-Brahman Party's 'ideological definition', as it was forced at crucial moments to respond 'to pressure from below'.[32] Party policy came to include favourable measures geared towards peasant and tenant interests, the extension of education and social reform, and a broad commitment towards 'democratisation' by opening up administrative and educational posts for lower castes.[33] In Bombay City, meanwhile, 'the mechanisms of the labour market encouraged workers to develop and maintain their village and neighbourhood connections, upon whose strength they drew to resist more effectively the demands and defy the pressures of their employers'.[34] These associations could often develop along the lines of

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[29] GOI, Reforms Office File 5/36-F, 'Letter from A.N. Surve to the Reforms Commissioner to the Government of India', 20 December 1935.

[30] Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: the Non-Brahman Movement in Western India, 1873 to 1930* (Bombay: Scientific Socialist Education Trust, 1976), p. 177; M.S. Gore, *Non-Bramhan Movement in Maharashtra* (New Delhi: Segment Book Distributors, 1989), pp. 58-59.

[31] The Satyashodhak Samaj was considered in much greater detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.

[32] Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*, p. 177. See also, pp. 193-198.

[33] See, for example, MSA, GOB, Educational Department File LC-824/F, 'Letter from M. Hesketh, Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Presidency, to the Secretary to the Government, Educational Department, "Council Question No. 2 put by Mr. Shankarrao Jayramrao regarding steps taken to increase the number of Non-Brahmin Teachers"', 17 December 1924.

[34] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge

caste and community – it helped that elements of the Marathi-speaking population were often concentrated in particular *mohallas* (neighbourhoods) within the city. Marathas were also recruited in large numbers to the Indian Army, albeit with careful restrictions on who 'may endeavour to pass themselves off as such'.[35] As late as the Second World War, military employers were noting that, 'Mahratta recruiting has suddenly taken a new lease of life and has rocketted [*sic*] and everything of Mahratta is bumper full and still they are coming in'.[36] For Donald Attwood the

> ' ... broadening and unification of the Marathas came about not so much from a conscious elite strategy but as a result of factors over which individual leaders had little control. These factors included the historical flexibility of caste boundaries, the competitiveness of Maratha alliances, and the mobility of the Maratha leadership – combined with the new demands and opportunities posed by mass politics under late colonial rule'.[37]

The politics of 'community' was thus important to a range of variable and fluctuating concerns, not only linked to the interests of elites seeking representation in the BLC. Of course, practising forms of political representation through the paradigm of 'community' also drew upon older histories of local societal contestations, circumstances and concerns, which were outlined at length in Chapter Two of this thesis. However, these longer antecedents underwent a process of reinvigoration and transformation during the interwar period, in the context of new opportunities for increased indigenous political influence as a result of the transfer of (albeit gradual and limited) power. With the 'provincialisation' of politics and the reconstitution of political parties as quasi-state institutions, 'community' now became vested with a new political importance, as a site through which the public's membership and rights as

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University Press, 1994), pp. 397-398; see also, Chitra Joshi, 'Bonds of Community, Ties of Religion: Kanpur Textile Workers in the Early Twentieth Century', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* [henceforth *IESHR*], 22 (1985), 251-280.

[35] Major Robert Mitchell Betham, *Recruiting Handbooks for the Indian Army: Marathas and Dekhani Musalmans* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1908), p. 150.

[36] London, India Office Library [henceforth IOL], Lumley Collection, MSS.Eur.F.253/45, ''Letter from K. Franks, Office of the Assistant Director of Recruiting, Southern Area, Poona, to Roger Lumley', 25 August 1943.

[37] Donald Attwood, *Raising Cane: The Political Economy of Sugar in Western India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 213; See also, Thomas Blom Hansen, *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 35-36.

potential citizens could be evoked and contested. It was this combined context of the implications of the greater devolution of political power to Indians by the Raj, and the distribution of this power through forms of communal mobilisation and reservation, which was so significant in shaping how the Congress conducted its quotidian attempts to appear fully representative of Indian society in changeable local circumstances.

3.2 The 'Congress System' in Bombay before Independence

In the aftermath of the 1919 GOI Act the Congress passed a new constitution at its December 1920 Nagpur session, whereby the party came to be reorganised along analogous lines to the structure of the colonial state. A new and more compact Congress Working Committee (CWC) was to act as the central executive in preference to the unwieldy All-India Congress Committee (AICC), where disparate regional interests had hindered decision-making in the past. The Congress's institutional composition also came to be restructured around the provinces, thereby reflecting the recently 'provincialised' nature of the colonial administration. In a relatively new departure, however, Provincial (or Pradesh) Congress Committees (PCCs) were now organised primarily on the basis of language. This had a varied impact across the different parts of the subcontinent. In Bengal, the new Bengali vernacular PCC mapped onto the colonial administration's comparatively homogeneous linguistic boundaries relatively effortlessly, not least because the Bengal Presidency had been reconstituted into the separate provinces of Assam, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa in 1912. In Bombay, however, this meant the creation of four new distinct PCCs within the one province: the Gujarat PCC in the primarily Gujarati-speaking north of the province (the GPCC); the Maharashtra PCC in the principally Marathi-speaking central districts (the MPCC); the Karnataka PCC in the chiefly Kannada-speaking south (the KPCC); and the 'cosmopolitan' and linguistically diverse Bombay City PCC (the BPCC).[38] This divergence in provincial demarcation between the state

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[38] A Sindh PCC was also formed to represent Sindhi-speaking areas within Bombay Province. However, as Sindh always had a rather ambivalent and contentious administrative relationship with the rest of Bombay Province, was territorially detached on account of the vast swathe of princely states of Saurashtra and Kutch that existed between it and other parts of the Province, and was to separate from Bombay and form its own Sindh Province in 1935 before becoming part of Pakistan in 1947, I have not explicitly referred to it here.

and the Congress had important consequences for ideas about citizenship in Bombay, as we will consider in the later sections of this chapter.

The new PCCs were to serve as the parent authorities of more local representations of the party, which was now theoretically supposed to have infiltrated society to the *taluka*, or sub-district, level. At the heart of these changes were efforts to expand the Congress's representativeness to the nation as a whole in an era of increased electoral democracy and anti-colonial mobilisation. By reconfiguring its provincial organisation on the basis of vernacular languages, the Congress thus hoped to broaden its support base beyond an English-speaking and Western-educated elite.[39] For similar reasons, the Congress membership fee was reduced to the relatively paltry sum of two *annas*. Across the subcontinent the organisational reforms signified a shift in Congress politics away from the maritime presidency cities (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras) and towards the vernacular-speaking interiors of places like Bihar, Punjab and UP. These changes were also paralleled by similar transformations within Bombay Province. In 1921, 12 of the 20 members who represented Bombay at the AICC annual meeting were residents of Bombay City; however, the following year there were only seven Bombay urbanites out of the 50 AICC members drawn from the province's various PCCs.[40] Rather than reflecting a relatively homogenised social elite (which, although drawn from various cities across the subcontinent, generally shared amongst themselves a common history of western instruction, the English language, and urban and high-caste norms and values), the reforms thus demonstrably broadened the party's social heterogeneity.

In Bombay, the interwar period heralded a shift within Congress politics away from the longstanding influence of urban Maharashtrian Brahmans, based in Bombay City and Poona and embodied by the 'radical' leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), and towards a broad vani-vakil-patidar Gujarati alliance, whose various constituent elements supported Gandhi and his programme of non-cooperation with the Raj on the basis of shared background, motivations, values and sentiments.[41] Increasingly sidelined within an expanding

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[39] Gopal Krishna, 'The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organization, 1918-1923', *Journal of Asian Studies* [henceforth *JAS*], 25 (1966), 413-430 (pp. 415-416).

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 423.

[41] These categories are revealing of the broad spectrum of Gujarati opinion which supported Gandhian Congress politics: 'vanis' as merchants and traders; 'vakils' as

Congress nationalist movement, some of Maharashtra's Brahmans, especially Chitpavans, diverted their attention to parties with more viable opportunities to maintain high-caste control over sites of political authority and cultural production. The Democratic Swaraj Party (DSP), whose prominent politicians included such Tilakite Chitpavans as N.C. Kelkar and L.B. Bhopatkar, advocated the social status quo and recommended working the GOI reforms throughout the 1920s and 1930s, in contrast to Gandhian resistance. However, many of their representatives retained their Congress membership and worked towards social conservatism and religious nationalism within the anti-colonial movement at the same time. Ahead of the 1937 provincial elections, for example, Bhopatkar was to describe Congress policy towards peasants' and workers' rights as an example of the '"insidious inroads of Communism", a menace "not only to the political peace, social stability and domestic happiness but also a sure means of destroying Congress politics built up during the last fifty years and of promoting class hatred and internecine feuds"'.[42] Bhopatkar and others were to put up a number of DSP candidates to oppose official Congress nominees at these elections, an act which led to their being disciplined by the Congress Parliamentary Board in Maharashtra.[43]

Other Brahmans found more amenable homes in the ideology of Hindutva, in which the future Indian nation-state would be linked to Hindu majoritarian rule presided over by upper-caste ideologues. V.D. Savarkar, Hindutva's chief progenitor, was a Chitpavan Brahman who served as President of the Hindu Mahasabha (1937-43), whilst the newly-formed Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) brought two other Chitpavans to political prominence: its founder K.B. Hedgewar, and its major ideologue, M.S. Golwalkar.[44] However, other prominent Brahman politicians, such as the Gandhian Shankarrao Deo and the socialist N.V. Gadgil, remained with the Congress and were supportive of particular elements of its new principles and beliefs.

lawyers and advocates; 'patidars' as peasant cultivators and proprietors. See, David Hardiman, *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917-1934* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981).

[42] 'Congress Settlements', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 2 November 1936.

[43] 'Congress Threat Answered: Poona Democratic Leader's Attack', *Times of India* (Bombay), 19 January 1937.

[44] W.K. Anderson and S. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The RSS and Hindu Revivalism* (New Delhi: Vistaar, 1987), ch. 1; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 14-17.

Amongst non-Brahmans in Maharashtra, the reception accorded to the Gandhian Congress was equally ambivalent. For much of the 1920s many non-Brahmans in Maharashtra continued to equate the Congress with Brahman hegemony and expressed their allegiances towards the Raj instead. In April 1921, for example, meetings held at Satara in support of Non-Cooperation 'were said to be total failures, as the lecturer was boldly met by the Satya Shodak Samaj enthusiasts. They heckled him rather severely, chiefly on social questions and the meeting ended with cheers for the King Emperor'.[45] Even as late as August 1937, at least one non-Brahman correspondent to the Bombay Sentinel was associating the 'Puppet Bania Gandhi and Puppet Congress' with Brahmanic supremacy in religion, society and politics.[46] However, simply because Gandhi, as Gail Omvedt has noted, 'was outside the Maharashtrian conflict and because the Maharashtrian extremist leaders scorned him so, non-Brahmans in the region could [also] see him as an ally'.[47] This contrasted notably with non-Brahman responses to Gandhi in Madras, where he was originally introduced on a predominantly Brahman platform and linked to the Tamil Brahman politician C. Rajagopalachari.[48] In March 1928 the first conference of the Nationalist Non-Brahman League was held at Nasik, which permitted its members to also be affiliated with the Congress. The *Bombay Chronicle* reported that

> '[t]he restrictive regulations of the old Non-Brahmin movement governing the admission of members ha[ve] been entirely done away with in order to facilitate the entry of as many members as possible subject to their adoption of the creed of the Conference which is the attainment of the full responsible government under the aegis of the British Empire by all peaceful methods'.[49]

Non-Brahman political interests thus slowly began to shift towards the Congress. By 1930 one of the most prominent Maharashtrian non-Brahman politicians, Keshavrao Jedhe, was participating in and propagating for Civil Disobedience

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[45] MSA, GOB, Home (Special) Department File 363-5 (1928), 'Satya Shodak Samaj: Summary of note-worthy events connected with the movement (as gathered from the Secret Abstracts) from 1910', Satara, April 1921.

[46] 'Open Letter to Hon. Kher and His Allies: From "A Non-Brahmin"', *Bombay Sentinel* (Bombay), 28 August 1937.

[47] Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society*, pp. 244-245.

[48] Eugene Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1969), p. 339.

[49] 'Non-Brahmin Conference: New Life and Wider Outlook: Rallying Round at Nasik', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 13 March 1928.

alongside the left-wing Brahman Congressman N.V. Gadgil.[50] And by 1938 the integration of non-Brahmans within the party was seemingly complete, as Jedhe was appointed the new President of the MPCC, replacing the Brahman Gandhian politician Shankarrao Deo. In most conventional accounts of the non-Brahman movement, the Congress is thus seen to have overcome its association with 'Brahman Raj' amongst non-Brahmans in Maharashtra by introducing constitutional reforms that broadened its support base and (particularly amongst left-leaning elements within the Congress Party, such as the Congress Socialists) by championing welfare reform.[51] This was a position also given contemporary accord by the Congress itself, who contrasted their ameliorative policies with the Non-Brahman Party's record whilst in office. For example, ahead of the 1937 provincial elections Jedhe and N.V. Gadgil gave a public meeting at Kopargaon in Ahmednagar District, where

> 'The grievances of the agriculturalists were dwelt on and the audience was informed that [the Non-Brahman Party politicians] Diwan Bahadur Kambli, Rao Bahadur Navle and Mr. Jadhav had done nothing for the agriculturalists and that the Village Improvement propaganda was only an attempt on the part of the Government to mislead the people'.[52]

These historical studies thus finish their accounts of the non-Brahman movement either before or at this moment during the 1930s, giving the impression that the particularities of non-Brahmanism were subsumed and overcome by their burgeoning sense of 'Indianness' within the nationalist movement. However, the absorption of many Maharashtrian non-Brahmans within the Congress was never a straightforward process. In fact, in 1948 Jedhe was to briefly leave the Congress, angered by the slow pace of welfare reform and the continuing dominance of Brahmans within the organisation. He became one of the founding members of the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), only to rejoin the Congress in 1952. And this episode also coincided with violence directed against Brahmans in many parts of Maharashtra in reaction to Gandhi's assassination by N.V. Godse, a Maharashtrian Chitpavan Brahman with links to the RSS.[53] By focusing upon how

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[50] Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt*, p. 246.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247; Gore, *Non-Bramhan Movement*, pp. 67-70.

[52] MSA, Home (Special) Department File 800-106 (1936), 'Extract from the Weekly Confidential Report of the District Magistrate, Ahmednagar', 26 June 1936.

[53] Maureen Patterson, 'The Shifting Fortunes of the Chitpavan Brahmins: Focus on 1948', in *City, Countryside, and Society in Maharashtra*, ed. by D.W. Attwood, Milton Israel, and N.K. Wagle (Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre of South Asian Studies, 1988), pp. 35-58.

Congress candidates could be selected on the basis of their 'community' ahead of elections, the rest of this chapter traces the continuing efficacy of group-based forms of representation even after non-Brahmans had been subsumed within the anti-colonial nationalist movement.

Although the electorate remained highly circumscribed, and at certain moments (1920-2; 1930-4; 1939-45) during this period the Congress refused to cooperate with the political structures of colonial rule, party politicians still needed to mobilise public support behind its anti-colonial campaigns of Gandhian civil disobedience as 'the most visible and unquestionable evidence of the fact that the masses had transferred their allegiance from the Raj to the nationalist leadership and its party'.[54] Indeed, at certain moments 'alliances made and constituencies fashioned by politicians working within the legislatures and municipalities could sometimes be pressed into service during movements of protest'.[55] This was the embryonic beginnings of a 'Congress system', which provided the context for an era of 'one-party dominance' in the first two decades after independence.[56] Anthropologists working in India in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Anthony Carter, Mary Carras and David Rosenthal in Maharashtra, have suggested that this 'system' was reliant upon local political link men, who would mobilise voters around various client and patronage networks.[57] Since the Congress was to become so politically dominant during this period, these different factions within it were often apt to perform like opposition parties. This was also a swiftly changing inner-party arena, constantly in the process of modification: 'Since state politics is highly competitive and non-ideological, patronage alliances sometimes changed with bewildering rapidity, tending to crystallise during important

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[54] Ranajit Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', in *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 69-120 (pp. 70-71).

[55] Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism*, pp. 413-414.

[56] Rajni Kothari, 'The Congress "System" in India', *Asian Survey*, 4 (1964), 1161-1173; Paul R. Brass, 'Factionalism and the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh', *Asian Survey*, 4 (1964), 1037-1047.

[57] Anthony T. Carter, *Elite Politics in Rural India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Mary C. Carras, *The Dynamics of Indian Political Factions: A Study of District Councils in the State of Maharashtra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Donald B. Rosenthal, *The Expansive Elite: District Politics and State Policy-Making in India* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977).

elections and then shifting as competitors adjust to the results of one election and prepare for the next'.[58]

Despite the fact that this 'Congress system' was in its initial phases of development before independence, the mobilisation of society around local factional networks in an ever-changing political arena had important implications for forms of representation in India. Rearranged to replicate the organisational structures of the Raj, the Congress, like the colonial state, came to rely upon local powerbrokers to represent its authority at the quotidian level and thereby inherited older colonial habits and customs of governance.[59] Where the Congress's anti-colonial campaigns of Non-Cooperation (1920-2) and Civil Disobedience (1930-4) were at their most successful, for example, they had often coalesced with pre-existing and particularised socio-economic grievances.[60] Much of the Congress's lofty nationalist rhetoric looked to emphasise the ultimate unity of purpose, identity and culture amongst Indians, and sought to downplay differences demarcated on the basis of class, caste, religious and linguistic 'community'. But in these localised practices, the overarching principles, objectives and symbols employed by the nationalist elite were frequently contorted into something unrecognisable by interactions between local Congressmen and quotidian society.[61] Like the everyday structures of dominance and influence that had bolstered the authority of the Raj, allegiances towards the Congress thus came to be frequently mediated through the idiom of 'community'.

Needing to newly speak and appeal to a variety of social groups, the employment of 'community' in the Congress's political practices also came to be increasingly inflected by particular circumstances and local contingencies. This meant that as the Congress became an increasingly accessible institution for a whole range of political actors and ideologies its practices varied from one governmental arena to the next. Although the division of political life along the lines of religious community emerged across the entire subcontinent, it was primarily in the Indo-Gangetic plains of the north that many of the Congress's 'agents continued to

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[58] Attwood, *Raising Cane*, p. 209.

[59] Chandavarkar, 'Customs of Governance', p. 448.

[60] Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Judith Brown, *Gandhi and Civil Disobedience: The Mahatma in Indian Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[61] Shahid Amin, 'Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921-2', in *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 1-61.

identify with forms of "Hindu" politics and ideas of the "Hindu" nation, with ultimately serious repercussions for independence and partition.[62] In the context of social conditions in Bombay and other parts of peninsula India, however, local Congressmen were more frequently drawn towards utilising caste and, increasingly, language, as the key criteria for mobilising Indian society behind the nationalist movement. The shift in the loyalties of many non-Brahmans from the colonial state towards the Congress during the interwar period therefore presaged a sharpened sense of the importance of caste in the quotidian interactions between the organisation and Maharashtrian society. As Susan Bayly has noted, 'Constitutional politics developed in India against a background of debates and power struggles in which both Indians and Britons treated caste as a natural unit of electoral allegiance'.[63] And as this chapter explores in greater detail in the next section, these political practices in Bombay therefore had their own divergent implications upon citizenship in India, as expressed through forms of identity, belonging and rights.

3.3 The 1937 and 1946 Elections in Bombay: Citizenship at the Nexus of Congress Ideology and Practice

In early 1937, elections were held to decide the composition of the legislative assemblies and governments in the eleven provinces of British India. The Indian National Congress achieved clear electoral majorities in five provinces – Bihar, Central Provinces (CP), Madras, Orissa and United Provinces (UP) – and was only defeated by other political parties who received a higher amount of votes from the electorate in three provinces – Bengal, Punjab and Sindh. Additionally, in Assam and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) the Congress emerged as the single most popular party and was to enter into coalitions with other minor political partners so as to form provincial governments.[64] Likewise in the new Bombay Legislative Assembly (BLA) the Congress emerged as the province's largest party, falling just short of obtaining half of the total seats (86 out of 175

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[62] William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1; see also, Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[63] S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, p. 234.

[64] The Congress also participated as a minority partner within a coalition government in Sindh.

seats). After convincing a couple of independent MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) to sign the Congress pledge in March of that year, the party was also to go on to form a majority provincial government in Bombay.[65]

After the passage of the 1935 GOI Act, the 1937 elections represented the first opportunity for elected Indian politicians to hold office within an autonomous and, importantly, a fully responsible provincial administration. The electorate was now 'five times larger than the electorate for the old Provincial Legislative Councils of the 1919 GOI Act and the new Assemblies had direct control over the entire executive government of the provinces'.[66] In Bombay, this was reflected in an extension of the voting public to 17.1 per cent of the provincial population from the minuscule 2.6 per cent previously granted suffrage in 1919.[67] Obviously, this was still an extremely limited proportion of Indian society able to flex their newly-found rights to electoral participation and political representation. Yet the efforts of the Congress to acquire popular legitimacy and act in the name of the Indian people as an entirety (as discussed in the previous section of this chapter) ahead of these elections also had important implications for anticipatory ideas about citizenship in an independent India amongst the public at large, even though they were still predominantly excluded from the vote. Reflecting on the party's successes at the elections a decade later in *The Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been President of the Congress at the time, suggested that,

> 'My approach to these elections, and to some extent the approach of most Congressmen, was different from the usual one. I did not trouble myself about the individual candidates, but wanted rather to create a country-wide atmosphere in favour of our national movement for freedom as represented by the Congress, and for the programme contained in our election manifesto ... We wanted no false votes, no votes for particular persons because they liked them'.[68]

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[65] 'Premiership of Bombay: Gujerat's Claim: Congress Secure Majority: Bid for Independents' Support', *Times of India* (Bombay), 6 March 1937; MSA, Home (Special) Department File 800 (106) D-3 (1937), 'Extract from the Bombay Secret Abstract for the Week Ending 6 March 1939: Politics – Elections to the Bombay Legislatures'.
[66] B.R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj, 1929-1942: The Penultimate Phase* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 70.
[67] NAI, Reforms Office File 102/32, 'Note on Franchise Committee Proposals', n.d.
[68] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004 [1946]), pp. 59-60.

At least ostensibly, then, the focus of the party's election campaign was to be upon a vote for a united anti-colonial nationalist movement. Whereas the colonial government was perceived to act in its own interests, the Congress presented itself as accountable to its currently subordinated citizens.[69] It was only through the achievement of independence, advocated Nehru, that substantive social inequalities could be addressed by a welfare-oriented and development-driven national state. In a speech delivered to a meeting at Satara ahead of the elections, Nehru proclaimed that 'To solve our problems the whole system – not merely a handful of men who governed us to-day – should be replaced ... Not until they had overthrown these burdens and captured power could the problems of poverty, unemployment and slavery be solved'.[70] Similar premises permeated the electoral rhetoric of regional Congress leaders. In a meeting held at Dhond in Poona District in January 1937, Keshavrao Jedhe

> 'explained the Congress programme and remarked that the Britishers were ruling over India for their own benefit regardless of the peasants who were the real masters of the Country. [N.V.] Gadgil said that the Government was dependent upon the peasants and it was their right to replace it by another if it was not functioning properly'.[71]

In the same speech at Satara, Nehru also disparaged those parties that formulated their policies around the protection of particular 'community' interests. By doing so, he claimed, they were deviating from 'the real issue, namely poverty, unemployment and freedom'. Instead Nehru pronounced that 'poverty attacked all without distinction of religion, race or class. It took all by the throat. Therefore there could not be any communal solution but only a national solution to our problems'.[72] Within the Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay Province, for example, the Non-Brahman Party was depicted by Congressmen as an elitist organisation focused upon the rewards and resources of office. In January 1937, Vallabhbhai Patel conducted a whirlwind tour of Maharashtra ahead of the elections, in which he visited four districts and addressed thirty meetings over the course of six days. According to the *Bombay Chronicle* correspondent who accompanied Patel on this tour, one particular subset of his speeches focused on

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[69] Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* (London: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 98.

[70] 'Poverty Recognises No Caste or Creed: Congress President's Triumphal Tour in Maharashtra', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 16 February 1937.

[71] MSA, Home (Special) Department File 800-106 D-3 (1937), 'Extract from the Political Department, Secret Abstract', 30 January 1937.

[72] 'Poverty Recognises No Caste or Creed', *Bombay Chronicle*.

the Non-Brahman Party, 'which tried to approach the peasantry and say that they would fight for their cause in the legislatures'. According to Patil, 'These very people had been in the legislatures in the past and everyone should have known by now that they did pretty little for the peasantry. On the contrary they hampered the progress of the country towards its cherished Goal'.[73] The politics of 'community' was therefore officially rejected by the Congress in its electioneering idiom as holding no meaning for low status groups within Indian society. Rather, emphasis was placed upon highlighting the public's ultimate unity of purpose under the anti-colonial nationalist movement. The speeches of these Congressmen suggested that the achievement of *swaraj* was to be accompanied by postcolonial efforts to eliminate social inequality. As the 'masses' became citizens of a modern nation-state, it was argued, their 'primordial' attachments to ethnicity and community would cease to have any political purchase.

However, this overarching rhetoric diverged considerably from the localised political practices of the nascent 'Congress system' amongst the various PCCs in Bombay Province ahead of the elections. In the build-up to the elections, the *Times of India* had published an article under the headline 'The Elections will be Fought by Persons, Not Parties', which suggested that the Congress had 'in innumerable cases … pinned the Congress label to the coats of candidates who even without that label would be almost certain of victory'.[74] Such arguments about the propensity of factionalism within the everyday organisational structure of the Congress were corroborated by the Nasik DCC President Dr. G.B. Bhutekar, who protested against his non-selection as a Congress nominee ahead of the election by suggesting 'that many candidates selected by the MPCC … [were] nonentities, accredited with no active Congress services, but [were] perhaps mainly preferred on account of their affluent conditions to genuine Congressmen'.[75] As noted in the previous section of this chapter, the work of both historians and social/political scientists in the 1960s and 1970s concentrated upon the actions of such political brokers based in the locality, who were capable of

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[73] 'Congress Hold on Peasant Masses: Sardar Patel's Whirlwind Tour Rouses Agriculturalists of Maharashtra: Bright Prospects of Thumping Victory', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 28 January 1937.

[74] 'The Elections Will be Fought by Persons, Not Parties: Voters' Apathy: Bombay Presidency Prospects', *Times of India* (Bombay), 7 January 1937.

[75] 'At Nasik: Dispute Over Choice of Candidates', *Times of India* (Bombay), 20 November 1936.

quickly mustering support around particular electoral contingencies and factional affiliations.[76]

Much of the focus of this older scholarship was thus upon the lack of importance of ideology within local Congress mobilisations, an outlook critiqued for denying that 'to countless Indians nationalism was a fire in the blood'.[77] This chapter notes the relevance of these local political practices and their divergence from all-India rhetoric. But at the same time, it avoids suggesting that caste, ethnicity and language were 'no more than labels ... no mere camouflage for factionalism'.[78] Instead it suggests that these Congress practices, which drew upon and politicised longer standing and local societal tensions, also impacted upon the imagination and expression of a variety of ideas about citizenship, via 'community'. This was not least because the majority of the Indian public's encounters with the Congress, as a political party that was supposed to be both representative and accountable towards local society, were conducted at the lowest levels of its organisational structure.

In a similar way to which inconsistencies and contestations emerged between different spatial arenas of colonial governmentality in their approach towards communal reservations within the legislative assembly, there was also rarely anything definite about how 'community' played into these forms of political mobilisation. In particular political arenas at particular moments, it might benefit 'a local leader to highlight the idea of a caste or religious constituency, as a way of building a power base ... but of course there often had to be underlying reasons for competition between the constituencies that were being mobilised'.[79] So whereas across the north, with its sizeable Muslim population, mobilisations around religion often served the interests of factional alliances and affiliations (on the basis of both communal antagonisms and cross-communal cooperation), for the *Times* this recourse to 'individualism' in selecting nominees in Maharashtra

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[76] Kothari, 'The Congress "System"'; Brass, 'Factionalism and the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh'; Carter, *Elite Politics in Rural India*; Carras, *The Dynamics of Indian Political Factions*; Rosenthal, *The Expansive Elite*; David Washbrook, 'Country Politics: Madras 1880 to 1930', in *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics 1870 to 1940*, ed. by John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 155-211.

[77] Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Indian Nationalism as Animal Politics', *The Historical Journal*, 22 (1979), 747-763 (p. 763).

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 752-753.

[79] Gould, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 153.

came to be shaped by a broad historical binary between Brahmans and non-Brahmans. This had particular relevance in a period in which the Congress's expanding support base and socially ameliorative rhetoric was attracting more non-Brahmans into the Congress, internalising this conflict within the party:

> 'Brahmin will vote for Brahmin and if there is a good percentage of Brahmin votes in any one constituency then a Brahmin will be returned no matter what his ticket. In the same constituency a non-Brahmin may score for the same reason ... From saying that the elections are being fought upon an individual basis one can safely go on to suggest that parties in the new Legislative Assembly are likely to be based to begin with on personalities rather than on adherence to a common platform'.[80]

Such assessments were replicated in the colonial reportage of the era. According to the District Magistrate of Ahmednagar, in the Northern Division constituency in the province, where the representatives of four seats were to be chosen, 'The three Congress candidates elected were all Non-Brahmans who had not previously taken a very active part in Congress affairs and were clearly selected for tactical reasons on account of their caste'.[81] However, in alternative constituencies and at other elections within Maharashtra the dichotomous and homogenised depiction of a Brahman/non-Brahman divide could be cut across by different forms of political mobilisation *within* these categories, or united in contention with an *externalised* 'other'. Ahead of the elections in 1937 in Bombay, for example, the leader of the MPCC and one of those responsible for choosing suitable Congress nominees for election was the Brahman and Gandhian politician Shankarrao Deo. In August 1936, Deo was to receive a letter from K.M. Munshi, the prospective Congress candidate for the BLA's University constituency, which disclosed the importance of linguistic affinities (in which Brahman and non-Brahman interests combined around a Marathi-speaking identity) in the internal wranglings behind party preferences for this particular seat.

Munshi, a prominent barrister who had been active in the Home Rule Movement of the 1910s, who had joined the Congress under the influence of Gandhi, and who would become Home Minister in the Bombay Congress Government in 1937, was well known for stressing the importance of developing a Gujarati regional consciousness. As a prominent author, his novels were based on Gujarati

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[80] 'The Elections Will be Fought by Persons, Not Parties', *Times of India*.
[81] MSA, Home (Special) Department File 800 (106) D-4 (1937), 'Extract from the Weekly Confidential Report of the District Magistrate, Ahmednagar', 26 February 1937.

historical themes that aimed at the reconstruction of a Gujarati cultural golden age.[82] And in the aftermath of independence, both Deo and Munshi would emerge as possibly the most prominent Congress advocates of often antagonistic Marathi and Gujarati interests in the context of demands for linguistic reorganisation. This is something which we will consider in greater detail in the next section of this chapter, when we focus upon the 1951 elections. In 1936, however, Munshi accused Deo of suggesting that if he, as a Gujarati, 'stood for the University constituency sufficient support from Maharashtra [would] not be forthcoming on personal grounds'.[83] In response Munshi insisted, in the circumstances, he would not stand 'if the Congress leaders of Maharashtra have no confidence in me or if they think that they cannot marshall [sic] sufficient voting strength in my favour in their province'.[84] For Deo and others who had voiced concern over Munshi's candidature, linguistic affinities rather than caste cleavages were central to forms of political mobilisation in this particular constituency.

At other times, forms of political mobilisation around particular factional networks could disturb the neat compartmentalisation of non-Brahman interests. Ahead of provincial elections in 1946, Deo and the President of the Congress's Central Parliamentary Board Vallabhbhai Patel received a letter from V.C. Pawar, the Secretary of Nasik City DCC, in which Pawar claimed as many as 42 Congressmen had applied for six Congress candidacies in the city. But of the six chosen, Pawar alleged, three were former representatives of the 'communal-minded' Maratha League.[85] The Maratha League, originally a caste-based organisation that had sought to distinguish Marathas from other non-Brahmans during the 1910s, had been revived as a totally new party in the mid-1930s under the patronage of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, as 'a sectarian organisation, on the

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[82] These include *Patan-ni-Prabhuta* ('The Greatness of Patan', 1916); *Gujarat-no-Nath* ('The Ruler of Gujarat', 1917); *Rajadhiraj* ('The Emperor', 1918); *Jaya Somanatha* ('Hail/Goodness/Victory to Somnath', 1937). These novels were saturated not only with references to a Gujarati 'golden age', but also a Hindu 'golden age'. See, Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 211.

[83] New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], Shankarrao Deo Papers, File 11 (1934-1967), 'Letter from K.M. Munshi to Shankarrao Deo', 13 August 1936.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] Deo Papers, File 11, 'Letter from V.C. Pawar, Nasik, to Secretary, Central Parliamentary Board/Vallabhbhai Patel, President, Central Parliamentary Board/Shankarrao Deo', 15 January 1946.

lines of the Muslim League ... to safeguard the interests of the Marathas, as apart from the general interests of the Hindus'.[86] Public support for this new party was judged by the Raj to be relatively minimal – the League was generally thought to be constituted by elite loyalist politicians, including former officers in the Indian army.[87] Having opposed Congress candidates in the 1937 election, the League also offered 'unanimous support to the British Government in the prosecution of this war against Germany', and purportedly aided in the suppression of Congress activities during the 1942 Quit India movement after organising a Maratha militia.[88]

Therefore, because of their history of service within the Maratha League, Pawar argued, these men did not deserve to be selected as potential Congress candidates in 1946. For him, they were 'not full Khadidhari [wearers of khadi, hand-spun cloth favoured by Congress nationalists who sought to boycott foreign goods], they never worked in the Congress before, and they never participated in any Congress activities'.[89] Rather these candidates' 'inner aim', Pawar claimed, was to 'establish Maratha domination in all social spheres by any way'.[90] Whereas the Congress had been oft conflated with 'Brahman Raj' at the start of our period of study, in this instance it was now the non-Brahman Marathas who were perceived as dominating local manifestations of Congress political power. The potential for antagonisms to emerge within the non-Brahman category, and for inter-caste Brahman/non-Brahman alliances to coalesce around a Marathi-speaking identity, therefore point towards the complexity and contingency of the Congress's local mobilisational practices. And in the variety of these everyday political processes, Congress official rhetoric about Indian society's cultural and

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[86] London, India Office Records [henceforth IOR], File R/1/1/3536 (1939-40), 'Letter from Chief Inspecting Officer, Bombay, to Deputy Director (E), Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India', 16 December 1939.
[87] Some examples include Rao Bahadur V.L. Thube, a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Pune; and Major Sardar Bhimrao Patankar, a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) from Satara.
[88] IOR, File R/1/1/3536, 'Unanimous Support to Britain: Nasik Mahratta Conference: From Our Own Correspondent', Nasik, 6 November 1939; *Ibid.*, 'Letter from Major Sardar Bhimrao Patankar, MLC, President, All India Maratha Conference, Nasik, to His Highness the Maharaja of Kolhapur', 27 November 1939.
[89] Deo Papers, File 11, 'Letter from V.C. Pawar, Nasik, to Secretary, Central Parliamentary Board/Vallabhbhai Patel, President, Central Parliamentary Board/Shankarrao Deo', 15 January 1946.
[90] *Ibid.*

purposive harmony is thus oft dislocated and its developmental programmes frequently misapplied.

The divergence between the practices of local Congress powerbrokers and the discourse of Congress communal impartiality and social egalitarianism 'enable a certain construction of the [organisation] that meshes the imagined translocal institution with its localised embodiments'.[91] This is what Thomas Blom Hansen has elsewhere defined as the 'sublime' and 'profane' dimensions of state power.[92] By appropriating this terminology, and applying it to a quasi-state institution such as the Congress instead, we are able to envisage the complex situated perspectives from which the party is perceived in the imagination and everyday practices of ordinary people. Because the party increasingly emerged as the dominant repository for votes in the gradual transition from colonialism to independence and democracy, it thus also came to serve as the primary site through which certain ideas about citizenship rights and forms of belonging – the right to vote, the representativeness of Congress candidates or elected politicians within their chosen constituency, the accountability of politicians for ensuring state resources reach their intended targets, or their ability to redirect them in the interests of particular groups within local society – were constructed and mediated. These everyday imaginings and enactments of citizenship could thus mould and reconstitute the official party line on belonging and rights in India into something relatively unrecognisable. Yet the public could also make recourse to ostensible party principles to castigate the actions of local party representatives when the need arose. Since not everyone imagined their relationship with the Congress organisation in exactly the same manner, a variety of hybridised and interchangeable conceptualisations of citizenship could emerge out of individual and group interactions with the party, and could shift depending on context.

One particular example will suffice here to explicate the argument that I am making, before we move on in the following sections of this chapter to consider how these various manifestations of citizenship were both defined and transpired within the context of independence, partition and linguistic reorganisation. Ahead

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[91] Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State', *American Ethnologist*, 22.2 (1995), pp. 389-390. I have here substituted the word 'state' for 'organisation', as I wish to make it clear that I am referring to the Congress Party rather than the Raj.

[92] Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 31-67.

of the provincial elections of January 1946, Vallabhbhai Patel received a letter expressing interest in the selection of Congress candidates in Bombay City. Significantly, the letter was addressed from 'the Voters of the G Ward and Suburbs (Dadar and Suburbs)' constituency, and made explicit reference to the necessity of conveying 'the feelings of the citizens of this ward'.[93] Concerned about the representativeness of the Congress candidate within their constituency, the signatories first listed a number of points 'in order of preference', which they hoped the party would take into account within the selection process:

> 'length of service to the nation through the Congress – whether since 1920, 1930, 1935 or very recently; sacrifices done in the cause of the Congress Fight for Independence; continuous and unchallenged loyalty to the Congress; service to the area from where he is to be returned; the majority of voters must feel the candidate as their own; other points such as educational qualifications, capacity, leisure, monetary conditions etc from our point are secondary'.[94]

At one level, then, their appeal was couched in the language of ideological criteria relating to party and national loyalty and service. In this sense the letter reflected the rhetoric of the CWC, particularly as it sought to address the higher echelons of the Congress organisation, embodied here by Patel as the President of the Central Parliamentary Board. But the signatories to the letter also sought to apply and utilise this principled language for the constituency's benefit. The candidate was also described as needing to be accountable to the voters, evident in the emphasis placed upon 'service to the area from where he is to be returned'. Finally, the penultimate point concerned the necessity of the candidate's representativeness, something elaborated upon in one further prerequisite described in the letter:

> 'The number of Voters is predominantly Marathi Speaking, and it would not be fit to select somebody however eminent he may be who is also not a Deccani. We do understand that under the Congress Flag there is no provincialism or communalism but we have not grown up to that stage as yet and our opponents like Hindu Sabha etc. are likely to carry on a mischievous propaganda to appeal to the provincialism etc. We know that whoever he is the Congress Candidate will be elected but every time the

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[93] Deo Papers, File 11, 'Letter from the Voters of the G Ward and Suburbs (Dadar and Suburbs), to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel', 8 January 1946.
[94] *Ibid.*

dissatisfaction goes on increasing and may burst when there is over accumulation'.[95]

The high-sounding ideological rhetoric of the CWC regarding representativeness was thus re-contextualised, to be locally mediated on the basis of the candidate's linguistic affiliations. Whilst other political organisations matched their candidates with local communal demographics, the Congress is implicitly criticised for having selected unrepresentative elites from amongst the constituency's linguistic minorities.[96] The signatories suggested that the best way through which the Congress candidate could both represent and be accountable to the interests of their constituency was if they epitomised the locally numerically-preponderate Marathi-speaking community. The utilisation of 'community' in the interests of electoral allegiance would therefore provide the majority of local society with a form of agency in the articulation and practice of their citizenship. But at the same time, by privileging the majority of local society in the selection process as the letter advised, the local Congress could also threaten to disregard linguistic 'minority' communities in the constituency. The letter is therefore indicative of the situated perspectives through which citizens envisage and interact with the Congress. It was in the context of this meshing of local political practices and representations of party ideology that the right to vote and the right to representation, as performances of citizenship, were imagined and enacted. And this could create curious hybrids, where principled commitments to accountability and representativeness were imagined as best delineated on the basis of 'community' interests.

3.4 The Selection of Congress Candidates in Bombay, 1951: Citizenship in the Context of Independence, Partition and Linguistic Reorganisation

Ahead of general elections to be held in the winter of 1951-52 Jawaharlal Nehru, now the first Prime Minister of an independent India, drafted a resolution on 'The Right Kind of Candidates' to be chosen by the various PCCs in the selection process, which was ratified by the CWC in its July 1951 session at Bangalore. For Nehru and the CWC, it was imperative that

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[95] *Ibid.*

[96] In this constituency, these would have been principally Gujarati-speaking middle-classes, whether Hindu or Parsee.

'Candidates should be chosen with great care and should be men and women of integrity, who by their past record and present professions, have shown that they believe in and act up to the principles and objectives proclaimed on behalf of the Congress. In particular, care should be taken that the choice of suitable candidates is not affected by the predominance of any group or clique in any area'.[97]

These criteria were further elaborated upon in a letter from Nehru to the Chairmen of the Provincial Election Committees in September of that year. One of the key ideological considerations here was the approach of the Congress in comparison to the 'communal bodies'. Nehru was to stipulate that 'Congress candidates must be chosen with particular care so that they might represent fully the non-communal character and approach of the Congress. Persons who have been connected with communal organisations should therefore be suspects from this point of view'.[98] Likewise, during his countrywide campaign ahead of the elections, Nehru indicated that he was 'laying great stress on one thing in particular – communalism which is rearing its head in some parts of the country'.[99] The primary context for this shift in emphasis around communalism (which had always been something which had threatened the Congress's efforts to present itself as embodying the needs, concerns and purposes of all of Indian society) were the events of 1947. With the advent of independence, 'most Indians … were [now] theoretically defined by the state as "citizens" rather than "subjects". Rights were defined by democratic conventions and … a written constitution'.[100] Full adult suffrage and participation within electoral politics now became a reality for all.

However, independence was also accompanied by the events of partition and the creation of a separate Muslim 'homeland' of Pakistan. In one of his speeches ahead of the elections, Nehru proclaimed that 'Many of our brethren were misled and the poison spread far and wide, bringing a great disaster upon us and ultimately led to the partition of the country. So we must learn from experience

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[97] 'The Right Kind of Candidates: Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru and passed by the Congress Working Committee, Bangalore', 10 July 1951, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* [henceforth *SWJN*]*, vol. XVI, pt II*, ed. by S. Gopal (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1994), p. 33.

[98] 'To Chairmen, Pradesh Election Committees', 19/09/1951, in *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

[99] 'The Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi: Speech at a public meeting, Delhi', 2 October 1951, in *Ibid.*, p. 112.

[100] Gould, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 291; see also, Gupta, *Red Tape*, pp. 98-99.

and understand where communalism is likely to lead us'.[101] By raising the spectre of partition, Nehru and other leading Congressmen sought to distinguish an outwardly secular and 'progressive' India from a religiously-inclined and 'backward' Pakistan. A vote for the Congress was thus presented by Nehru in terms of this starkly polarised contrast:

> 'In a nation, all its citizens should have equal rights, whatever their religion. This has been put down in our Constitution, and the Congress has followed this fundamental principle all these years ... I am not bothered about your vote. I am more bothered about your mind and heart and that you should grasp this fact. I am worried that what has been achieved after tremendous difficulty and sacrifices – our freedom – should not slip away or get weakened, and that we may again become backward. We will become backward unless we constantly follow a progressive path. Communalism will certainly set us back and bind us down, especially the sort of communalism shown by some of these Hindu and Sikh organizations nowadays'.[102]

The implications of this ideological position ahead of the elections were not solely restricted to the Congress rallying against religious forms of communalism. These tendencies could also manifest themselves around alternative forms of 'community' interest related to caste, language and region. In this broader context, partition had larger, more comprehensive consequences and implications upon forms of citizenship, representing only one realised manifestation of a range of regionalised imaginings and 'ideas of India'.[103] Across the south and west of the subcontinent, and including Maharashtra, movements demanding the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on cultural and linguistic lines emerged in the context of an impending independence, and on analogous lines to the Pakistan demand, as alternative and autonomous sites through which citizens could conceptualise their rights and status. In Bombay, this also owed something to the mismatched nature of provincial administration and the PCCs – the Bombay Congress government was frequently depicted by Maharashtrians as

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[101] 'The Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi', in *SWJN, vol. XVI, pt. II*, p. 113.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[103] For more on the theory behind this impact of partition upon ideas about citizenship across the subcontinent, see the section of the Introduction entitled 'The Setting'.

primarily serving the interests of, and redirecting state resources towards, Gujarat.[104]

Ahead of independence, a group of leading Congressmen (not least Nehru) had therefore come to acknowledge the necessity of accepting partition in the north-east and north-west as a means by which to assert the power of the centre over the other provinces elsewhere in the subcontinent.[105] Congress rhetoric against communalism ahead of the elections was also therefore constructed in the context of the party's efforts to contain further 'fissiparous' demands. Here, it was the possibility that electoral choices would be made on the basis of caste and language which was presented as the greatest cause for Congress concern. The 1951 election manifesto made specific reference to the demands for linguistic reorganisation, but asserted that other factors, 'such as economic, administrative and financial, ... have to be taken into consideration'.[106] In his campaign speeches Nehru also referred to the constant

> 'danger ... that any caste which is in a majority in a particular area will choose its caste men ... [T]his narrow-minded way of electing a candidate will mean that the future Parliament will be full of men of low stature, of individuals who think all the time only of parochial interests, of their own caste and locality, and not of the entire country and its problems'.[107]

Nehru and the CWC therefore demanded that an emphasis on integrity, past record, and agreement with the principles and objectives of the Congress, rather than communalism and factionalism in the context of the recent partition and demands for the refashioning of provincial administrative boundaries, should govern the selection of potential Congress candidates. However, the localised practices on the part of the PCCs in Bombay were to depart considerably from these prerequisites. At one level, the problem emanated from discrepancies

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[104] See, for example, 'Maharashtra and Ministries: Pandit Nehru's Statement', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 17 June 1937; MSA, GOB, Political and Services Department File 8720/46 pt. II, 'Major Irrigation Works', n.d.

[105] Jinnah's Pakistan demand had actually envisaged a weak centre with strong governmental powers being invested in the various provinces, as a means through which to maintain Muslim autonomy *within* India. It was the Congress who ultimately cast their weight behind the partitioning of the subcontinent. See, Asim Roy, 'Reviews: The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', *MAS*, 24 (1990), 385-408.

[106] NMML, All India Congress Committee [henceforth AICC] Papers, Part II, File G-63 (1951), 'The Congress Election Manifesto', 14 July 1951.

[107] 'Quiet Strength and Avoidance of a War Mentality: Speech at Ramlila Ground, New Delhi', 29 July 1951, in *SWJN, vol. XVI, pt. II*, pp. 61-62.

within the rhetoric of Nehru and other Congressmen themselves. Despite emphasising that factional and communal affinities should play no part in the selection process, Nehru went on in his letter to the Chairmen of the Provincial Election Committees (cited above) to assert that

> 'It is not only a matter of honour for us, but something of great practical importance, that we put up representatives of the minority communities in adequate numbers. Separate electorates and reservations have been given up, and this has increased our responsibility in this respect. If we fail to discharge this responsibility, critics will be entitled to say that joint electorates have failed, and that we cannot adequately protect the interests of minorities ... Normally we should try to give them representation in accordance with their population'.[108]

It was in this regard that Nehru was to get in touch with the Chief Minister of Bombay Province, Morarji Desai, to criticise the list of potential Congress candidates provided by the BPCC. Nehru advocated the inclusion of one Abid Ali, a long-serving Congressman who had participated in several Satyagrahas during the colonial period, had been imprisoned for the Congress cause, and was a current AICC member. But another reason in favour of his selection related to 'his being a Muslim' and 'member of a minority community which we wish to encourage'.[109] By recommending candidates on the basis of their community whilst otherwise advocating the essential unity of Indian citizens before the law, Nehru and others thus opened the party up to criticism over the contradictions evident within its rhetoric.[110] At another level, however, the privileging of 'community' in the selection process was tied in with the local politics of clientelism and faction. In the same letter to Desai, reference was made by Nehru to the suggestion that Ali had not been selected because of his differences with the BPCC President and the Chair of its Provincial Election Committee, S.K. Patil. There was a 'general impression', Nehru claimed, 'that [the BPCC] is controlled by a narrow clique, and

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[108] 'To Chairmen, Pradesh Election Committees', in *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
[109] 'To Morarji Desai', 22 October 1951, in *Ibid.*, p. 47; 'To Morarji Desai', 27 October 1951, in *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[110] This replicated earlier problems during the Muslim mass contacts campaign in interwar UP. See, Mushirul Hasan, 'The Muslim Mass Contacts Campaign: An Attempt at Political Mobilization', *Economic and Political Weekly* [henceforth *EPW*], 21 (1986), 2273-2280; Gould, *Hindu Nationalism*, pp. 223-232.

any person who cannot fit into that clique has no chance of survival. S.K. Patil is the *bête noire* of large numbers of people'.[111]

Generally, the procedure for choosing Congress candidates ahead of elections involved the various DCCs making recommendations to the Provincial Election Committee, who could then either accept these proposed candidates or select its own nominees. 'The factional groups based in the DCCs then, had to engage patronage networks and leaders at a state level, in order to get their men selected'.[112] In Bombay City, S.K. Patil was situated at the apex of this network of political cliques and clientelistic networks and could thus preside over the selection of candidates that were allied with his particular faction. For example, after local Congressmen based within the suburb of Mahim had passed a resolution recommending a candidate for the forthcoming elections in September 1951, Patil quickly chastised the Mahim Committee's President. According to Patil it was 'neither fair nor proper for subordinate Congress Committees to suggest any names', as it 'would only create embarrassing situations'. Therefore, 'no notice can be taken of any such recommendations'.[113] Once decisions had been made by the Provincial Election Committees, the list of proposed candidates was then passed on to the Central Parliamentary Board for ultimate approval.

As we have seen in the previous sections of this chapter, the manner in which these political cliques, factions and clientelistic networks could be constructed could, at certain moments, privilege the paradigm of 'community' in the interests of electoral contingency. In choosing candidates for the national and provincial assemblies in Bombay City, Patil proposed and implemented his idea that representation was to be given to communities on a 'communal-wise as well as

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[111] 'To Morarji Desai', 27 October 1951, in *SWJN, vol. XVI, pt. II*, p. 57. This was a status S.K. Patil vigorously rejected. In a letter to Nehru in February 1952 he condemned the way in which it had 'become the fashion in Congress circles everywhere for dissatisfied persons to at once run to the highest tribunal with their fancied grievances', and suggested that Nehru gave 'credence to those complaints'. See, AICC Papers, Part II, File 2646 (1952), 'Letter from S.K. Patil to Jawaharlal Nehru', 15 February 1952.

[112] William Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s-1960s* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 156; Brass, 'Factionalism and the Congress Party', p. 1043.

[113] NMML, Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee [henceforth BPCC] Papers, File 8 (1951), 'Letter to the President, Mahim (Dharavi) TCC, from S.K. Patil', 11 September 1951.

territorial-wise' basis.[114] In theory, this meant that where a community had a population of 100,000 members or more in the city, they were to be given at least one representative to contest from the place in which, as far as possible, they had the largest concentration. The other members of the Bombay City Election Committee agreed that it was 'quite necessary to make such an allotment and approved of the plans of the Chairman'.[115] 'Community' affinities therefore became a legitimate means through which the rationale behind the selection of Congress candidates was conducted at the local level. But this could also work the other way. Allegations of communal preference could also emerge within the context of disputes between factions about the selection of particular candidates. Issues regarding communal and ethnic allegiances in the selection process were thus voiced in the appeals which the AICC permitted unsuccessful Congress candidates and other members of the party to make against the decision of the PCCs, or to send in representations against the chosen candidate.

The remainder of this chapter focuses upon a series of vignettes drawn from these files of complaints on individual Congressmen in Bombay Province contained within the AICC Papers, to make inferences about everyday conceptualisations of citizenship in the context of linguistic reorganisation.[116] Of course, these factional appeals and representations were often of doubtful veracity and quite possibly based on hearsay. But they provide a number of significant insights into the centrality of 'community' in the discourses surrounding the rights of the citizen to suitable electoral representativeness and accountability. In this regard, the complaint to the AICC serves as the site through which the citizen or local Congressman questioned the legitimacy of the provincial selection panel for not correctly discharging their responsibilities.[117]

References to 'community' occurred in a number of different circumstances. They emerged in instances where complaints were made about a candidate being not quite representative enough. Conversely, they materialised around objections to the selection of candidates on the basis of local demographic dominance. They

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[114] BPCC Papers, File 10 (1951-53), 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Bombay Pradesh Election Committee', 29 September 1951.
[115] *Ibid.*
[116] An analogous consideration of these files, but in the context of corruption, has been conducted by William Gould. See, Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence*, pp. 157-165.
[117] For a similar analysis of the complaint in the context of the state, see, Gupta, *Red Tape*, pp. 166-187.

could also develop around the past propensities of candidates to manipulate and extract state resources in the interests of particular communities. All of the complainants considered below employed aspects and provided examples of both the Congress's secular and egalitarian rhetoric and local political practices, in a variety of ways which were dependent upon their own particular situations and circumstances. But at the same time, these ordinary Congressmen were themselves members of local society, whose petitions were shaped by their own norms and beliefs, and by the application of everyday societal pressures upon them.[118] The politics of 'community' was thus sometimes also considered by members of ordinary society as the best method through which to guarantee the actualisation of citizenship's privileges and guarantees. And in this sense, notions of representativeness and accountability were mutually constituted through both the ideologies and processes of the Congress as a quasi-state organisation, and the imaginings and practices of ordinary people.

3.5 Representativeness and Accountability

Our first case study concerns an appeal received by the AICC from one D.P. Tandel, a rejected Congress candidate from the Palghar and Jawahar Constituency in Thana District, who claimed that the Congress's chosen nominee for this ward was unable to fully represent the interests of the majority of the region's constituents. This, Tandel suggested, owed something to the candidate's own ethno-linguistic affinities.[119] Bordering Bombay City to the south-west, the Marathi-speaking districts of Kolaba, Poona, Ahmednagar and Nasik to the south and east, the Gujarati-speaking former princely state of Baroda to the north, and the Arabian Sea to the west, the political situation in Thana during this period was particularly vexing for a number of reasons. First, the structure of the district's administration caused considerable confusion and numerous disputes in the context of demands for linguistic reorganisation. Whilst its proceedings were conducted in the Marathi language, Thana had been grouped within the 'Northern

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[118] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 1049-1071 (p. 1051); Taylor C. Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *MAS*, 45 (2011), 81-107.

[119] AICC Papers, File 4495 (1951), 'Letter from D.P. Tandel, Post Satpati, Taluka Palghar, District Thana, to the Chairman, Central Election Committee, New Delhi', 11 October 1951.

Division' of Bombay Province, which otherwise was made up of primarily Gujarati-speaking districts.[120] Its location on the border between Marathi-speaking and Gujarati-speaking areas in the province also ensured both proponents of Gujarat and Maharashtra made claims to the district, or certain tracts within it, in anticipation of the new provincial jurisdictions.

Second, Thana District was culturally and ethnically diverse. Much of the coastal region around Bombay City, including the district administrative headquarters at Thana City, was becoming an overflow for the metropolis during the twentieth century. Owing to both rapid urbanisation and international, inter-provincial and intra-provincial migration, this south-western corner of the district had become a site of considerable linguistic heterogeneity, with large populations of Gujarati-, Hindi-, Marathi- and (after partition) Sindhi-speakers. Further up the coast, and in the mountainous interior, Thana District was home to both 'backward' and adivasi ('tribal') communities such as the Kolis, Warlis, Katkaris, Dhublas, Dhodias and Gabits (fishermen). The ethno-linguistic affinities of these borderline 'communities' were also open to question ahead of provincial reorganisation, and were contested by proponents of Gujarat and Maharashtra who sought to take advantage of these territories being included within the new administrative boundaries.[121] For example, in a representation to the Linguistic Provinces Commission of 1948, tasked with discussing the feasibility and practicalities of reorganisation, the Thana District Gujarati Conference claimed that the 'grammar and construction' of the adivasis' language was 'more akin to Gujerati than Marathi'.[122] In the same year, Harsidhbhai Divatia argued, on behalf of the Gujarat Research Society, that these adivasis were an indigenous, Gujarati-speaking 'old [racial] stock' of Thana District, who were 'closely connected with the soil'.[123]

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[120] The other, primarily Gujarati-speaking districts within this Northern Division were Ahmedabad, Broach (Bharuch), Kaira, Panch Mahals and Surat.

[121] For more on the manner in which adivasis' rights as citizens were frequently exploited in the context of linguistic reorganisation by the proponents of Gujarat and Maharashtra, see Chapter Five of this thesis.

[122] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2875/46 – Pt. II (B Class), 'Representation from Thana District Gujerati Conference, Sanjan [Dahanu], to the Linguistic Provinces Commission', n.d.

[123] Harsidhbhai Divatia, *Linguistic Limits of Maha Gujarat* (Bombay: Gujarat Research Society, 1948), pp. 19-20.

Marathi-speakers, on the other hand, had 'come to Thana recently for service or for other form of maintenance'.[124]

It was in these larger circumstances linked to reorganisation and the ethno-linguistic allegiances of Thana's adivasi and backward communities that our rejected candidate D.P. Tandel protested the decision to award the Congress candidacy in Palghar-Jawahar to

> 'Kumari Jayanti Shroff, a Gujarati lady, when the whole constituency is predominently [sic] Maharashtrian and of the backward classes. She is the daughter of a businessman and businessmen in Palghar can be counted on the tips of fingers. I do not know why this nonentity who cannot and does not command the confidence of voters and who has done no social work of any importance or taken any part in political activity has been selected ... '.[125]

In contrast, Tandel recommended his own candidature within the appeal on the basis of a number of different considerations. References were made to his engagement in Congress activities 'from the very beginning of the Congress movement since 1922. I have been jailed not once, twice but thrice. I was once in Jail for one year, another time for two years and a third time also. At no time in my whole service have I done anything against the Congress'.[126] On the one hand, then, Tandel sought to position his appeal within the context of Nehru's recommendations about the selection of appropriate candidates on the basis of their past record towards the nationalist cause. He presented his own historical involvement in the Congress in stark contrast to Shroff's failure to 'take part in any political activity'. He also emphasised his participation in social work over the past thirty years in a similar manner, thereby highlighting his sense of accountability towards the local electorate. But it was here that an emphasis on 'community' also permeated his appeal. Whereas Shroff was a Gujarati woman with links to business interests, he was 'born a Fisherman and [did] business as a fisherman and [had] done social uplift work among the fishermen and the backward class and [had] started and aided cooperative institutions of the Backward class and ... [enjoyed] their confidence'.[127] On the other hand, Tandel was thus both representative of and accountable towards his constituency on the basis of shared ethnic affinities.

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[124] *Ibid.*

[125] AICC Papers, Part II, File 4495, 'Letter from D.P. Tandel'.

[126] *Ibid.*

[127] *Ibid.*

In this appeal, then, Tandel positioned himself as the protector of Maharashtrian and 'backward' community interests, in which he would serve the electorate by ensuring an equitable distribution of state resources. It helped that he was himself a member of this 'backward' community, and thus subject to the same pressures, exigencies and concerns. By approving the selection of a Gujarati-speaking businesswoman who had shown a distinct disinterest in social work amongst the region's 'backward' communities, Tandel believed the local Congress committee had reneged on its commitments towards the majority of Palghar-Jawahar's voters. This was part of a broader provincial malaise: 'although the Congress has many times avowed that it stands for the amelioration of the condition of the backward class and fishermen, ... there is no single spokesman of that class or community' selected as a potential Congress candidate from Bombay Province.[128] In this sense, the politics of 'community' within the selection process were presented by Tandel as the best means through which to guarantee the privileges and guarantees of citizenship amongst this section of the population. In many ways, Tandel's ambitions are also thus a localised reflection of ideological motivations behind the demands for linguistic reorganisation. Like the proponents of a unilingual Maharashtra, he sought to improve 'democratic transparency and accountability in the region' and involve 'local people to a great[er] extent in the development process'.[129] By doing so he would thus improve the everyday purchase of citizenship rights amongst his constituents.

Invocations of the rights of citizens to representation and accountability were thus critical to factional struggles within the Congress organisation over candidate selection, and could potentially benefit particular sections of the public. But precisely because these forms of political representation and thus access to the resources of the state were arranged on the basis of 'community', they could potentially benefit particularly locally dominant groups more effortlessly than others.[130] Our second vignette concerns a range of appeals, petitions and complaints received by the AICC in October 1951 from disgruntled members of the public and local Congressmen in Poona District.[131] Poona District was situated in the centre of what would become Maharashtra, surrounded by the predominantly Marathi-speaking districts of Ahmednagar, Sholapur, Satara,

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[128] *Ibid.*
[129] Mawdsley, 'A New Himalayan State', p. 101.
[130] Jeffrey and Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance'.
[131] See, AICC Papers, Part II, File 4502 (1951).

Kolaba and Thana. The implications of a potential reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries here may thus seem relatively insignificant in comparison to Thana. The introduction of democracy in the context of reorganisation has perhaps most persistently been perceived as a harbinger of Marathi linguistic majoritarianism, whereby a newfound consensus between Brahmans, Marathas and other Marathi-speaking communities had coalesced around the idea of the 'Marathi *manus*', or Marathi man, in opposition to a Gujarati 'other'.[132] But in the context of the rapid identification of issues in the interests of electoral contingency, at other times and places this 'Maharashtrian-ness' could be cut across by other forms of identity linked to caste, class and religion. In fact, it was in Poona that the most frequent references to the manipulation of the selection process on the basis of 'community' appeared within the appeals and representations received by the AICC ahead of the 1951 elections.

Of central importance to the accusations about the selection of candidates were fears that in a future unilingual Maharashtra, Marathas, as the province's most numerically preponderate caste group, would monopolise access to elected political posts, government jobs and state resources. Whereas in Bombay Province, the strength of the 'Maratha vote' was diluted by the presence of Gujarati- and Kannada-speaking voters, the creation of Maharashtra would increase the percentage of Marathas within the provincial electorate. This process, many of the appeals and representations suggested, was already evident in Poona District, where the selection of Congress candidates was made on the basis of demographic 'community' interests. N.K. Gokhale, a Brahman pleader from the town of Baramati, regaled the AICC with a tale of how he was forced from local office in 1940 by the former MPCC President Keshavrao Jedhe on account of his caste identity, and had resigned from the Baramati Taluka Congress Committee in protest. He suggested that he had applied once again to be a Congress candidate 'to test whether the efforts and constant declarations of Nehru had any effect on the local and provincial Congress committees, which I still saw had a strong bias for community and caste'.[133] In this regard, W.H. Kothadiya,

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[132] Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 195-197.

[133] AICC Papers, Part II, File 4502, 'Letter from N.K. Gokhale, Pleader and Bagayatdar, Baramati, District Poona, to the Chairman, Central Election

another pleader from Baramati but from amongst the local Jain 'community', cited a recent statement made by the MPCC President B.S. Hiray to the press, in which Hiray had asserted 'that he had selected only 63 candidates as Marathas out of 143 seats of the BLA though there is an outstanding overwhelming majority of the Maratha community in Maharashtra. If properly considered they would have got more seats than they had already got'.[134] For Kothadiya, this demonstrated that communal considerations had infiltrated the allocation of seats.

Kothadiya also suggested that Hiray's claims about a Maratha 'majority' distorted provincial demographics: 'In Maharashtra there are so many communities such as Malis, Dhangar, Sonar, Sali, Koshti, Shimpi, Lingayat, Brahmin, Jain, Parsi, Christian etc etc. that if properly considered the number of Marathas would not be eight to ten per cent'.[135] R.K. Karkhanis, a journalist from Poona City, made similar claims in his assertions about the division of Poona District's communal populations – whilst 'ten candidates out of 14 selected were from the Maratha community alone … the majority of the voters in this District is of non-Marathas (nearly double the Maratha community)'.[136] In Karkhanis' opinion, it was evident that Hiray and the Poona DCC President A.S. Awate, both Marathas by caste, had 'joined hands together to suppress non-Maratha communities' in the district.[137] Reflecting on what he perceived to be the manipulation of the selection process in the Maratha's interests, the journalist R.K. Karkhanis argued that

'It is a fact as clear as day-light that there is hardly any selfless worker in the Maratha community devoted to the Congress. They are all first-class opportunists taking advantages of power politics. It is extremely doubtful whether these Maratha candidates have any ability to preserve the prestige of the great Congress. All these so-called king-makers (Parliamentary Board) and candidates selected are a gang of selfish persons. They have got vested

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Committee, "Appeal against the rejection of application by the Maharashtra Provincial Election Committee, Poona"', 12 October 1951.

[134] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from Walchand Heerachand Kothadiya, Pleader, Baramati, to the Chairman, Central Election Board, "Misleading Statement of Shri Hire"', 30 October 1951.

[135] *Ibid.*

[136] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from R.K. Karkhanis, Journalist, Poona, to the Chairman, Central Parliamentary Board, "Wrongful selections of Congress candidates for Assembly and Parliament (Poona Centre)"', 12 October 1951.

[137] *Ibid.*

interests for their community alone. After taking advantage of the power, they would mercilessly kick the mother Congress at any time'.[138]

Perhaps the most significant appeal came from D.R. Wayase, a member of the Dhangar (a politically, socially and educationally 'backward' caste who were traditionally shepherds) 'community' who had applied for nomination as a Congress candidate in either the Indapur or Baramati constituencies within Poona. Wayase noted that 'the movement for national freedom was not smooth in this part, as several movements of a communal nature originated and thrived here'.[139] For Wayase, longstanding Brahman/non-Brahman antagonisms had left a 'legacy' of communal consciousness amongst the Marathas, which had been utilised by a section of Congressmen 'to capture most places of importance' ahead of the elections.[140] He suggested that this had important implications for Dhangars and other non-Brahman 'communities' beyond the Marathas residing within Poona District:

> 'I found an appeal from Dhangar communalists finding ready response to break away from Congress which was being a vehicle of Maratha domination. Their demand was more and proper representation for their community in all elections. This feeling and demand by itself is not proper and commendable. But it must not be forgotten that this is a reaction to the communalism of the Marathas'.[141]

These extracts are revealing of the ways in which local Congressmen and members of the public in Poona negotiated and re-contextualised both overarching Congress rhetoric about communal impartiality in the selection process and local Congress practices which had apparently privileged Marathas. First, as the quotation taken from Gokhale's letter demonstrates, appeals frequently drew upon the language of the Congress High Command's claims to all-India 'representativeness' and political secularism. In all of the appeals, this was contrasted with the propensity towards 'communalism' on the part of the MPCC and Poona DCC in the selection of their candidates. And in the context of an impending linguistic reorganisation, the potential for particular Maratha-based interests to control provincial politics would be amplified. Both Kothadiya and

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[138] *Ibid.*

[139] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from Devrao Ramrao Wayase, to the Chairman, Central Election Committee, "Appeal against the decision of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Election Committee"', n.d.

[140] *Ibid.*

[141] *Ibid.*

Karkhanis went on to suggest that the candidates chosen were ultimately unrepresentative and unaccountable because they had been selected in the interests of their caste; Marathas, despite being a numerically preponderate 'community', did not represent the interests of the majority of the non-Maratha public in Poona District. However, by focusing upon communal demographics, the efficacy of 'community' in these appeals was to clandestinely return. In the appeal of Wayase, for example, reference is made to the need for 'more and proper representation' for the Dhangar community to counter 'the communalism of the Marathas' and 'Maratha domination'. On the one hand, local Congressmen and the public raised demands for more inclusive forms of representation as a crucial manifestation of their citizenship; but on the other, these continued to be constructed around 'community' interests. Local imaginings and enactments of rights and status, formulated around everyday interactions between the Congress organisation and local society over the candidate selection process, thus circumnavigated and refashioned citizenship's definition within the party's overarching electoral rhetoric into curiously imagined hybrids at the quotidian level.

In their references to 'community' as critical within the selection process, the memorandums and petitions within Poona District paralleled Tandel's conceptualisation of citizenship at the nexus of political ideology and practice. Central to the appeals made in both Poona and Thana was an emphasis upon guaranteeing the rights, privileges and interests of Marathi-speaking society. To at least some extent, then, the local public was granted agency in the articulation of their citizenship, particularly when the interests, allegiances and ethnicities of local Congressmen and particular elements coalesced. However, the ability of the public to influence the selection process was also often conditioned by these same caste and linguistic affinities, with Marathas and Marathi-speakers more likely to dominate its articulation and enactment in a potential Maharashtra. Meanwhile, Tandel's particular spatial and temporal location in Thana at the time of growing demands for reorganisation, and in circumstances in which a Gujarati-speaking candidate had been chosen to represent the Congress, ensured that he privileged the politics of language instead of caste. By raising the issue of ethno-linguistic affinities, Tandel was also able to suggest that the interests of the constituency's majority had been overlooked rather than raising fears over the weaknesses of a communal minority, as in Poona. The examples presented here

thus highlight how conceptualisations of citizenship could fluctuate around local societal circumstances, political contingencies and the manipulation of ostensible Congress principles, depending upon the situated perspective of the citizen.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated upon citizenship in Bombay Province as a dynamic process, conceptualised, articulated and practised in response to the increased forms of democratic self-governance at the provincial level during the interwar period, and then in anticipation of and reaction to the events of independence, partition and linguistic reorganisation. Central to all these experiences' impacts upon ideas about citizenship were both the Indian National Congress's ostensible ideological commitments to secularism and social egalitarianism, and its propensity towards the politics of faction and community in its localised practices. Throughout this period the Congress attempted to present itself as both representative of and accountable towards all Indian subjects/citizens, whether in its efforts to succeed at provincial and general elections within the constitutional structure of the state or to mobilise society behind 'non-cooperative' Gandhian protests. In this sense, debates about citizenship in India were always wrapped up within these larger political agendas. However, because the nationalist anti-colonial struggle needed to take place at a popular level to certify its all-India representativeness, the Congress came to rely upon local political powerbrokers to mobilise public support for the party. This chapter has shown how the interwar period witnessed a gradual shift in the vast majority of these local representatives' allegiances, generally away from the colonial state and towards the Congress as a quasi-state alternative. But these new members also frequently brought with them habits and customs of governance which they had developed during their years of collaboration with the Raj.

In the context of the centrality accorded to 'community' in colonial forms of political representation and collaboration, the emergence of a nascent 'Congress system' therefore often led to the more forceful articulation of 'community' interests within the Congress. Yet this was a practice which was subject to a number of fluctuations across time and space. Particularly in the north of the subcontinent, Congress agents often became associated, both symbolically and in actuality, with organisations and ideologies of Hindu revivalism. In the Marathi-

speaking districts of Bombay, meanwhile, local Congressmen were more frequently drawn towards utilising caste and, increasingly, language, as the key criteria for mobilising society behind the nationalist movement. This was represented by a vast shift in the allegiances of Maharashtrian non-Brahmans during the interwar period, away from the Raj and the 'loyalist' Non-Brahman Party and towards the Congress. Brahman/non-Brahman antagonisms thus came to be newly internalised within the party. At the same time, however, this chapter has highlighted instances where this broadly-based Brahman/non-Brahman divide could be cut across by politicians in the interests of electoral contingency. Increasingly throughout this period, non-Brahmanism came to be seen as a site of Maratha dominance. Equally, Brahman, non-Brahman and other interests could at times combine around regional Maharashtrian political interests. This variety in 'community'-based mobilisations across different arenas within the Congress organisation had important implications for the divergent ways in which 'community' influenced particular constructions of citizenship.

Whereas the demand for Pakistan was devised and orchestrated on the basis of representing the interests of a Muslim citizenry, similar calls for forms of provincial autonomy elsewhere in the subcontinent were organised on the basis of language. Nehru's emphasis on combating communalism within the Congress's selection process ahead of the 1951 elections was thus not only directed at stifling support for the parties of the Hindu Right, but also at postponing the insistent demands for the creation of unilingual provinces in the south and west of India. Similarly, the selection of Congress candidates in Bombay City and Maharashtra ahead of these elections was also made with one eye on the likelihood of linguistic reorganisation over the forthcoming years. The penultimate section of this chapter highlighted how some of the appeals and representations received by the AICC from members of the public and rejected local Congressmen demonstrate the ways in which ideas about citizenship were formulated in the context of both these 'sublime' ideological precepts and 'profane' everyday machinations.[142] In this sense, we have been able to expose how perceptions of citizenship have been re-contextualised to fit with contemporary local exigencies and concerns. In these fluctuating circumstances, the manner in which 'community' was applied to guarantee the actualisation of citizenship's privileges and guarantees could vary. For example, in the context of linguistic

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[142] Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai'.

reorganisation, community could be invoked to demand the greater representation and accountability of politicians towards a linguistic majority. However, it could also be referred to in the interests of protecting a variety of communally-defined minorities.

4: Region, Reservation and Government Recruitment, 1930s-1950s

'On the one hand, it is most desirable that the standards of qualifications for admission to the public services should be uniform for all communities and that, as far as possible, they should not be lowered ... On the other hand, it must be recognised that every community is entitled to its proper share in the public services, that it is the duty of the State to see that it gets its proper share and that if any class or community, by reason of its illiteracy and backward condition, is unable to secure its proper share, the State ought to provide for it ... '

Political and Services Department Note by V.H. Vachhrajani, 19th September 1938.[1]

The note of V.H. Vachhrajani, a civil servant in the Political and Services Department of the Bombay Government, cited above, provides clear evidence of the conflict of interests inherent to the discourse surrounding the implementation of policies of affirmative action within the Bombay administration. Within only twelve years of Vachhrajani's note, this contradiction had been enshrined within independent India's 1950 Constitution. Under the 'Right to Equality', Article 16.1 of the Constitution provided for 'equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State'.[2] Yet Articles 16.3 and 16.4 provided occasion to circumvent such universal rights provided for the individual citizen, pertaining to residence and state-defined 'backwardness'.[3] This chapter considers how both a variety of colonial and postcolonial state actors and members of Indian society framed their arguments regarding reservations in both the provincial and all-India administrative services in terms of the contrary ideals contained within Vachhrajani's note and the Constitution. In this sense, this chapter complements the work of Rochana Bajpai, who has looked to 'unpack ... the articulations of a range of nationalists, both eminent and less well known' within the Constituent Assembly debates on

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[1] Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Political and Services Department File 1643/34 II, 'Political and Services Department Note by V.H. Vachhrajani', 19 September 1938.
[2] 'Article 16 (1)', The Constitution of India, p. 7 <http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-indexenglish.htm> [accessed 6 July 2013].
[3] *Ibid.*

affirmative action, thereby providing 'a better grasp of the internal complexity and ideological variations within nationalism'.[4] However, it departs from Bajpai's primary focus upon the debates by arguing that in the context of the anticipation and then repercussions of independence and partition, local and provincial enactments of citizenship rights to bureaucratic representation not only diverged from those constructed in the Assembly but also predated and influenced it.[5] Critical to these local interpretations were the particular 'situated perspectives' of both the local state actor and the individual member of society. Interpretations of citizenship rights thus differed from region to region, were dependent upon the context of larger ongoing historical processes and were linked in with divergent individual, class and 'community' exigencies.

The first section of this chapter briefly considers these ideas in the context of the existing historiography on affirmative action, which was created and justified by both colonial and postcolonial states on the basis of the necessity of representing particular 'community' interests. It suggests that we need to pay closer attention to the different spatial complexities of the state and how the practices of its more local manifestations were shaped in its interactions with local societal exigencies and concerns to understand why reservations were implemented differently from one administrative space to the next. It thus looks to demonstrate a western Indian 'pre-history' to the more recent moves towards 'universal backwardness' with the implementation of reservations for OBCs in the 1990s. It does so by reflecting upon the impact of the 'provincialisation' of politics and independence and partition in Bombay.

The second section contains a close case-study of the various ways through which the provincial government in Bombay classified 'communities' and designed reservations for the various sub-stratums of its provincial administrative services. It considers how the provincial practices of the Bombay Government deviated from all-India reservation policy, despite a theoretical commitment to the same overarching principles, because of alternative and localised societal circumstances. In fact, in the Subordinate services, reservations were introduced in proportion with the demographic strength of particular 'classes' rather than on

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[4] Rochana Bajpai, *Debating Difference: Group Rights and Liberal Democracy in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 115.
[5] See the recommendations of P.S. Deshmukh in the Constituent Assembly Debates to introduce forms of affirmative action based on the Bombay model, in section 4.2.4 below, for example.

the basis of 'minority' community interests. Finally, this section also briefly highlights how reservation practices in interwar Bombay were approached and interpreted in a postcolonial setting. Whilst they influenced the approach and recommendations of the first Backward Classes Commission in 1955, they were rejected by the Nehruvian Congress central government as encouraging casteism.

The final section further explores the discrepancies in affirmative action between Bombay Province and the centre. It considers the ongoing demands and discussions throughout the 1930s and 1940s over the introduction of provincial reservation practices for locally-recruited elements of the all-India services. It then goes on to analyse the calls for proportionate quotas to be recruited from each province to the all-India services in accordance with provincial population size. In doing so, it focuses upon how the proponents of these forms of reservation could interpret them in a positive light, in the context of the transformations which accompanied independence, as a performance of self-government. Simultaneously, it notes how their detractors suggested that by favouring local, indigenous rights to representation, these reservations would potentially damage attempts to foster a wider sense of 'Indianness'. Again, these reservations were described in the language of 'community' interests, with caste, linguistic and religious 'minorities' worried about the dominance of local 'majorities'. Taken together, these interlinked debates over and practices of forms of affirmative action served as a contextual framework upon which citizenship rights were identified, expressed and enacted by a variety of different members of Maharashtrian society.

4.1 Citizenship, Community and Reservations

Whilst much has been written on the introduction of reservations in the colonial administrative services, particularly in relation to Muslim and Scheduled Caste (SC) 'minorities', historians have yet to consider in detail the manner in which these reservations could diverge in the context of particular provincial societal stresses and strains.[6] The work of Christophe Jaffrelot has in part begun this

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[6] For the role of separate reservations and electorates in Muslim identity formation and the formulation of the Pakistan demand see, for example, David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57 (1998), 1068-1095 (particularly pp. 1078-1081).

process, noting in its acknowledgements that 'North India is going the way South India – and, to a lesser extent, West India – have already gone'.[7] However, whilst delineating a history of Maharashtrian caste antagonism by focusing in early chapters on such individuals as Jotirao Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, Jaffrelot's efforts are geared primarily towards explicating the later rise of Kanshi Ram's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and more recent low-caste assertion in northern India. This chapter will therefore build upon his and others' efforts to concentrate on provincial governmental policies on reservations during this critical period of state transformation in India.[8] But it will do so within the context of regional patriotisms of a *longue durée* (as considered in Chapter Two), the uncertainties of independence and partition, and the demands for the reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines. It thus links the demands and debates over reservations to the expression of citizenship rights and status in anticipation of forms of indigenous autonomy and self-government. The chapter thereby plans to resituate supposedly recent developments in north India related to the rise of numerically preponderate, low-status 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs) within an alternative spatial and temporal setting, whilst contributing to a greater understanding behind the imperatives of linguistic reorganisation in this period.

The Government of India (GOI) Acts of 1919 and 1935, despite being limited in their nature and organised to extract resources and control Indian subjects, did contribute towards a number of notable social and political changes in the subcontinent.[9] For an array of scholars working in the 1970s and 1980s, often collectively labelled as the 'Cambridge School', greater financial and legislative self-governance for the thirteen British India provinces under the reforms had encouraged the 'provincialisation' of Indian politics, as a range of often competing political patrons, factions and interests were now able to extend their networks of power and influence beyond the locality.[10] Many of these works were primarily

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[7] Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India* (London: Hurst and Company, 2003), pp. v, 5-6.

[8] See, for example, William Gould, '"The Dual State: The Unruly Subordinate", Caste, Community and Civil Service Recruitment in North India, 1930-1955', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 20 (2007), 13-43.

[9] For more on the impact of these inter-war constitutional reforms, see Chapter Three of this thesis.

[10] David Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008 [1976]); John Gallagher,

interested in delineating how these provincial interests and concerns then coalesced through cross-communal alliances at the all-India level. In fact it was recognised colonial policy to divert Indians' attentions away from all-India agitations and towards provincial machinations and concerns, where they could wield a considerable degree of authority. In these works initiative was thus vested primarily in the slow divulgence of greater forms of self-government to Indians by the colonial authorities, resulting in the Cambridge School's thesis being thoroughly and accurately critiqued for denying ordinary Indians their own 'agency' in the political process.[11] Although it remains an unasserted point, in these accounts it is also therefore implicit that it was the upper echelons of the colonial state and its constitutional reforms which determined the nature of nascent ideas about citizenship in India. This has led Partha Chatterjee, as noted in more detail elsewhere in this thesis, to suggest that citizenship emerged in India within a discrete and European-derived bourgeois public sphere.[12]

The impact of 'provincialisation' as a topic worthy of concerted research, however, has recently been re-opened in new and innovative ways, especially as there has been little effort to consider the divergent spatial trajectories of diarchy and full provincial autonomy.[13] As well as denying Indians agency in the assertion of their citizenship, the work of the Cambridge School can also be critiqued because 'The teleological framework that structured their narratives tended to construe the politics of the [provincial] arena as an increasingly inconsequential sideshow to the anticolonial struggle as it unfolded at the national level'.[14]

Gordon Johnson, and Anil Seal, eds. *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics 1870 to 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); B.R. Tomlinson, *The Indian National Congress and the Raj, 1929-1942: The Penultimate Phase* (London: Macmillan, 1976); C.J. Baker and D.A. Washbrook, *South India: Political Institutions and Political Change 1880-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1976).

[11] Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Indian Nationalism as Animal Politics', *Historical Journal*, 22 (1979), 747-763; Ranajit Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India', in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. by Ranajit Guha (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 1-8.

[12] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

[13] This lies partly behind the recent research efforts of the political geographer Stephen Legg. See, Stephen Legg, 'Scalar geographies of dyarchy: sexuality, morality and the government of India 1919-1935', Paper given at South Asia seminar series, University of Leeds, 11th May 2011.

[14] I thus apply Prashant Kidambi's critique of the Cambridge School's neglect of the impact of urban politics upon nationalist politics to an analogous neglect of the province in the context of nascent ideas about citizenship. See, Prashant

Instead, this chapter argues that 'provincialisation' also had important repercussions when scrutinised more carefully from the perspective of the province. Importantly, it initiated a whole host of legislative discrepancies in the classification of 'communities' deemed worthy of forms of affirmative action within the bureaucracy, both from province to province and between the provinces and the all-India centre. Far from denying Indians agency, this chapter therefore suggests that it was the history of Brahman/non-Brahman social, cultural and political tension which was crucial to how the Government of Bombay (GOB) applied constitutional reform in western India. These prerogatives, shaped in mutually constitutive interactions with local society, diverged considerably from those that governed the introduction of reservations at alternative spatial levels and trajectories of the state in the north of India and at the all-India centre. Constructions of citizenship were not therefore limited to a bourgeois public sphere but developed out of the variable discourses and practices of the different levels of the state.[15] This is evident in the manner in which administrative reservations in Bombay were composed and structured, thereby helping to shape particularised regional perspectives on citizenship amongst Maharashtrians.

Whilst across much of northern India Muslims represented the primary constituency to which affirmative action was provided, in Bombay Province (especially after the separation of Sindh in 1935) they formed a relatively small fraction of an 'Intermediate' class, in which non-Brahman interests predominated.[16] These spatial incongruities in the definition of 'communities' deserving of reservation, as well as the extent and scope of provincial and central policies, are suggestive of the divergence in all-India prerogatives and regional governmental concerns, and highlight the processes behind the development of contrasting notions of citizenship in the context of independence, partition and the linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries. Whilst notions of national belonging in the north and at the all-India level were

Kidambi, 'Nationalism and the City in Colonial India: Bombay, c.1890-1940', *Journal of Urban History*, 38 (2012), 950-967 (p. 951).

[15] Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 99.

[16] Reservations for 'non-Brahmans' also shaped the nature of affirmative action in Madras Province. See, Eugene Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1969); Eugene Irschick, *Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s* (Madras: Crea Publications, 1986).

dominated by this 'Muslim Question' and the repercussions of the creation of Pakistan during the 1940s and 1950s, if we look beyond the north, as suggested in the Introduction to this thesis, we can discern a much more nuanced perspective on partition's spectre. By considering the Pakistan demand as part of a much broader trend towards regional mobilisation, we can discern its impact on stimulating further efforts to both define and resist autonomous administrative spheres of political interest elsewhere in the subcontinent.

Dominant, numerically preponderate or majority 'communities' often presented demands for greater provincial autonomy in the language of citizens' rights to forms of 'self-governance'. And linked in with this was the notion of the greater or exclusive entitlement of 'locals' to receive a greater share of provincial bureaucratic roles.[17] But whereas in the north-east and north-west of the subcontinent these were primarily mediated in the colonial period on the basis of 'majority' religious 'community' interests, in the south and west of India, it was caste and linguistic 'community' rights that shaped these demands. As Susan Bayly has noted,

> 'The ... crucial factor here was the creation ... of the new linguistically defined state boundaries which were drawn up so that individual states became zones of high numerical concentration for the members of only one (or at most two or three) of the broad *sat-sudra* "peasant" jati blocs'.[18]

As Joseph Schwartzberg argued as long ago as 1968, in a study of caste and region in north India, in the case of 'non-elite peasant' castes, *exclusivity* seems to be the rule. His analysis revealed both the preponderance of Jats in the district of Ludhiana in the Punjab, where they measured over 50 per cent of the population, and the absence of similar 'peasant' castes of comparable status in the area.[19] This is not to argue for 'static' castes rooted to the land, but rather that as individuals moved about, in search of new opportunities and higher social status, they would pick up particular caste nomenclature dependent upon the role they performed in the particular linguistic region in which they were found. This

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[17] William Gould, Taylor C. Sherman, and Sarah Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the "Everyday State" in the Post-Partition Government Services of India and Pakistan', *Past and Present*, 219 (2013), 237-279 (pp. 258-264).

[18] Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 287.

[19] Joseph E. Schwartzberg, 'Caste Regions of the North Indian Plain', in *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, ed. by Milton Singer and Bernard S. Cohn (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 81-114.

hypothesis holds true in Bombay Province, where three distinctive 'peasant' castes were concentrated in three distinct linguistic regions: in the northern, Gujarati-speaking districts of the province, there existed a sizeable Patidar-Kanbi caste cluster; in the central, Marathi-speaking districts, the Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster made up the vast majority of agrarian society; and the Lingayats were found in large numbers in the southern, Kannada-speaking portions of the province. 'Exclusivity' amongst these castes was therefore closely linked to language, demonstrated by the major role each of these communities played in the reorganisation of Bombay into its three separate linguistic provinces. In fact, as we shall see, the movement for the creation of Maharashtra and Karnataka grew out of attempts by these distinct 'pockets' of numerically preponderate peasant caste groups to assert their authority within district, divisional and provincial reservation practices in Bombay during the interwar period. Conversely, those who felt threatened by these manifestations of local majoritarianism articulated their concerns in the language of 'minority' citizenship rights, whether on the basis of caste, religious or linguistic 'community' interests.

'Majority'-based reservations in Bombay also predated the later move to universal 'backwardness' at the all-India level, as conceived by the Backward Classes (Kalelkar) Commission in 1955, reinforced by the Mandal Commission of 1980, and partially implemented in the face of much high-caste resistance by 1993.[20] Since the early 1990s, political scientists have noted the increased prominence of regionally-based political parties in all-India politics, often dominated by peasants of 'non-elite' origins who demand preferential treatment in the extension of welfare provision through 'majority' reservations.[21] This development has often been regarded as a novel, contemporary trend, a result of the collapse of a 'Congress system' which had seen the Indian National Congress party govern India almost continuously since its first independent elections in 1951 until 1989.[22] Yet, as noted above, the extension of policies of affirmative action beyond demographically defined 'minorities' such as Scheduled Castes and Muslims, had

[20] *Report of the Backward Classes Commission* [henceforth *BCC*] (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1956).

[21] Aditya Nigam, 'India after the 1996 Elections: Nation, Locality and Representation', *Asian Survey*, 36 (1996), 1157-1169; Mahesh Rangrajan, 'One, Two, Many Indias', *Seminar*, 480 (1999), 26-29.

[22] Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For more on the 'Congress system', see Chapter Three of this thesis.

notable precursors in inter-war western India. Part of the problem behind the shrouding of this 'pre-history' has been the tendency within South Asian historiography to focus on the north, particularly Bengal and the Gangetic plain, at the expense of the alternative histories of the south and west.[23] And this relates to the particular problematics of writing histories of the 'whole' in this period of India's past, which was conditioned by the commencement of provincial autonomy.

4.2 Classifying Communities and Reserving Representation in Bombay

In 1925 the Government of Bombay (GOB) classified various 'communities' as diverse as low-status caste Hindus, 'untouchables' and 'tribals' as 'Backward' for the first time, prescribing 'a minimum percentage of recruitment from members of the Backward Communities to the clerical staff of all Departments in the Presidency proper'.[24] The bureaucratic reservations coincided and paralleled another communal classification for educational purposes, which fixed a minimum percentage of 'Backward' classes to be admitted to Primary Teacher Training Colleges. These rather broad and overlapping arrangements, however, caused considerable ambiguity and confusion both amongst the public and within governmental policy, and the special provincial report of the Depressed Classes and Aboriginal Tribes Committee in 1930 proposed 'that the nomenclature of classifications ... should be changed'.[25] By 1933 the Government of Bombay had decided to classify homogenised caste and religious 'communities' into 'Advanced', 'Intermediate' and 'Backward' classes, a policy which was continued under the first (1937-39) and second (1946-51) Congress governments in the province.

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[23] David Washbrook, 'Towards a History of the Present: Southern Perspectives on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, ed. by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar and Andrew Sartori (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 332-357. For more on the reasoning behind this northern and eastern focus in the historiography of the subcontinent, see Chapter One of this thesis.

[24] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 VIII, 'Political and Services Department Note', 10 May 1940.

[25] *Report of the Depressed Classes and Aboriginal Tribes Committee, Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1930), pp. 8-9.

Brahmans, who dominated the civil service, were classed as 'Advanced' alongside other traditionally literate 'communities' such as Kayastha Prabhus, Parsis and Banias.[26] The 'Intermediate' category, meanwhile, was primarily represented by 'communities' involved in the non-Brahman movement, most prominently the Marathas in Maharashtra and the Lingayats in Karnataka. It was also deemed the most suitable class for all of Bombay's Muslim population, and the large agrarian Patidar-Kanbi caste cluster in Gujarat. Finally, the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and a special 'Other Backward Communities (OBCs)' category (a disparate collection of 'communities' which included all those deemed 'Criminal Tribes'), were classified as 'Backward'.[27] This arbitrary division of 'communities' into three broadly-defined classes for the purposes of bureaucratic reservation, and the contradictory language in which reservations for different levels of the services were defined, ensured a number of divergent intra-provincial conceptualisations of citizenship. However, these ideas about citizenship also diverged from both northern and all-India conceptualisations of rights and status, primarily because reservations were based around caste rather than religion, and thus reflected the principal social cleavages of local Maharashtrian society.

4.2.1 The Provincial Services and 'Advanced' Classes

In the highest stratum of the provincial administration, generally referred to as the Provincial Services, no percentage of recruitment from any class was fixed. The reasoning behind this decision was ostensibly couched in the language of administrative efficiency, and echoed the first sentence of the note drawn up by V.H. Vachhrajani with which this chapter began, by foregrounding the state's supposed impartiality. 'If the standard of the Provincial Service is to be maintained', claimed a note jointly written by the Commissioners of the Northern, Central and Southern Divisions of the Province, 'it would be most undesirable in our opinion that a definite percentage for the recruitment of Backward and Intermediate Classes should be prescribed'.[28] The emphasis here, then, was on a

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[26] See, for example, the schedule of 'Advanced' classes in, MSA, Political and Services Department File, 'Statement showing the percentage of Intermediate and Backward communities', n.d.

[27] MSA, GOB, Reforms Office File 218, 'Schedules of Backward Classes', 29 May 1933.

[28] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Political and Services Department Note', 18 November 1940.

detached, efficient and monolithic state, objectively arbitrating social conflict – the subject-citizens of Bombay could theoretically rely upon the state to protect their rights and privileges.

Beyond the smokescreen of balanced neutrality, however, was a tendency to encourage particular 'communities' to fill such posts on account of their own specific virtues and merits. The aforementioned note, for example, went on to read, ' ... for higher appointments the bulk of the candidates must still be found in those classes where there is a hereditary tradition of culture, a high standard of intelligence and a full appreciation of the value of education'.[29] As colonial forms of knowledge concerning Indian society thus continued to condition the nature of administrative recruitment, the Provincial Services remained primarily the domain of the 'Advanced' classes despite the introduction of the classificatory system. By 1939, 71.5 per cent of appointments for this level of the provincial bureaucracy came from the 'Advanced' category (and only 0.3 per cent from the 'Backward' classes).[30] Indeed, Brahman dominance of the bureaucracy was deemed inevitable by some, since they were considered 'the *best* at secretarial and administrative work'.[31] This was evident in the Bombay Government's Political and Services Department's response to a petition from the Assistant Director of (Army) Recruiting, Southern Area, during Governor's rule in the province in the midst of the Second World War. The Assistant Director requested that the Department do all it could to push for the employment of more Marathas in the highest-level Provincial Services, as an encouragement for Marathas to enlist in the war effort. The Department's response, however, was unequivocal:

> 'So far Marathas in the Deccan area have shown no ability to stand up to the Brahman castes in the matters of adroitness and quickness of brain, which gets persons on in Government service and if the number of Marathas in such appointments is disappointingly small, the educational and perhaps psychological makeup of the Marathas has a lot to do with it'.[32]

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[29] *Ibid.*

[30] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Political and Services Department Note regarding a Letter from Mohamedally Allabux on Muslim Representation in the Services', 21 January 1941.

[31] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 XIII, 'Political and Services Department Note', 23 June 1944.

[32] *Ibid.*, 'Political and Services Department Note', 2 August 1944.

Similar inclinations in the recruitment process were also evident under the Congress-led Bombay Government, which came to power after the 1937 provincial elections. In deciding upon a candidate from Bombay for recruitment to the All-India Police Services, for example, the Home Minister K.M. Munshi agreed with the Inspector General of Police that there was no need for either restricting the level of competition or forwarding the special nomination of an 'untouchable', despite the underrepresentation of the 'Backward' classes at this level of the administration.[33] The suggestion by the Chief Minister B.G. Kher, that the Home Department consider a Harijan (the Gandhian term for the SCs) candidate elicited a blunt response from Munshi. He argued, '[The] … Department's attempts to secure good Harijans are being made but the specimen of candidates I have seen are scarcely encouraging. The proposal should be dropped'.[34] Despite the claims of colonial policymakers and nationalist politicians to objectivity and broad all-India representativeness, the prospects of 'Intermediate' and 'Backward' classes gaining employment in the highest levels of the administrative structure therefore remained limited in practice. The highest echelons of the state in Bombay remained the preserve of caste-based elites.

4.2.2 The Inferior Services and 'Backward' Classes

Perhaps the biggest problem was the centrality that both the colonial state and Congress politicians in Bombay continued to afford to definitions of 'community' in the classificatory process. Despite declaring that the categorisation of individuals on the basis of their 'class' would allow the Government to avoid making distinctions in these terms, communal considerations rather than an individual's economic or educational status were actually used to decide to which 'class' they belonged.[35] The contradictory nature of this decision was discussed in 1946, when the Bombay Congress Government responded to the petition of an individual who had refused to list his son's caste or sub-caste on the registration

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[33] For more on the specific background of K.M. Munshi, see Chapter Three of this thesis.

[34] MSA, Political and Services Department File, 'Note from K.M. Munshi, Home Minister', 13 August 1939.

[35] For a similar debate on caste or class-based considerations in the definition of 'backwardness' at the all-India level conducted after independence in the Constituent Assembly, the judiciary and the Backward Classes Commission see, Ornit Shani, *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism: The Violence in Gujarat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 52-63.

form at his new school, claiming that it 'sanctioned communalism'.[36] The school authorities had insisted on it being recorded, on account that the information had to be furnished to the Government. Whilst acknowledging the potential such forms had for 'developing the caste-complex' in children, the GOB went on to argue that if they did not state their caste, 'It is difficult to say whether they belong to the Advanced, Intermediate or Backward communities', thereby restricting their access to any educational concessions.[37] It was therefore imperative that caste information was recorded so as to ascertain whether a particular candidate for recruitment fell within the reservation guidelines. The rights of citizens to various forms of affirmative action were therefore to be mediated through the prism of 'community'.

Unlike the Provincial Services, then, such categorisation was deemed officially and publically essential to the reservation policy followed within the lowest stratum of the administration in Bombay, the 'Inferior Services'. Here the 'Intermediate' classes were already relatively well represented (69.6 per cent of all 'Inferior' jobs in 1939), and instead the Bombay Government undertook to bring in more representatives from the 'Backward' classes.[38] The SCs in particular received a further ten per cent reservation for 'Inferior' jobs, whilst the 'Backward' classes as a whole also benefited from a fixed ten per cent for recruitment to the middle stratum of the provincial bureaucracy, the 'Subordinate Services'.[39] The affirmative action strategies followed in these lowest levels of the provincial bureaucracy towards 'Backward' classes in Bombay correlated with similar prerogatives in the north of the subcontinent and at an all-India level. SCs were provided with a reservation of 12.5 per cent of vacancies filled by direct recruitment in the all-India services by the late 1930s.[40] Likewise, under the first constitution of an independent India in 1950, SCs and STs were granted reserved

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[36] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 XIII, 'Letter from a V.S. Shetti to Prime Minister and Minister in charge of Education', 7 December 1946.

[37] *Ibid.*, 'Government U.O.R. to Letter from a V.S. Shetti to Prime Minister and Minister in charge of Education', 18 January 1947.

[38] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Political and Services Department Note on Letter from Mohamedally Allabux on Muslim Representation in the Services', 21 January 1941.

[39] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 X, 'Reply to Mysore State Muslim League, requesting information on fixing of percentages of recruitment in government services', n.d.

[40] New Delhi, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], Government of India [henceforth GOI], Home Department File 1/8/49-Admn, 'Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution', 21 August 1947.

quotas of 14 per cent and seven per cent in government jobs, to ensure participation and access amongst groups who had historically been subject to caste discrimination.[41] Critical to these forms of reservation was the conceptualisation of 'minority' community's special rights and interests as citizens.

The reservations introduced by the Raj for 'minorities' during the interwar period were conditioned by practical political necessities related to the maintenance of colonial control. In tandem with increased representation in the electoral arena (as already considered in Chapter Three), they served as a mechanism through which to tie the allegiances of particular 'communities' to the Raj through forms of preferential treatment, thereby countering the Congress's claims to all-India representativeness. However, reservations were also rationalised in the language of imperial liberalism on the basis that these demographically-defined 'minority communities' required the state's special protection. They were also central to the Congress's rhetorical justifications for continuing with certain types of reservation when the party accepted office in Bombay in 1937 and after it formed India's first independent national government a decade later. Reservations for SCs and 'Backward' classes in Bombay Province invoked the principle that it was the state's 'duty' to see that all 'communities' received their 'proper share' of employment in the bureaucracy, with special standards applying to those who, by reason of their 'illiteracy and backward condition', would not normally be able to gain such jobs.[42] 'Minority communities' were thus considered a particularly important sub-section of the citizenry who required the state's special protection – in an era of constitutional reform and the steady realisation of forms of self-government, their interests were perceived as likely to be swamped under the growing tides of democratisation and the 'Indianisation' of the administrative services.

However, the introduction of caste-based reservations for SCs at the all-India level was overshadowed by the more extensive forms of affirmative action provided by the Government of India (GOI) for religious 'minorities', and in particular the

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[41] Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984), p. 122.

[42] It is therefore reflective of the second part of V.H. Vachhrajani's note with which this chapter began. See, MSA, Political and Services Department Note 1643/34 II, 'Political and Services Department Note by V.H. Vachhrajani', 19 September 1938.

Muslim 'community'. Muslims, treated as a homogeneous bloc despite their sectarian, linguistic and class differences, were seen to constitute a sizeable 'minority community' of 22.2 per cent of the subcontinent's population in the 1931 census.[43] At the all-India level, one-third of all permanent vacancies for direct recruitment were to be reserved 'for redress of communal inequalities' as a result of a debate in the Council of State in 1925.[44] However, despite being ostensibly 'negative in nature, i.e. it does not undertake to secure representation for any particular community', recruitment policy did recognise 'that Muslims are entitled to the largest proportion of [vacancies]'.[45] Similar prerogatives shaped provincial reservation policy in north India. In the United Provinces (UP)'s Civil Executive and Subordinate Excise Services, Muslims were provided with respective set quotas of 33.3 and 33.0 per cent of all jobs.[46] The obligation to protect the rights and privileges of 'minorities' was thus primarily mediated by the colonial state at the all-India level and in the north on the basis of *religious* 'community' interests.[47] And this was also to be carried over into the postcolonial period. An analogous notion of state 'duty' towards Muslim 'minorities' shaped the perspectives of certain elements within the Congress leadership, epitomised in the principles espoused by the new Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. As Taylor Sherman has pointed out,

> 'This was consistent with Nehru's concept of the nation and his brand of secularism ... Nehru did not try to impose a secular point of view on all Indians, but rather, he attempted to prevent the use of religion for political ends. He accomplished this not by staying out of questions of religious identity but by "balancing favours to various religious communities"'.[48]

Whilst the presence of reservations in the services for Muslims were considered by the Congress as synonymous with Muslim separatism and the Pakistan

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[43] Quoted in William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 29.

[44] NAI, Home Department File 14/9/33-Ests, 'Home Department Note', 23 August 1933.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] NAI, Home Department File 29/5/1/28-Ests, 'Note of S.N. Roy', 16 August 1929; see also, Gould, '"The Dual State: The Unruly Subordinate"', pp. 20-23.

[47] For an earlier, nineteenth-century example of the employment of the term 'minority' to describe Indian Muslims, see Francis R. Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 130-131.

[48] Taylor C. Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment in India* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 144; see also, Achin Vanaik, *The Furies of Indian Communalism: Religion, Modernity and Secularisation* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 67.

demand, and were therefore abolished, Nehru suggested that 'the government had a duty to make minority communities feel secure'.[49] Accordingly, the 1950 Constitution's provisions for the 'Protection of the interests of minorities' under Article 29 with a 'distinct language [Urdu], script [Persian/Indo-Arabic] or culture [Indo-Islamic] of its own' were directed primarily at protecting the interests of India's Muslims.[50] In a recent article, Joya Chatterji has proclaimed that this era saw the production of 'the new figure of "the minority citizen", neither citizen nor alien, but a hybrid subject of new national regimes of identification and law', a model which was 'distinct, in critical ways, from models derived from the West'.[51] Indeed, the 'minority citizen' was a peculiar South Asian invention. Yet the discourse of 'minority' could also have a different purchase in the various parts of the subcontinent. Chatterji's focus is primarily concentrated upon the conceptualisation of minority citizenship in the north and at the all-India level, as India and Pakistan looked to reach an agreement on rules regarding the protection and welfare of those Hindus, Sikhs (in Pakistan) and Muslims (in India) that had chosen, or had been forced by circumstances, to remain behind. Her attention has therefore primarily been drawn towards the manifestation of 'minority' in terms of religious-based communities.

However, as societal interactions with this discourse of 'minority' were primarily enacted at the local level, where subject-citizens encountered the state, its meaning could alter and shift dependent upon the particular situated perspectives of those that it had engaged. During the interwar period, J.D.V. Hodge, a particularly perceptive civil servant in the Home Department at the all-India level, noted the discrepancies and divergences in governmental policy across India, and the different implications and manifestations of the 'minority' idiom that occurred as a result. He argued that

> 'The recruitment with which we are concerned is made in several provinces, and [the Auditor General] suggests that the term 'minority community' must bear a different significance in different parts of India. To us the term practically means 'Non-Hindu'. This classification is appropriate enough for Northern India and Bengal, but it loses its value considerably in Madras, where the local Government have adopted a different classification to suit

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[49] Sherman, *State Violence and Punishment*, p. 144.
[50] 'Article 29', The Constitution of India, p. 13.
[51] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 1049-1071 (p. 1051).

local conditions. It would not be in accordance with our intention to allow Brahmans to swamp two-thirds of the vacancies'.[52]

The language of 'minority' rights and interests was also invoked in the context of a different set of circumstances in Bombay. This had important implications for the definition of citizenship amongst these groups. Whereas in the north and at an all-India level, the idiom of 'minority' came to be principally associated with homogenously-defined Muslim interests, both the state and public in western India instead considered it primarily as a justification (alongside the notion of 'backwardness') for affirmative action for the 'Backward' classes. Representations received from individuals and caste-based groups in western India carefully engaged with this language in their efforts to extract maximum concessions and benefits from the provincial state. For example, a 'Petition from certain Daivadnya caste people residing in Kanara District' for their re-classification as 'Backward' contended that they formed a '*very small minority* of 17,000 souls in a population of 417,000 souls in Kanara District', with a 'very insignificant ratio of government service even taken on a population point of basis'.[53] Likewise, the Ahir Sonars of Jalgaon city in East Khandesh District, looking back on the redefinition of their nomenclature, claimed, 'We were classed as "Backward" with a view to give us the necessary help to which a *minority is entitled*, but then all of a sudden we found ourselves in the company of "Intermediates"'.[54] This also had important implications in the aftermath of independence and partition. So whereas the construction and articulation of 'minority' citizenship rights for the new Congress-led GOI was caught up in a reciprocal relationship with Pakistan related to religion, in the context of mass migration, refugee rehabilitation and 'secular' constitutional commitments, it was articulated rather differently in Bombay. Here the vocabulary of *swaraj*, self-government and democratisation was linked to calls for the linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines. The definition of 'minority' rights in Bombay was thus primarily conditioned by concerns about adequate safeguards for these 'minorities' or the rejection of reorganisation altogether, and was commonly enacted through caste and linguistic 'minority community' based idioms. In part, this was a reaction to

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[52] NAI, Home Department File 29/5/1/28-Ests, 'Note of J.D.V. Hodge', 9 November 1928.

[53] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 V, 'Petition from certain Daivadnya Caste people residing in Kanara District', 23 November 1938. My italics.

[54] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 X, 'Letter from "Ahir Sonars"', 4 May 1942. My italics.

the threat of 'majority' or numerically preponderate castes and linguistic groups within a reorganised province and in the context of the implementation of a fully democratic political process.

4.2.3 The Subordinate Services and 'Intermediate' Classes

This brings us back to the idea of the 'provincialisation' of state legislative practices, as considered at the start of this chapter. And it also provides an angle through which to consider the GOB's policy towards reservations amongst the middle stratum of the provincial bureaucracy, the 'Subordinate Services' or clerical cadre. Here, reservations departed considerably in both content and mission from 'minority' interests (which, as we have seen, governed the justification for affirmative action in Bombay amongst the 'Backward Classes' in the 'Inferior Services') and religious prerogatives. For purposes of administrative efficiency Bombay Province had been subdivided into four commissionerships, each headed up by a Commissioner who reported back to Bombay's Governor. These commissionerships broadly reflected the linguistic demographic composition of the province and, as we shall see in the penultimate section of this chapter, lower level provincial civil servants were not generally transferred between them. First, Sindh was primarily constituted by Sindhi-speakers, and was the only Muslim majority area within the Province. It always had a rather ambiguous relationship with the rest of Bombay, and was constituted as a separate province of its own in 1935. Meanwhile, what became known as the Northern Division was primarily made up of Gujarati-speaking regions (with the exception of Thana District), whilst the Central Division was constituted by Marathi-speaking areas, and the Southern Division Kannada- and Marathi-speaking districts. Importantly, Muslims made up fewer than eight per cent of the combined population of the Marathi- and Kannada-speaking districts of the Central and Southern Divisions.[55]

Muslims, then, as a religious minority interest, still maintained 'separate electorates' in the provincial legislative assembly, whilst their representation remained an important aspect of the provincial machinations around reservations. Yet they played second fiddle to caste considerations in inter-war

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[55] 'Imperial Table XVII: Caste, Tribe, Race or Nationality', in *Census of India, 1931, volume VIII – part II: Bombay Presidency, Statistical Tables*, ed. by A.H. Dracup and H.T. Sorley (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1933), pp. 412-443.

Bombay Province, even more so after the separation of Sindh. In response to a question from the Mysore Muslim League as to whether the Bombay Government had created any forms of special treatment for the province's Muslims, the Political and Services Department noted that, 'the Government has prescribed certain minimum percentages of recruitment to the Intermediate and Backward Classes as a whole and not for each and every community as such belonging to these castes'.[56] Muslims were thereby expected to compete will all other 'Intermediate' classes for reserved appointments. Likewise, they also remained standardised as a unitary and homogenised 'Intermediate' class, despite demands for reclassification from particular sub-sections of Muslims on the lines of sect, language, class and caste.[57] Indeed, the Sub-Committee of the Backward Classes Board in Bombay was to revise the schedule of Aboriginal and Hill Tribes on this account, removing the Tadvi Bhil 'community' from the list because they were also Muslims and therefore not entitled to claim the concessions on offer to both 'Intermediate' and 'Backward' classes.[58] In another note dismissing a request from the Collector of Ratnagiri to reclassify the Daldis (a Muslim fishing community), as 'Backward', the Department argued that '"Caste" is not a feature of the Muslim community'.[59] Religion as a category of classification, as we have seen in the previous sub-section too, was therefore *relatively* peripheral in western India in comparison to the north and at an all-India level.

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[56] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 X, 'Reply to Mysore State Muslim League, requesting information on fixing of percentages of recruitment in government services', n.d.

[57] Similar demands based around notions of religious 'minorities' within the Muslim community emanated from the north. See, Justin Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India: Religion, Community and Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); William Gould, 'The U.P. Congress and "Hindu Unity": Untouchables and the Minority Question in the 1930s', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 39 (2005), 845-860 (pp. 858-859).

[58] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Proceedings of the Sub-Committee of the Backward Board constituted for the purpose of revising the schedules of Backward Classes as published in G.R. G.D. No. 9930 dated 03/12/1934', n.d.

[59] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 X, 'Political and Services Department Note on Letter from S. Aminuddin, Collector of Ratnagiri, for reclassification of Daldis as "Backward"', 15 May 1941; Compare this statement to the work of Susan Bayly, who has noted that rather than caste norms being unique to Hinduism, 'one finds both in the past and today a high level of sensitivity to the nuances of caste, especially in matters of marriage and ritual pollution' amongst India's other faiths. See, Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, p. 18.

Despite this, we can draw some connections between policies geared towards ensuring Muslim representation in the north and the reservation scheme implemented by the Bombay Government for the Subordinate Services. But in doing so it is necessary to move away from the provinces in which Muslims made up a sizeable demographic minority of the population, such as UP, and towards regions where they constituted majorities. In the north Indian provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, Muslims formed a majority of 55.8 and 53.2 per cent of the population according to the 1931 Census.[60] This slight numerical preponderance formed the backdrop to a relatively novel form of reservation in the Muslim 'majority' regions of northern and eastern Bengal, which sought to prescribe 'representation ... in proportion to ... numerical *strength*', rather than weakness.[61] Here, 'community' still mediated the rights of citizens to access bureaucratic jobs and were still justified in the language of 'backwardness', but were conceptualised and articulated on the basis of 'majority' Muslim community interests instead.[62] Likewise, by examining the intricate machinations of the Subordinate Services reservation system in Bombay Province, we can see how the progressive 'Indianisation' of the services during the interwar period chimed with local ideals of belonging, through which the Marathas saw themselves as hereditary 'sons-of-the-soil' deserving of superior representation within Marathi-speaking portions of the region.

As we saw in the previous chapters, growing assertiveness on the part of low- and intermediate-caste communities during the interwar period in Bombay often manifested itself in agitation against the likelihood of 'Brahman Raj' if the British were to leave India. The British colonial authorities in Bombay sought to plug-in to these concerns and divert non-Brahman political allegiances away from the Congress by creating a series of reservations in the recruitment of provincial civil servants. For appointments to the middle stratum of the provincial administration, the Subordinate Services, a variable percentage was fixed for the 'Intermediate' classes in the different districts of the province, which correlated with population figures and the regions in which non-Brahman agitation was at its most vociferous. In the Central and Southern Divisions of the province, made up

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[60] Quoted in Gould, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 29.

[61] NAI, Home Department File 29/5/1/28-Ests, 'Note of S.N. Roy', 16 August 1929. My italics.

[62] Roy noted that whilst the Hindu community in Bengal constituted a 'minority', they were deemed as certainly not in need of protection. See, *Ibid.*

of Marathi- and Kannada-speaking districts, the 'Intermediate' classes made up large proportions of the population and led their own vernacular non-Brahman movements. Here, higher percentages of government reservations were enacted for these classes. So, for example, whilst in the Southern Division (made up of both Kannada-speaking districts such as Bijapur and Dharwar, and Marathi-speaking districts such as Kolaba and Ratnagiri, as well as districts like Belgaum where sizeable groups from both 'communities' lived), this was as high as sixty per cent (i.e. a majority of all jobs in the Division), in the Gujarati-speaking districts of Surat and Panch Mahals, as well as in Bombay City, it was only thirty per cent.[63]

Many Marathas were ideally placed to take advantage of this system of recruitment, as a numerical majority in Marathi-speaking districts who controlled the non-Brahman movement, but still 'backward' enough in comparison to 'Advanced' classes such as the Brahmans to demand reservations to improve their social well-being. In the case of the Subordinate Secretariat Service, for example, despite reserved 'Intermediate' class recruitment not being conducted on the basis of specific shares for particular 'communities' within this category, out of 30 per cent of the 51 posts reserved for the 'Intermediate' classes, 27 per cent went to the Marathas. This, they suggested, ensured that, 'On the whole it would appear the Marathas have got a fair – perhaps more than that – share in the Subordinate Secretariat Service, so far as, for instance, the 1940 recruitment was concerned'.[64] This early example of a 'creamy layer' (i.e. the benefits of reservations going to those relatively wealthier, better educated, numerically preponderate and socially dominant groups *within* this category) provoked consternation amongst other 'Intermediate' groups (including the region's Muslims) who found their ostensible rights to reservation circumscribed.[65] The Kurubar Wool Industry Development Cooperative Association, for example, which was based at Kanebennur in Dharwar District, presented a petition to the GOB on

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[63] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 X, 'Reply to Mysore State Muslim League, requesting information on fixing of percentages of recruitment in government services', n.d.; MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 VI, 'Political and Services Department Note', 20 June 1939.

[64] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Political and Services Department Note', 26 March 1941.

[65] The term 'creamy layer' was first introduced in the report of the Sattanathan Commission of 1971, which divided the 'Other Backward Classes' category created by the 1950 Constitution into two further sub-categories (the 'backward classes' and the 'most backward classes'), in an effort to ensure reservations reached the most needy amongst Indian society.

behalf of the Kurubar/Dhangar shepherd caste which deprecated the broad composition of the 'Intermediate' class category. They suggested that 'all the concessions are swept away by the advanced classes *among* the Intermediate and the *really* backward classes that deserve help are denied all help. Help does not reach the *really* backward classes down to Kurubars and the like'.[66]

However, even 27 per cent of recruitment still underrepresented the near 43 per cent of the 'Intermediate' classes which the Marathas constituted, and ensured that calls for their adequate representation on population grounds also continued to permeate petitions to the provincial government.[67] The manner in which rights to reservations were presented therefore deviated on the basis of the particular situated perspective of the individual or community concerned. So, whereas the interests of a large proportion of Muslim, SC and other non-Brahman groups within Marathi-speaking districts of Bombay were often best served by appeals in the language of 'minority' citizenship rights, in contrast a resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Ratnagiri District Maratha Association in September 1939 proposed that 'candidates from the Maratha community should be selected always in proportion to the strength of the population of the Maratha community of this district'.[68] But because, as we saw in the previous two chapters, the very definition of 'Maratha' itself was fluid, it could also sometimes serve the interests of these same groups to claim 'Maratha' status too, especially in those contexts in which citizenship rights were mediated on the basis of locally-defined 'majorities'. The natural upshot of the idea of 'community' entitlement based on numerical preponderance was the growing demand for the creation of a homogeneous province where 'majority communities' could assert their authority over local institutions and state resources. Just as the Pakistan demand looked to provide

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[66] MSA, Political and Services Department File 490/46 Pt. I (B Class), 'The Kurubar Wool Industry Development Cooperative Association Ltd., Kanebennur, (Dist. Dharwar)', 17 September 1946. My italics.

[67] According to the 1931 Census, the 'Mahratta and Kunbi' caste cluster constituted 22 per cent of the entire population of Bombay Presidency, including the Princely States, and nearly 43 per cent of the 'Intermediate' classes. See, 'Imperial Table XVII: Caste, Tribe, Race or Nationality', in *Census of India, 1931, volume VIII – part II*, pp. 412-443.

[68] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 IX, 'Copy of Resolution No. 5 passed by the Working Committee of the Ratnagiri District Maratha Association', 17 September 1939; See also, MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 XIII, 'Copy of a Memorial addressed to His Excellency the Governor of Bombay, by Mr. J.S. Savant, President, Maratha Recruitment Board, Bombay', 9 October 1944; *Ibid.*, ''Letter from Sardar Rao Bahadur V.L. Thube (MLA) to the Governor of Bombay', 17 September 1945.

Muslims with autonomy in areas where they constituted the greater part of the population, demands for linguistic reorganisation promised a greater degree of self-sovereignty for either Marathas (if defined on the basis of these loose and flexible caste-based affiliations) or Maharashtrians (on the basis of language).

4.2.4 The 1950 Constitution, OBCs, and Bureaucratic Reservations

By the time reservations in government services were considered by the Constituent Assembly, the ongoing events of partition and the creation of Pakistan had drastically altered the political climate. During the debates, P.S. Deshmukh proposed 'that the preponderance of certain communities in Government service be done away with and a system of recruitment proportionate to the population of groups of backward and intermediate communities as exists for instance in the Bombay Presidency be immediately introduced'.[69] However, this did not correlate with Nehru's vision of a new casteless and egalitarian India which, as we have seen, found its way into the new constitution under Article 16.1 which provided for 'equality of opportunity' in employment by the state. Deshmukh's scheme was therefore dismissed as a 'legacy from the past' by the Home Department.[70] However, despite such rhetoric, the constitution did provide for positive preferential treatment in the administration to the nation's SCs and STs, owing to their particularly acute social and economic 'backwardness'.[71] This mirrored much of the discourse on 'minority' representation favoured by the Bombay Government in its reservations amongst the Inferior Services towards the SCs and STs, but omitted any coherent decision on the OBCs. Yet 'backwardness' as defined in the constitution could also be considered a condition for reservation for all 'communities'. As Ornit Shani has noted,

> 'Reservation for the backward castes was a more ambiguous manner ... Article 16(4) of the constitution secured the provision for reservations of posts for "any backward class of citizens". But there was no clear and

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[69] NAI, Home Department File, 22/2/47-Ests (S), 'Proposal of Dr. P.S. Deshmukh', 3 November 1947.

[70] *Ibid.*, 'Home Department Note on Dr. P.S. Deshmukh's Resolution', 16 November 1947.

[71] Galanter, *Competing Equalities*; Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, pp. 268-269.

acceptable criterion for defining who the Other Backward Classes/Castes (OBCs) were'.[72]

This ambiguity caused difficulties for the provincial Congress Government in implementing the all-India directives and new constitutional requirements. At first, it was decided that the 'proper course' for the Bombay Government was to continue 'to make reservation in favour of members of the Backward Class as a whole (and not only in favour of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes)', pending clearer parameters.[73] It was only after protracted debate with the centre on the intricate workings and 'spirit' of the constitution that the Bombay Government was forced to accept their view and separate SCs and STs from the 'Backward' Class. The Government of India argued that,

> ' ... while it is not obligatory as a constitutional necessity to make reservations in the public services separately for the SCs and STs, such reservation should, as far as possible, be made as a matter of convention. This is desirable if Government are to carry out the spirit of the obligation imposed on them by Articles 16(4) and 335 of the Constitution'.[74]

The Bombay Government, on the other hand claimed,

> 'The spirit of the constitution cannot be deduced from certain specific provisions but must be deduced from the entire framework of the Constitution with special reference to its basic principles ... Of course it is open to Government to make provision for reservation in respect of any particular SC or ST if it be a backward class of citizens; but that will be a matter for consideration in respect of each individual caste or tribe, and such reservation will not be *qua* [considered as/in the capacity of] a SC or ST but as a backward class'.[75]

Part of the reason for the Bombay Government's eventual willingness to compromise in January 1953 was that it would ensure they were eligible for grants the Government of India made available for SCs and STs.[76] Reservations for 'Intermediate' classes, too, were not immediately cancelled. In fact educational concessions, it was suggested, might be continued indefinitely as certain

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[72] Shani, *Communalism, Caste and Hindu Nationalism*, p. 54.

[73] MSA, Political and Services Department File 490/46 IV, 'Political and Services Department Note', n.d.

[74] MSA, Political and Services Department File 490/46 X-A, 'Letter from Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs', 20 March 1952.

[75] *Ibid.*, 'Note of Office of R.L.A. in response to Letter from Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs', n.d..

[76] See the file in, *Ibid.*, 'Reservation in Government Service for the members of the Backward Class'.

'communities' within the Intermediate class, such as the Dhangars, Bariyas and Dharalas were perceived by the GOB to come under the remit of educationally 'weaker sections of the people' in the wording of Article 46.[77] Some 'Intermediate' classes therefore came to be perceived anew as being encompassed within the OBC category in Bombay. Meanwhile, Article 340 provided for the creation of a Backward Classes Commission (BCC), which was to be tasked with investigating the social and economic conditions of OBCs, determining the criteria for identification of such groups (caste or class), and preparing a schedule of the socially and educationally backward classes in accordance with their chosen criteria. Set up in 1953 under the Chairmanship of Kakasaheb Kalelkar, it was also to make recommendations as to the ameliorative measures necessary to improve their circumstances. Submitting its report in 1955, its most contentious proposal advocated a minimum percentage of reservation in government service for OBCs, which resulted in a number of the Commission's members, including its Chairman, conveying minutes of dissent, and its eventual shelving by government.[78]

The manner and means through which these OBCs were defined mirrored, in many ways, the already existing approach of the provincial Bombay Government to reservation.[79] Indeed, the Commission went as far as to cite the Bombay system as an influential example for future practice in northern India and at the centre.[80] First, OBCs were classified on the basis of caste rather than class, in a similar manner to which the 'Intermediate' and 'Backward' classes were defined on the basis of caste in Bombay. This led the Ministry of Home Affairs to dismiss the Report: 'It cannot be denied that the caste system is the greatest hindrance in the way of our progress towards an egalitarian society, and the recognition of the specified castes as backward may serve to maintain and even perpetuate the existing distinctions on the basis of caste'.[81] Second, the Commission created a list of 2,399 'backward communities' who should be classified as OBCs and provided

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[77] MSA, Political and Services Department File 490/46 V, 'Political and Services Department Note', 19 October 1950.

[78] *Report of the BCC*, vol. I: Main Report, pp. i-xxv, 125-141; *Ibid.*, vol. III: Minutes of Dissent; Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Memorandum on the Report of the BCC* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1956), pp. 24-25.

[79] It also reflected similar policies implemented for 'backward castes' in southern India. See, Galanter, *Competing Equalities*, p. 159; Sunita Parikh, *The Politics of Preference: Democratic Institutions and Affirmative Action in the United States and India* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 171, 173.

[80] *Report of the BCC*, vol. I, p. 137.

[81] Ministry of Home Affairs, *Memorandum on the Report*, p. 3.

with greater representation in the services: landowners of uneconomic holdings; agricultural and landless labourers; cattle and sheep breeders; artisans; barbers; washermen; and communities engaged in domestic and menial service. It therefore included 'communities' who were numerically preponderate in their respective localities and provinces, in a similar manner to the Bombay Government with regard to its 'Intermediate' classes in the Subordinate Services. Finally, it recommended that 25 per cent of vacancies in Class I of the All-India Services, 33.3 per cent in Class II, and as much as 40 per cent in Classes III and IV should be reserved for OBCs, taking into account reservation in proportion to population (although reducing the percentage below half to 'leave sufficient scope for highly qualified candidates to come into the services').[82]

Whilst the Backward Classes Commission Report was ultimately rejected, policy in regard to affirmative action continued to be a decisive issue for the remainder of the twentieth century. In Maharashtra, for example, a provincial BCC under the chairmanship of B.D. Deshmukh recommended caste-based reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs in 1964. In 1979, however, Maharashtra's Chief Minister Sharad Pawar decided to reserve 46 per cent of posts for the 'poor' on the basis of class considerations, thereby permitting the Marathas to benefit from these forms of affirmative action, too.[83] The move towards 'universal backwardness' also finally took hold in the north and at the all-India level, with the implementation of the recommendations of the 1980 Mandal Commission (the Kalelkar Commission's heir) during the early 1990s alongside much high-caste anger.[84]

The variable justifications behind bureaucratic reservations within interwar Bombay Province have a number of important implications for an analysis of the conceptualisation and enactment of citizenship in India. First, they demonstrate that ideas about citizenship were not imposed by a monolithic and distant state, and that a sense of citizenship was therefore not abstract, Eurocentric, and without any practical purchase for ordinary Indians. Despite the theoretical commitment to state impartiality and universal equality of opportunity in recruitment to the Provincial Services, candidates continued to be selected on the basis of their community's perceived inherent propensity towards administrative service. And beyond this highest echelon of the provincial bureaucracy,

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[82] *Report of the BCC*, vol. I, pp. 139-140.
[83] Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution*, p. 247.
[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 320 ff; Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, pp. 291-305.

community considerations were actively endorsed in the recruitment process. The state therefore came to be constituted by a multitude of societal actors, who frequently worked at cross-purposes to one another and whose actions were conditioned by an engagement with the circumstances of local society. The 'provincialisation' of legislative practices during the interwar period also actively encouraged these multiple and competing spatial trajectories of the state. The decision to implement different percentage-based gradations of reservations for the 'Intermediate' classes in the Subordinate Services in Bombay, for example, was influenced by greater non-Brahman political assertion within Marathi- and Kannada-speaking areas than elsewhere in the province.

Second, this ensured discrepancies in the everyday application of rhetorical tropes utilised by the state to justify reservations. So the commitment to protecting minority citizens' rights and interests amongst both the Raj and the Congress were primarily formulated around religion in the north of the subcontinent and at the all-India level, especially in the face of growing demands for 'Muslim separatism' and then in the aftermath of partition. However, in Bombay this obligation on the part of the state was mediated through caste-based identities instead. These influenced the recommendations of the BCC in 1955, but were rejected by the central Congress government at the time. Third, the multiple and competing trajectories of the state and the role of local society within it had important repercussions upon the articulation of citizenship amongst ordinary members of the public themselves. The particular ways in which individuals and groups would express their rights to forms of reservation were thus conditioned by their own specific situated perspectives on the state. For example, the emphasis upon minority citizens' rights to reservations through the medium of caste-based identities in Bombay was perceived as one means of surmounting the growing dominance of the Marathas within local levels of the state as a result of reservations introduced for the 'Intermediate' category. By claiming to constitute a hard-pressed 'minority', individuals, families and groups within particular caste-based communities looked to be reclassified as 'Backward' and thereby make use of the reservations accorded to this class.

4.3 Provincial Reservations at the All-India Level?

By the late 1920s, the GOI was beginning to pay increased attention to the divergences and discrepancies in provincial legislative practice, especially as individuals, 'community' representatives, and provincial governments in their capacity as envoys for their constituents, campaigned for the introduction of both (a) provincial-based reservations and (b) provincial reservation practices at the all-India level. The latter anticipated the introduction of affirmative action for *locally-*recruited elements of the all-India services (i.e. those recruited to work for the GOI, but within Bombay) on similar lines to Bombay provincial policy, where 'Intermediate' classes would be provided with reservations in proportion to their local numerical strength. Meanwhile, the former attempted to introduce set quotas of recruitment for the entire central, all-India services (mainly based in Delhi) to fulfil on the basis of the provincial proportions of the subcontinent's population. Like the previous section, this section of the chapter will consider these demands and the central government's reactions to them in the context of citizenship.

First, this was a period in which an impending and then achieved independence ensured high 'expectations that the first postcolonial governments would bring about significant changes in both the composition and the functioning of the services'.[85] Yet these expectations, and the manner in which they shaped ideas about the rights and status of various elements of the Indian public, diverged depending upon the particular 'situated knowledges' through which individuals perceived of their relationship with the state.[86] Interestingly, these were still articulated on the basis of 'community' rather than individual interests, even in instances where petitioners probably had more personal predilections in mind. For those who argued in favour of provincial reservations at the all-India level, much emphasis was placed upon the dominance of particular provincial communities within the central administrative services. But their demands for reservation on a proportional population basis for the various provinces was also conditioned by the ideals of self-government – to be both more accountable and representative, the central state needed to draw representatives from all areas of the subcontinent, whilst in its localised manifestations it would help

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[85] Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter', pp. 240-241.
[86] Gupta, *Red Tape*, p. 104.

immeasurably if the all-India administration's representative spoke the regional vernacular. Conversely, 'minority' citizenship rights to the state's protection were evoked by those groups that were likely to suffer if these forms of provincialism were integrated into the central bureaucratic system. Their reservations were expressed in the language of national integration both ahead of and after independence, where provincial demands would damage the solidarity of the new nation-state.

4.3.1 Interwar Provincial Reservation Practices at the All-India Level

It was in 1928 that the Government of India first decided that it 'might be advantageous to settle at this stage some of the points that have arisen ... with reference to the conditions of the provinces' in regard to all-India recruitment.[87] The Auditor General accepted that 'local distinctions' in legislative policy from one province to the next 'should not be applied' generally across the entire central secretariat. However, he perceived the problem as being 'different' for those limited sections of the all-India services in which 'recruitment is practically confined to particular areas'.[88] In these localised pockets of all-India administration, located at a distance from Delhi and generally bound to be recruited from a limited regional section of Indians, the Auditor General deemed it necessary to adopt local recruitment practices in appointment to central offices. The Auditor General's viewpoint was supported by the Home Department civil servant W.H. Emerson, who recognised the logic of applying provincial representative practice in circumstances that were more likely to 'suit local conditions than any we can devise'.[89] Yet others remained unconvinced by such arguments. A.H. Lloyd, a civil servant within the Government of India's Finance Department, rejected the idea of following provincial policy in locally-recruited stratums of the all-India services as 'entirely divergent' from the principle hitherto followed at the centre and therefore 'logistically impossible to defend'. He suggested a uniform policy should be pursued across the central secretariat wherever located, thereby avoiding loopholes and potential challenges which divergent strategies would create. Concurrently, Lloyd also considered the application of provincial policies would 'ensure the taking of a number of men

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[87] NAI, Home Department File 29/5/28-Ests, 'Note of K.P. Anantan', 7 November 1928.
[88] *Ibid.*, 'Quote from Auditor-General', 13 August 1928.
[89] NAI, Home Department File 29/5/1/28-Ests, 'Note of W.H. Emerson', 20 August 1929.

wholly inferior to the requirements of offices', thereby 'reducing the minimum standard of efficiency ... below a reasonable limit'.[90]

This debate on the viability of different reservation policies within the all-India services demonstrates the manner in which colonial ideas about managing local networks and informal political alliances could shift depending on spatial location. And this has a number of important implications for thinking about how citizenship was conceptualised, articulated and enacted by different groups within Indian society. Under pressure from regional petitions and memorials, as well as divergent provincial policies as a result of diarchy, the Auditor General and Emerson commended the introduction of provincial reservation practices within localised elements of the all-India services. However in doing so, they implicitly favoured local, indigenous rights to representation. This could be perceived in a positive light. It seemed to fulfil the citizenship aspirations of a broad cross-section of local society, as a harbinger for the greater democratisation of the locally-recruited all-India services by assisting in a (locally) more socially inclusive distribution of state jobs. Rather than appointing an 'outsider' from an entirely different part of India, by recruiting central state representatives from amongst vernacular-speaking local society, they would be perceived to be both more accessible and accountable towards the majority of the local public.

At the same time, however, as noted by Lloyd, the introduction of these provincial forms of reservation could have more 'profane' dimensions. First, they contradicted the universal principles of merit that were supposedly central to the recruitment process at the all-India level. They promised to circumscribe the potential 'outsiders' from other parts of the subcontinent would have for gaining access to this form of central state employment, as they would not necessarily be included within or privy to the existing local classificatory and reservation practices. So whilst it marked inclusiveness for some, it excluded others from access to state jobs and resources within this particular territorial domain. Simultaneously, the introduction of such reservations could also potentially permit locally dominant factions and communities to monopolise recruitment to government jobs and thereby employ the resources of the central state for their own particular benefit. They therefore imperilled the state's commitment to protecting the rights and interests of 'minority citizens', whether these were

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[90] *Ibid.*, 'Note of A.H. Lloyd', 2 October 1929.

defined on the basis of religion at the all-India level, or more locally on the basis of 'Backward' and 'Intermediate' classes. There was, therefore, a number of ways in which citizens' rights to provincial forms of reservation at the all-India level could be conceptualised and acted upon, which often depended on the particular perspective of the individual or 'community' concerned.

With no consensus able to be reached in the 1928 debate, the discussion of provincial reservation practices in pockets of locally recruited all-India services was shelved, and demands for its implementation contained in representations and petitions received by the GOI were ignored. Attempts to have Bombay provincial policies introduced within the all-India services were primarily led by non-Brahmans, and in particular representatives of the Marathas. In March 1932, the prominent Non-Brahman Party politician Bhaskarrao Jadhav, a Maratha by caste, asked whether the Raj intended to apply 'the rules made by the Government of Bombay for the recruitment of the non-Brahmin backward communities from the Marathi and Canarese speaking districts ... when recruiting servants in the departments directly under the Government of India ... within the territorial limits of that Presidency'.[91] And in August 1936, the General Secretary of the Maratha Educational Conference V.L. Thube submitted a representation requesting Maratha representation at the all-India level. Thube argued that for all-India reservations, ' ... it is not social position or status that has any significance here. It is the condition of education that counts. No doubt we are a little [more] advanced than depressed, but stand far behind Muslims and others that are classed as "Minority Communities"'.[92]

Thube thus invoked the idea of educational 'backwardness' to demand the framing of all-India policies of affirmative action to eliminate social inequalities. But at the same time he remained dismissive of these special privileges being apportioned solely to demographic 'minorities' as followed in contemporary GOI reservations policies. Thube's petition therefore suggested that the epithet of 'backwardness' could also be assigned to groups and 'communities' that were numerically dominant in the locality but who also continued to suffer from a lack of central secretarial representation. The fact that the Marathas had already come

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[91] NAI, Home Department File 22/25/32-Ests, 'Question down for meeting on 14 March 1932'.

[92] NAI, Home Department File 34/4/36-Ests, 'Letter from Rao Bahadur Vithalrao L. Thube, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department', 28 August 1936.

to dominate reservations prescribed for the 'Intermediate' classes within the provincial administrative services was conveniently ignored – their 'backwardness' was now to be re-contextualised in comparison to others at the all-India level in an effort to access central government jobs. Meanwhile Jadhav noted the manner in which the Bombay Government's provincial policies favoured the recruitment of 'backward' communities from particular localities in the province (as noted in the previous section of this chapter), where the non-Brahman movement was at its strongest. He expected the same forms of reservation to be introduced in the locally recruited elements of the all-India services. Calls for the introduction of reservations on Bombay policy lines from amongst Marathas therefore envisaged the protection of their local rights to jobs in their 'homeland', where they represented the numerically preponderate 'community' within Marathi-speaking districts.

In the face of this sustained petitioning, the central government was again prepared to consider adopting provincial practices in locally recruited elements of the all-India services during 1944. In fact, it was anticipated in a note by A.R. Mudaliar that the problem of divergent provincial and all-India practices would 'come up in acute form' as a result of the amalgamation of Madras Province's railway services under central jurisdiction from 1 April.[93] In the past, the Madras-based railways had accepted the principle of proportional representation of non-Brahmans, Brahmans and other 'communities' in the service, in line with Madras provincial governmental policy.[94] But whilst the central Railways Department was prepared to accept the continuance of the current system in Madras, on account of the railways being located solely in Madras, it was considered that 'to introduce further sub-divisions in reservations on the railways as a whole' was not 'practicable'.[95] The Home Department corroborated this argument 'because the demand for such a recognition does not exist universally and the application of

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[93] NAI, Home Department File 31/28/44-Ests (S), 'Note on "Central Services and Communal Representation" by Sir A.R. Mudaliar', n.d.

[94] The Madras provincial policy on bureaucratic reservations was perhaps the most closely linked to those implemented in Bombay, concentrating as it did upon increasing non-Brahman representation in the services.

[95] NAI, Home Department File 31/28/44-Ests (S), 'Railway Department Note', 29 March 1944.

the Provincial reservation may upset the policy and proportions in this behalf laid down on an all-India basis'.[96]

Local reservations were therefore permitted in this instance, but were recognised only because they had already been utilised, and to tamper with them would have been to cause unnecessary inconvenience. There was no question of these provincial policies being extended to cover railway lines that passed through more than one province, on account of the difficulties that the application of the divergent policies of different provincial administrations would create. Meanwhile, Brahman/non-Brahman conflict was deemed not to be of all-India significance. In the same year, in fact, a demand for reservations for the Lingayats in the central services was rejected because, 'The minority communities for whom a definite percentage of vacancies in the central services is reserved are not territorial or tribal sub-sections of India, but the communities who form a distinct unit by virtue of their professing a religion distinct from Hinduism'.[97] Religion rather than caste thus continued to condition the manner in which 'community' interests were represented in rights to reservation at the all-India level.

The colonial central government ultimately dismissed the introduction of regional reservation policies amongst locally recruited elements of the all-India services for a number of interrelated reasons that referenced ideas about the meaning and nature of citizenship. First, as noted in Lloyd's aversion to introducing representation on these lines, it was deemed likely to impair the 'efficiency' of the central bureaucracy, where choosing candidates on the basis of merit and intellectual ability was ostensibly presented as the best method for recruitment and correlated with colonial justifications for their rule related to state impartiality and the rule of law. At one level, then, emphasis was placed on the 'equality of opportunity' for recruitment to state employment at the all-India level for all citizens regardless of the candidate's social background. At another level, however, policies of affirmative action on the basis of 'community' were given credence (as noted in the previous section of this chapter) because Muslims and SCs both received forms of reservation at the all-India level during the 1930s. These were justified by the colonial state on the novel footing that it was necessity to protect and guarantee 'minority' citizens' rights and interests in the

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[96] *Ibid.*, 'Home Department Note', 10 August 1944.
[97] NAI, Home Department File 31/9/44-Ests (S), 'Home Department Note', 18 March 1944.

context of political 'democratisation' and bureaucratic 'Indianisation' – in reality they had a lot to do with efforts to bolster and maintain colonial authority.

The second reason for the rejection of regional reservation policies at the all-India level by the GOI was, therefore, in part related to this particular interpretation of which citizens were 'deserving' of reservation. The classificatory and recruitment processes of Madras and Bombay tampered with this definition by introducing reservations amongst the numerically preponderate non-Brahmans. Justified on the basis of 'backwardness' but arranged to reflect local demographics, they were perceived by their GOI detractors to promote opportunities for the monopolisation of all-India state jobs by these groups. This was considered likely to take place at the expense of Muslim and SC 'minority' interests within the province, which the GOI had undertaken commitments to protect, whilst restricting the access of individuals and groups from outside the province to all-India posts too.

4.3.2 Post-Independence Provincial Reservations at the All-India Level

After independence, the Congress government at the centre, like their colonial predecessors, continued to disavow the efficacy of introducing provincial reservation policies within locally recruited elements of the all-India services for much the same reasons. In addition, however, the recent events of partition, the necessities of establishing the new nation's legitimacy and territorial integrity, and efforts to define the composition, status and rights of its newly-independent citizenry ensured that Congress politicians and state servicemen within the GOI presented it as an 'inopportune moment to promulgate any new orders which [would] serve to create a rift between communities or between the sub-sections of any community'.[98] Rejecting the provincial policies on reservation of Bombay and Madras, the new Auditor-General of India argued in 1948 that,

> 'The object of the Government of the Dominion of India being to go more
> on the basis of merit, in future, than on communal considerations, except
> to the very limited extent contemplated by the Resolution [for SCs and STs],
> to continue the distinction between the various sub-communities of the

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[98] NAI, Home Department File 26/7/48-NGS, 'Ministry of Home Affairs u/o', n.d.

Hindu community would only mean the perpetuation of the retrograde policy followed in the past'.[99]

However, the anticipation of independence and its ultimate arrival with the end of colonialism was also perceived as a major transition and generated heightened expectations about the implementation of significant changes to the all-India services amongst the public at large, too.[100] As the national Congress-led government sought a novel popular legitimacy that enabled them to act in the name of the people, new responsibilities were theoretically furnished upon state employees to protect the rights and interests of India's newly-constituted citizens. One of the ways in which these new governmental duties were constructed by members of Indian society was in the calls for greater inclusionary practices within the central administrative structure of the state, as part of a symbolic demonstration of the state's newfound accountability towards a national citizenry. But because a range of different spatially-located interest groups sought representation within this central state, the privilege of working for the government often became a site of competition and dispute.[101] The state thus also served as a repository of power, to be subverted and appropriated for particularistic interests.[102] A range of perspectives on citizenship could therefore be conjured out of both interactions between the state and society (as interest groups clamoured for representation within the all-India services), and in individual and collective imaginings of the state (with reference to the increased accountability and inclusiveness of the state with the creation of a national government). This is evident, as we shall see, in the language invoked within the petitions and memorials received by the newly-independent GOI requesting the implementation of provincially-organised and demographically-proportionate reservations within the all-India services.

Many of the petitioners and memorialists concerned referenced the continuing dominance of Indians from the Punjab and UP within the all-India bureaucratic

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[99] NAI, Home Department File 26/15/48-NGS, 'Letter from Narahari Rao, Auditor General of India, Camp Madras, to H.V.R. Iengar, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi', 14 October 1948.

[100] Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter', pp. 240-241.

[101] C.J. Fuller and John Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 1-30.

[102] Craig Jeffrey and Jens Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance: Class and State in Uttar Pradesh', in *Ibid.*, pp. 91-114.

structure.[103] This dominance is evident if we compare the provincial percentages of India's population at the 1931 and 1951 censuses with a head-count of the provincial affinities of all-India staff in early 1947.[104] Across all service levels of the Secretariat Department and attached offices, Punjabis numbered 1,660 permanent employees and 10,140 temporary employees, or nearly 42 per cent of the total administrative staff. Yet Punjabis made up only 8.1 per cent of the subcontinent's population in 1931, and even less after partition (4.7 per cent). Employees from UP came to 921 permanent and 7,523 temporary staff, or nearly 30 per cent of the total. These figures were slightly less skewed, but UP's residents still only represented 17.5 per cent of India's population in 1951 and 14.1 per cent in 1931. The nearest figures from any other province came from Bengal, which constituted just over 7 per cent of all-India staff in 1947, 14.4 per cent of the Indian population in 1931 and 7.3 per cent (after partition) in 1951. Bombay's share of all-India jobs was lower than 0.9 per cent, even though they made up 7.5 per cent of the Indian population in 1931 and ten per cent in 1951. The lowest representation came from Orissa, with only five permanent and thirteen temporary staff, a paltry 0.06 per cent of the all-India services. Yet Oriya-speaking groups constituted 1.2 per cent of the population in 1931 and 4.1 per cent in 1951.[105]

Undeniably, representation was at least partially so skewed because of Delhi's proximity to both Punjab and UP. But, serving as an example of north Indian majoritarianism, these statistics had important repercussions on the debates regarding the composition of the all-India services during this period. These considerations about proportional representation for the provinces were further

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[103] Interestingly, it was representatives from the same regions (Punjab and UP) of South Asia that were perceived to dominate the bureaucracy within Pakistan, particularly as they came to resettle as refugees in areas where they had traditionally been perceived as 'outsiders'. See, Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh: 1947-1962* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[104] I have chosen to utilise the 1931 and 1951 censuses to give a perspective on provincial population percentages both before and after partition. See, J.B. Hutton and B.S. Guha, *Census of India, 1931: Volume I: India: Part II: Imperial Tables* (Delhi: Government of India Press, 1933); R.A. Cofalaswami, *Census of India, 1951: Volume I: India: Part II-A: Demographic Tables* (New Delhi: Government Central Press, 1955). The 1941 Census was incomplete due to the Second World War and its statistics have been otherwise discredited for a number of reasons.

[105] NAI, Home Department File 31/28/47-Ests (S), 'Provincial Representation in Secretariat Departments and Attached Offices: Permanent', and 'Provincial Representation in Secretariat Departments and Attached Offices: Temporary', n.d.

heightened as a consequence of the central government's efforts to rehabilitate refugee servicemen from Pakistan within the new Indian bureaucracy. In December 1949 a member of the Constituent Assembly, P.T. Chacko, accused the Government of India of 'provincialism' in channelling temporary secretarial appointments towards displaced servicemen.[106] Likewise, a letter from Y.R. Tawde, the President of the Kshatriya Maratha Association in Bombay City, contemplated that,

> 'The already precarious and uncertain position of the Marathas will be rendered still more uncertain by the influx from Pakistan ... What little protection and safeguards [the Marathas] had are being discontinued ... whilst Sikhs migrating to Bombay are going to be protected'.[107]

The largest and most notable inward migration as a result of partition into Bombay Province saw approximately 550,000 non-Muslim Sindhis crossing the Arabian Sea by boat and landing at Bombay City's harbour by 1952. The extent of the refugee problem overwhelmed the Bombay Government, who 'tried to resist taking responsibility for refugees' by petitioning the GOI against any additional arrivals – appeals that were rejected by the central government.[108] Sindhis were indeed aware of their perceived 'foreignness' and the hostility with which they were treated by 'locals' in Bombay. An ex-Congress member of the Sindh Legislative Assembly, P.V. Tahilramani, in a letter to Nehru in March 1952, complained that 'we displaced persons from Sindh are, even after four years of domicile in Bombay, an unwelcome distinct group if not aliens and outcastes'.[109]

Meanwhile, elsewhere in India attempts to rehabilitate servicemen were dealt with in a similarly inept and clumsy manner.[110] In north-east India, a similar refugee influx of Bengali-speakers from East Pakistan was causing serious tensions in Assam, which had resulted in 'the Chief Minister of Assam ... already playing his

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[106] NAI, Home Department File 9/24/49-NGS, 'Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative): (to be answered on the 7 December 1949). Question. Shri P.T. Chacko', n.d.

[107] New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], All India Congress Committee [henceforth AICC] Papers, Part I, File G-17 (1946-49), 'Letter from Y.R. Tawde, President, Kshatriya Maratha Association, Maratha Colony (West), Dahiwar, Borivil, Bombay Suburban District, to the President, AICC, "Re: Marathas and the New Constitution"', 2 March 1948.

[108] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 169.

[109] AICC Papers, Part II, File 3034 (1952), 'Letter from Parsram V. Tahilramani, to Jawaharlal Nehru', 1 March 1952.

[110] Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter', pp. 258-264.

most serious trump card against the centre: provincial separatism'.[111] And it was from here that one of the first memorials to demand forms of provincial representation at the all-India level had emerged in 1939. It was the Assam Government who proposed that a fixed quota should be introduced for each province in respect of recruitment to the civil and defence services under central control. It had decided to support this proposal, 'seeing that a small, distant and poor province such as Assam, not yet even possessing a University of its own, labours under special handicaps in competition with larger and richer provinces'.[112] Whilst it appreciated that, theoretically, the Assamese 'community' was provided with the same 'equality of opportunity' for service employment through competitive examination as any others, it suggested real 'equality' would only be ensured by the fixing of provincial quotas, which were to be fulfilled by holding local examinations under the Assam Government's jurisdiction. The Assam Government thus framed its arguments in the language of the state's commitment towards protecting the welfare of its citizens, arguing that provincial reservations should be enacted at the all-India level to ensure greater levels of inclusion from amongst 'backward' areas.

At the same time, however, other individuals, groups and governments who demanded provincial reservations at the bureaucratic centre could evoke principles of self-government developed in anticipation of independence that suggested that employment should be restricted to 'locals'. For example, ICS probationers allotted to the joint Bihar and Orissa cadre were required to learn two of the official administrative languages of the region during their probationary course – these were Bengali, Hindi and Oriya. The Orissa Government suggested that those languages should automatically be Oriya (for the Orissan section of the cadre) and Hindi (as prescribed for the Bihari section of the cadre).[113] Bengali, despite being the vernacular of a sizeable linguistically-defined Bengali 'minority' in both these provinces, was to be left out. Efforts to ensure that the all-India services were more representative at the national level could thus stimulate local dominance at the provincial level, with an ultimately

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[111] Khan, *The Great Partition*, p. 169.
[112] NAI, Home Department File 188/39-Ests, 'Letter from H.G. Dennehy, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, to the Secretary of the Government of India, Home Department, "Representation of the Provinces in the Central Services"', 10 August 1939; see also, NAI, Home Department File 31/7/40-Ests (S).
[113] NAI, Home Department File 35/10/40-Ests, 'Serial Nos. 1-2', 18 May 1940.

detrimental impact upon the citizenship rights of 'outsiders' residing within these regions.[114]

The construction of 'minorities' and 'majorities', 'locals' and 'outsiders' on the basis of region and language was also conjured up within the Constituent Assembly's Advisory Committee on Minorities. As we saw in the previous section of this chapter, the constitutional commitment towards the protection of minority linguistic, script and cultural interests was primarily applied in the context of India's Muslim community to the Urdu language, the Perso-Arabic script, and Islamic religious practices. However, the Advisory Committee's original recommendation along these lines also took into account the mobilisation of communities around linguistic groups. So, when 'Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar deprecated the committee taking up the question of political minorities', it applied as much to his wanting to avoid 'Tamil v Telugu controversies [being] introduced' as it did to the question of religious 'minorities'.[115] Article 350B of the 1950 Constitution authorised the appointment of a 'Special Officer for linguistic minorities', who would 'investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution'.[116] And in the 'minority representations' received as petitions by the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) during the Constituent Assembly debates, the demands and concerns of regional and ethno-linguistic 'minorities' were raised as frequently as 'minority communities' defined on the basis of religion and caste. For example, the AICC received letters from the All-India Marwari Federation concerned about increased 'anti-outsider' rhetoric in West Bengal, the Muslims of Karimganj in Assam who raised the spectre of Assamese-Bengali conflict as well as religious tensions, an All Assam Minorities' Conference concerned about the potential for minority languages to be replaced by Assamese, an appeal to abolish excluded and partially excluded areas by the All India Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas Association of Rajahmundry, and a memorial from the All Orissa Minority Communities

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[114] Consider, for example, the increased anti-Bengali immigrant sentiment in Assam in the 1980s. See, Amalendu Guha, 'Little Nationalism Turned Chauvinist: Assam's Anti-Foreigner Upsurge 1979-80', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15 (1980), 1699-1720; Sanjib Baruah, *India Against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

[115] London, India Office Records [henceforth IOR], File L/PJ/10/55 (Mar 1946-Oct 1947), 'Secret Note on the Minorities in India', n.d.; *Ibid.*, 'Confidential Minutes of a Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Minorities held on 27 February 1947'; *Ibid.*, 'Note by F.F. Turnbull, Under Secretary', 19 March 1947.

[116] 'Article 350B', *The Constitution of India*, p. 177.

Conference expressing concern over the place of Bengali- and Telugu-speaking groups domiciled within Orissa.[117]

This final petition, received on the eve of the Constituent Assembly debates, sought to ensure that 'no loop-hole should be left in the constitution'. For the All Orissa Minority Communities Conference, the Fundamental Rights contained within the 1935 Government of India Act were 'defective. [They did] not include the case of the linguistic minorities'.[118] Appended to the letter was B.K. Pal's *The Problem for the Orissan Minorities*, a pamphlet published in 1945 which suggested that the creation of an Orissan linguistic state in 1936, coupled with 'provincialisation', had resulted in 'the attempted annihilation of the cultural and social existence of the minority communities' in Orissa.[119] The problem emanated from the fact that, 'The word minority refers only to religious minorities in India', whilst 'Under provincial autonomy in Provinces constituted mainly on a linguistic basis, it is linguistic minorities who are most helpless'.[120] Pal concluded his argument by suggesting that these developments threatened India's national integrity:

> 'They [the 'majority' members of the government-appointed Orissa Domicile Committee, who suggested linguistic restrictions on the granting of certificates for domicile in Orissa] seem to ridicule as "universalism" all Patriotism beyond Provincialism. They have, therefore, recommended for the establishment of Provincial Sovereign States with independent trade and economic policies with an exclusive provincial out-look which according to their philosophy is alone entitled to the phraseology of "nationalism"'.[121]

Pal therefore sought to establish affirmative action policies for linguistic 'minorities' on a similar footing to caste and religious groups, invoking the ideas about the state's protection of beleaguered and downtrodden minority citizen's interests. But he also constructed these demands around the idea that the 'minority' had the aims of national solidarity on their side, whilst the 'majority' were governed by parochial interests that would potentially damage the future unity of the country. This was of utmost importance in the context of the

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[117] These petitions and representations are contained in, AICC Papers, Part I, File G-17 (1946-1949).

[118] *Ibid.*, '"Humble Memorial" from the All Orissa Minority Communities Conference, to R.A. Kripalani, Secretary, AICC', 4 March 1947.

[119] B.K. Pal, *The Problem for the Orissan Minorities* (Cuttack: The Orient Press, 1945), pp. 9-10.

[120] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, 14-15.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

continuing discussions over the Pakistan demand, as it conflated the possible repercussions of linguistic provincialism with religious provincialism in the north-east and north-west. Just as caste and religious identities could be seen as conducive to the growth of 'fissiparous' and 'separatist' tendencies, language, as it also became interlinked with the idea of regional 'homelands', was perceived anew in an analogous manner. And this drew together minorities who needed the state's protection, and the Congress High Command who sought to maintain the central state's integrity, in their aversion towards the expression of local majority backwardness. The note of the Joint Secretary to the Home Department, P.V.R. Rao, for example, who considered and rejected the idea of provincial reservations at the all-India level in September 1947, argued that,

> 'The persons who enter Government service through reservation will be fully aware that their prospects in service are more likely to improve with an intensification of provincial jealousies and rivalries than otherwise and they will therefore tend to promote them. Also, their loyalties will be primarily to their Provincial leaders to whom they will be looking forward for help in their advancement and not to the Government, as it should be. Moreover, Provincial reservation will intensify the jealousies due to differences in language and culture. Assam will derive little comfort if Bengalis domiciled in Assam monopolise reservations in favour of Assam and Andhras when they find all posts reserved for Madras taken away by Tamilians. I feel that a strong and a determined refusal to recognise local divisions may still prevent a development of fissiparous tendencies'.[122]

Both demands for the introduction of provincial reservation practices in locally-recruited elements of the all-India services, and demands for the introduction of provincial reservations across the entire central bureaucracy are therefore revealing of some of the larger questions on citizenship and the nature of the state during this transformative period.[123] Central governmental policy was to generally reject such demands as negating the meritocratic and impartial basis upon which the state ostensibly operated. But this often served to present a benign facade behind which a more malevolent form of high-caste north Indian majoritarianism could dominate. Meanwhile, both those in favour and against provincial reservation practices presented their arguments in the language of the citizenship rights and interests which an independent national state was expected

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[122] NAI, Home Department File, 'Note of P.V.R. Rao, Joint Secretary, Home Department', 30 September 1947.

[123] For more on the ideas of the state's 'sublime' and 'profane' dimensions see, Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 31-67; Gould, '"The Dual State"'.

to protect. Those who demanded provincial reservation sought to counter Punjabi/UP predominance in the central services by presenting their caste or region's 'backwardness' to the state for redress. In this interpretation, the state was to act as an adjudicator, balancing out different provincial 'community' interests and providing forms of affirmative action for those unfairly disadvantaged.

At the same time, these supporters of provincial reservations in the central services evoked principles of self-government, in which the central administration's representatives would be more accountable to a localised public. But, as Rao suggested in the extract cited above, accountability towards the province potentially negated the promotion of a wider sense of Indian identity. It was fear over the prospect such 'fissiparous' tendencies had for shattering a fragile national integrity which ensured they were ultimately rejected by the Congress High Command. Their interests thus coalesced in this instance with those of 'minority citizens' residing within these areas, who were also potentially threatened by the creation of provincial reservations, which would turn the localised manifestations of the central bureaucracy into a domain to be captured and controlled by regionally dominant groups. Their arguments against provincial reservations, whilst still constructed in the language of the rights and interests that the state was committed to protect, and based around distinct 'community' interests, also evoked the ideals of national citizenship to undermine the contentions of those supporting these forms of affirmative action.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to locate the development of different ideas about citizenship within the paradigm of provincial and central policy-making on recruitment to the civil service. It has argued that contrasting approaches to affirmative action within the different echelons of the services in Bombay helped spawn a range of imaginings and experiences of citizenship. Ostensibly, merit and efficiency were at the forefront of the provincial government's considerations when deciding upon recruitment to the highest level Provincial Services, where no reservations were enacted. Yet despite the rhetoric of state objectivity at this level, there remained a tendency to encourage particular 'communities' to fill

such posts on account of their 'inherent' literary and administrative acumen, which countered the ostensibly principled emphasis on equality of opportunity for all. Amongst the lower levels of the provincial civil service in Bombay, meanwhile, the colonial and Congress governments looked much more openly to balance 'community' interests. Justified on the basis of ethical tenets related to the state's 'duty', reservations were theoretically introduced to see that all 'communities' received their 'proper share' of employment in the bureaucracy. And because it was with these lower and more immediate spatial representations of the state that individuals were most likely to interact, citizenship came to be enacted primarily at this localised level. Those individuals who sought to access bureaucratic reservations as either 'Intermediate' or 'Backward' classes dressed their appeals, petitions and memorandums in the language of citizenship rights and 'community' interests. But whereas some called upon the necessity for the state to protect 'minority' rights, others employed the language of 'self-government' by calling for recruitment on the basis of local demographics.

Moreover, the emphasis upon provincial forms of governmental autonomy also points to the efficacy of diarchy in this process. 'Provincialisation' during the interwar period had vital consequences upon legislative discrepancies between the provinces and the all-India centre, and encouraged the further development of multiple and competing conceptualisations of citizenship. Whilst in the north and at the all-India level religion was privileged as the primary means through which rights to reservation were mediated, in the south and west caste was given greater prominence. The Bombay Government's affirmative action policies were thus conditioned by local societal circumstances – greater representation was provided for the 'Intermediate' classes in those divisions and districts of Bombay in which the non-Brahman movement was at its strongest. Whilst Muslims formed a relatively small fraction of the 'Intermediate' class category, it was dominated by non-Brahmans and, in particular, the Maratha caste cluster. Notions of citizenship, i.e. whether rights were articulated in relation to 'minority' interests or those of local 'self-government', therefore depended upon the specific 'situated perspective' of the individual in western India in relation to the benefits and issues with growing Maratha dominance within the reservation process. And in this sense they diverged notably from the manner in which citizenship was defined in the north.

Ultimately, tracing these forms of affirmative action in interwar Bombay, which were based upon the 'backwardness' of a numerically preponderate group and in which reservations could be introduced for as much as 60 per cent of all 'Intermediate' government jobs, provides evidence of a longer history of 'majority' forms of representation. This goes some way towards re-contextualising the introduction of reservations for OBCs during the 1990s and tracing their early emergence in western India. This chapter has therefore provided an attempt to re-write the history of the introduction of reservations and their consequences within the civil services with a particular provincial perspective in mind. It has argued that these became particularised because of local societal stresses and strains, with important repercussions on the nature of citizenship in western India. It has therefore privileged a particular facet of 'community' identities, which were predominant in western India and therefore departed from the 'Muslim Question' in interesting and innovative ways.

5: Classifying and Counting Language at the 1951 Census

'Sholapur census enumeration with regard to mother tongue not proper. Kannad peoples language not being taken properly by Marathi enumerators'.

Telegram from N.B. Kadadi, Member of Bombay Legislative Council (MLC), and M.S. Sirdar, Barrister-at-Law, Sholapur, to the Chief Minister, Bombay, 20th February 1951.[1]

This chapter examines the classification and enumeration of language at the 1951 census in the context of an impending reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines. By doing so, it develops a number of important insights into the formulation and enactment of citizenship in Bombay Province during this period. The first section places the arguments of this chapter in the context of existing scholarly work on the census in India. By focusing primarily upon language it looks into an area of ethno-demographic classification which has been largely ignored in the previous historiography. This links in with the points raised in the introduction to this thesis about the propensity towards privileging the north as the point of theoretical analysis within dominant historical narratives on independence, partition, and citizenship. The chapter also considers the 'everyday' practices of local census officials in a number of contested settings in Bombay, where the collection of data on mother-tongue was critical to the delineation of territorial borders.

Theoretically, enumerators were expected to ask, listen and record the information tendered in their interactions with individual members of local society in an impartial and detached manner. But the second section of this chapter demonstrates how these state intermediaries, drawn from amongst local society themselves, were subject to analogous pressures, concerns and exigencies as the rest of the public in Bombay. Census data on language in 1951 could thus be incorrectly recorded and knowingly refashioned in the interests of the enumerator's own 'community' ahead of provincial reorganisation. In this sense, ideas about belonging and status for citizens in Bombay came to be articulated, at

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[1] Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Political and Services Department File 7699/46 – pt.V, 'Telegram from Nagapabpa Bandappa Kadadi, MLC, and M.S. Sirdar, Barrister-at-Law, Sholapur, to the Chief Minister, Bombay', 20 February 1951.

a local level, on the basis of ethno-linguistic affinity. Simultaneously, the second section also traces a number of petitions and memorials received by the Bombay Government from other members of the public about the manipulation of statistics on mother-tongue by local census officials, which called for the higher echelons of the state to make redress. Here, appeals were couched in the language of the core constitutional values and principles of state objectivity, integrity and secularism, and placed emphasis on an inclusive and universalistic citizenship. The ways through which the public engaged with and looked to benefit from their rights and status as citizens was thus dependent upon their particular 'situated perspective' in the context of larger historical processes linked to linguistic reorganisation.

The penultimate section of this chapter considers the position of the region's *adivasi* (tribal) population amidst efforts to define their ethno-linguistic allegiance ahead of boundary demarcation. As a result of local enumerative practices, the number of adivasis recorded as speaking tribal mother tongues in the Dangs, Thana and West Khandesh Districts declined, to be replaced by an increased emphasis upon the official provincial languages of Gujarati and Marathi. Everyday enumerative mechanisms and procedures thereby served to establish forms of regional ethno-linguistic majoritarianism, which departed from the state's professed commitment to protect the citizenship rights of its tribal 'minorities'. By focusing upon the dual perspective through which individuals interacted with its local manifestations and practices, and imagined it as a 'sublime' entity and 'translocal institution', this chapter therefore ultimately suggests that the state had a definitive impact on how a variety of ideas about citizenship were both imagined and expressed via language.[2] In the context of the enumerative and classificatory procedures at the 1951 census in Bombay ahead of linguistic reorganisation, the state thus served both as a site to be captured to serve the particularistic interests of those individuals who sought to manipulate the census returns, and also paradoxically as an entity through which other members of

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[2] I borrow both these ideas of the 'sublime' state and the 'translocal institution' from the works of Thomas Blom Hansen and Akhil Gupta, respectively. See, Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 31-67; Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 100-104.

society sought remedy for this subversion of their constitutionally-defined rights and interests.

5.1 The Census, Language and Local Intermediaries

The decennial all-India Census, inaugurated across the entire subcontinent for the first time in 1871, and completed with great rigmarole every ten years since, was considered essential for the formulation of state knowledge about indigenous society in colonial India.[3] For Ronald Inden, writing in 1990, the census was the epitome of the colonial project to classify and count Indian 'communities', an 'imagined India' of false projections based around Orientalist stereotypes.[4] The writings of Arjun Appadurai, Bernard Cohn and Nicholas Dirks have since modified and introduced important caveats within this approach. Yet for these anthropological historians, 'the empirical project of the census [remains] wedded to the most general of Orientalist categories for the classification of the social order, with built-in assumptions about hierarchy and precedence'.[5] The census thus perpetuated colonial misunderstandings that Indian society was ordered primarily around religion: both the supposedly primordial communal division that existed between Hindus and Muslims; and the ranked and stratified nature of Hindu society based around a caste 'system', with Brahmans existing at the apex of this hierarchy. And, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, it also came to have important political implications, structuring the colonial state's reforms and the demarcation of administrative and governmental concessions to Indian 'communities' such as Muslims on the basis of their 'minority' demographic status, particularly in north India. In this historiography, modern Indian political identities are often seen to derive from these colonial processes: '[Herbert Hope] Risley's anthropology worked not so much to retard nationalism as to render it

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[3] Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 201.

[4] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

[5] Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, p. 202; see also, Bernard Cohn, 'The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia', in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*, ed. by Bernard Cohn (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 224-254; Inden, *Imagining India*; Arjun Appadurai, 'Number in the Colonial Imagination', in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. by C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 314-339.

communal. In so doing, it also left a bloody legacy for South Asia that continues to exact a mounting toll'.[6]

For Sumit Guha, Norbert Peabody and others, this approach has glossed over administrative continuities from the pre-colonial era, whereby enumerative practices were conducted by the Mughals and their successors as they sought to acquire knowledge about the local societies they governed.[7] It has also obscured the extent to which the formation of pre-colonial community identities was always political, as individuals, groups and communities engaged with the state's prescriptions and structures to protect their own interests and concerns. And this Eurocentric approach has paid relatively scant attention to the consistent fluctuations and transformation in the formulation of colonial knowledge during this period, as highlighted perhaps most effectively in the work of Susan Bayly.[8] Bayly concurs with Dirks and others that many late nineteenth-century colonial ethnographers, such as W.W. Hunter and H.H. Risley, were influenced by a wider intellectual climate in which race science in the metropolis and overseas empire became increasingly pervasive.[9] In this interpretation, different *jatis* constituted separate 'races'. Paradoxically however, others such as Denzil Ibbetson, were drawn towards a 'material' or 'occupational' understanding of caste, which placed stress upon its relative fluidity and openness. The emphasis on ethnicity and blood, emerging partially from ideas about a stratified hierarchy of Brahmanical values within a caste 'system', was deemed by Bayly as not as all pervasive amongst the administrators as historians have initially argued.

Part of the reasoning behind this relates to the particular spatial location of these administrators. Whilst Ibbetson developed his 'material' interpretation within the Punjab, Hunter and Risley's formulations emerged out of the specific locale of

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[6] Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, p. 227.

[7] Norbert Peabody, 'Cents, Sense, Census: Human Inventories in Late Precolonial and Early Colonial India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 43 (2001), 819-850; Sumit Guha, 'The Politics of Identity and Enumeration in India, c.1600-1990', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45 (2003), 148-167; see also, C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[8] Susan Bayly, 'Caste and "Race" in the Colonial Ethnography of India', in *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, ed. by Peter Robb (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 165-218.

[9] See also, Christopher Pinney, 'Colonial Anthropology in the "Laboratory of Mankind"', in *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, ed. by C.A. Bayly (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1990), pp. 252-263.

Bengal. And this suggests the need to attach adequate importance to local Indian societies in the formulation of colonial knowledge. As Peabody has argued, much previous research has oft tended 'to situate the genesis of colonial ways of knowing as being entirely within the European episteme', ensuring that 'the role of indigenous actors, agendas and ways of knowing in the construction of these discourses has been systematically ignored'.[10] Whilst much of this has been rectified by tracing both the changes and continuities between the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the continuing efficacy of the census has not yet been thoroughly considered in the context of Indians' gradual transition from colonial subjecthood to independent citizenship. This chapter seeks to build upon this already nuanced and developed scholarship by stressing the continued importance of the local indigenous intermediary in everyday classificatory and enumerative processes attached to the collection of data in postcolonial India.

Within the context of the census, and the vast levels of illiteracy amongst the native populace, it was decided that 'in India we cannot work on the Western system, whereby each householder has a schedule handed him to fill up, and that schedule is simply collected'.[11] Instead, indigenous enumerators and supervisors employed by the state were critical to the collection of vast amounts of local data, and in effectively relaying it back to the appropriate authorities. However, conducting the census was also always simultaneously a political process, with important consequences for the potential representation of communities both within the electoral arena and the structures of the bureaucracy – the centrality of the census in 'underpin[ning] ethnic quotas in pre-Independence India', for example, has led Steven Wilkinson to describe the colonial state as undertaking a form of 'consociationalism'.[12] Hence, the indigenous intermediary also occupied a position of important political interest, in which the manipulation of statistics could potentially benefit particular factions, groups and 'communities'. Drawn from amongst local society themselves, these enumerators were subject to the same pressures and concerns as ordinary members of the public, and could be

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[10] Peabody, 'Cents, Sense, Census', pp. 819-820.

[11] L.J. Sedgwick, *Census of India, 1921: Volume VIII: Bombay Presidency: Part I: General Report* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1922), pp. ii-iii.

[12] See, Steven I. Wilkinson, 'India, Consociational Theory and Ethnic Violence', *Asian Survey*, 40 (2000), 767-791 (pp. 768, 775): 'Consociationalism featured the inclusion of minorities in a political "grand coalition" that granted them cultural autonomy. It also gave minorities a veto over important legislation and made ethnic "proportionality ... the principal standard of political representation, civil service appointments, and allocation of public funds"'.

pressurised, cajoled and influenced by particular interest groups and locally important individuals.[13] In these circumstances, the supposed 'impartiality' of the enumerator in the collection of data was upset in practice, as they became enmeshed within networks of patronage, placed emphasis upon their particular social identities, and interpreted the statistics in light of their own interests and concerns. For most Indians engaging with the state at the census, their rights and status as citizens were enacted in these more informal, on the ground (and oft one-sided) negotiations with local state representatives.[14]

The everyday interactions through which ideas about citizenship were formulated in the context of the census are of especial important when considering the larger historical processes linked to the ongoing transition from subjecthood to citizenship. In 1941, for example, in an environment saturated by religio-political mobilisation in north-east and north-west India after the Lahore Resolution of the previous year 'census operations became a much more direct fight between advocates of Hindu and Muslim enumeration'.[15] Half a decade later, these statistics were then utilised by indigenous politicians to augment their claims to particular tracts of territory in the context of plans for the partition of Punjab and Bengal. Whilst Hindu nationalist organisations scrambled to demonstrate the analogous religious and cultural identities of tribal and low-caste groups residing in these areas, Muslim political organisations looked to foster depictions of the cultural distinctiveness and 'minority' rights of adivasis to reduce the numerical strength of the Hindus. These low-caste and tribal groups were frequently caught in the religio-political crossfire, and their own interests and concerns overridden and nullified when drawn into these larger, national political debates.[16] Throughout this process, the collection and classification of religious data by enumerators was thus of immense importance for a variety of political and

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[13] C.J. Fuller and John Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 1-30 (p. 26); Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State', *American Ethnologist*, 22.2 (1995), 375-402 (p. 384).

[14] For similar ideas in a different context, see, Taylor C. Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 45 (2011), 81-107 (pp. 100-102); Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 1049-1071 (p. 1051).

[15] William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 232.

[16] Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, 'Transfer of Power and the Crisis of Dalit Politics in India, 1945-47', *MAS*, 34 (2000), 893-942.

'community'-based interests – and in fact, they helped shape the final position of the new nation-states' territorial boundaries.

Similarly, the collection and classification of 'community' data at the census of 1951 was potentially critical to those who espoused notions of citizenship which focused upon semi-autonomous forms of provincial self-government within India. As made clear in the introduction to this thesis, there was actually nothing inevitable about Pakistan's separate sovereignty – for Jinnah, it was a 'bargaining chip' to extract concessions from the Congress and the Raj for both India's Muslims and his own political party, the Muslim League. Rather, Jinnah envisaged a con-federal constitutional arrangement based upon Hindu-Muslim parity at the centre.[17] If we thus treat partition and the Pakistan demand as part of a much broader trend towards regional mobilisation and sub-national autonomy, we can also decipher the continuing importance of the census towards forms of citizenship in the aftermath of independence. However, whereas regionalism in the north-east and north-west of the subcontinent was constructed around the distinctions built up between forms of religious affiliation, it was language which dominated similar processes in the south and west of India. Key to local enumerative and classificatory processes in western India, then, were attempts to carve out limited areas of influence for locally prominent linguistic groups, especially as the centre came to be perceived as dominated by a north Indian majoritarianism (see Chapter Six).

Another important strand within this chapter will therefore consider the importance of linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries in this period, which provided the context for much of the machinations, petitions and representations around the census during 1951. The efficacy of linguistic demographics within the census has often been largely ignored in the existing historiography, particularly because of the emphasis upon caste and religion as the key elements in colonial definitions of Indian society.[18] Because, as David

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[17] Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Asim Roy, 'Reviews: The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', *MAS*, 24 (1990), 385-408.

[18] See, for example, the essays in N. Gerald Barrier's edited volume on the census: Kenneth W. Jones, 'Religious Identity and the Indian Census', in *The Census in British India: New Perspectives*, ed. by N. Gerald Barrier (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981), pp. 73-101; Harry W. Blair, 'Caste and the British Census in Bihar: Using Old Data to Study Contemporary Political Behaviour', in *The Census in British India*, pp.

Washbrook has noted, histories of 'the whole' have invariably been 'not much more than histories of Bengal and the Ganges valley', the importance of the collection and classification of data on language has generally been downplayed.[19] With the enumeration of caste being almost entirely abolished in 1951 and replaced with a new stress on socio-economic classifications, the continuing political efficacy of 'community' in the Nehruvian period has also been generally overlooked. But by refocusing our perspective on the wider implications of the anticipation and aftermath of independence and partition, in which multiple ideas about swaraj and self-rule (including the Pakistan demand) were often expressed through a regional idiom, this chapter seeks to trace the importance of the 1951 census afresh.

In doing so, the following two sections of this chapter will focus on a number of particularly important areas in Bombay Province in the context of demands for linguistic reorganisation and the census of 1951. The first section considers the taking of the census in the southern districts of Belgaum and Sholapur, where particular tracts of territory within this district were to be contested by proponents of the unilingual provinces of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Although statistics on the linguistic composition of these districts have to be treated with the utmost caution considering their manipulation by local census officials, it is apparent that Belgaum District was a Kannada-speaking 'majority' area, with a sizeable Marathi-speaking 'minority' residing in the north and west of the district and in the district administrative headquarters, Belgaum City. Sholapur, meanwhile, was primarily a Marathi-speaking area, with a notable Kannada-speaking 'minority' in Sholapur city and the South Sholapur Taluka.[20] The record of

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151-175; Frank F. Conlon, 'The Census of India as a Source for the Historical Study of Religion and Caste', in *The Census in British India*, pp. 103-117; G.A. Oddie, 'Christians in the Census: Tanjore and Trichinopoly Districts, 1871-1901', in *The Census in British India*, pp. 119-149.

[19] David Washbrook, 'Towards a History of the Present: Southern Perspectives on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, ed. by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar and Andrew Sartori (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 332-357 (p. 332).

[20] J.B. Bowman, *Census of India 1951, Language Handbook: Sholapur, Satara South, Bijapur and Kolhapur Districts* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1955), pp. 1-12; J.B. Bowman, *Census of India, 1951: Volume IV: Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch: Part II-A: General Population Tables, Social and Cultural Tables and Summary Figures by Talukas and Petas* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1953), pp. 135-144.

the ethno-linguistic affinities of villages, towns and cities were thus deemed critical to the delineation of provincial boundaries.

The second section analyses the local performance of the census primarily in the Dangs District, but also in Thana and West Khandesh, as areas that were claimed by supporters of either a unilingual Gujarat or Maharashtra. These districts had large adivasi populations, whose ethno-linguistic allegiances were the subject of much controversy in 1951. Adivasis made up 21.91 per cent of the population in Thana District; 39.42 per cent of the population in West Khandesh; and as much as 84.35 per cent of the population in the Dangs.[21] In a similar manner to how low-caste and *adivasi* populations in Bengal were treated ahead of the 1941 census by proponents of Hindu and Muslim politics, the supporters of Maharashtra and Gujarat in Bombay Province sought to affiliate the *adivasi* populations of western India with their own linguistic community. In the Dangs, where the *adivasi* population were said to speak a local vernacular known as 'Bhili' or 'Dangi', conflict between Maharashtrians and Gujaratis as to whether Dangi derived from either Marathi or Gujarati led to a subsequently rapid decline in the number of respondents returning Dangi as their mother-tongue in the census. Linguistic diversity, it seems, was to be replaced by an emphasis upon monolinguism within the newly demarcated provinces.

This chapter therefore seeks to enhance existing scholarship on the census in India in two ways. First, it concentrates upon the everyday enumerative and classificatory practices of indigenous intermediaries, who proved essential to the larger processes related to the gathering of colonial knowledge, and who frequently became embroiled within the political consequences of data-collection. Second, it focuses afresh on linguistic demographics in the context of regionalism and growing demands for linguistic reorganisation, which has been relatively overshadowed in previous studies by the focus upon caste and religious community as the key categories and identities of social analysis by the state. It thus stresses both continuities and changes in the gradual transition from colonialism to independent nationhood – so whilst the classification and enumeration of mother-tongue was provided with a relatively novel importance

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[21] New Delhi, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], Government of India [henceforth GOI], Home Department File 74/62/52 – Pub. I, 'Appendix B: District wise statement showing the Scheduled Tribes population and is percentage to the population in the Bombay State according to the Census 1951', n.d.

in the aftermath of independence and partition, in which it became tied up with ideals related to forms of local self-government, the census also continued to reflect older colonial models and practices. Even though caste was no longer counted, and emphasis was put upon socio-economic classifications, individuals continued to express their interests and rights through the idiom of 'community'.

5.2 Boundaries, Enumerators, and the Census of 1951

This section of the chapter considers both the impact of state justifications and principles regarding the collection of census data, and the localised actions of census enumerators, on ideas about citizenship in western India. It focuses in particular on Sholapur and Belgaum, two southern fringe districts of Bombay, which would contain significant sites of contention between Kannada speakers and Marathi speakers over the exact linguistic allegiance of certain tracts of territory. The first sub-section briefly augments the analysis of the previous section of this chapter by comparing and contrasting the prominence accorded to 'Language Handbooks' drawn from the census returns of 1951 in the decisions of the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) with the use of census statistics on religion in the delineation of the territorial boundaries of India and Pakistan. It also emphasises how, despite the suggestion in governmental rhetoric that the census would now focus upon economic rather than 'community' criteria, the decision to continue to collect statistical returns on language, as well as for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Bombay still provided the potential for the political manipulation of the data.

The second sub-section demonstrates how the local practices of the census enumerators could depart significantly from the notion of the state's communal impartiality, with the political manipulation of statistical returns in the interests of particular 'communities' ahead of linguistic reorganisation. Simultaneously, however, those who presented examples of such local state malpractice couched their petitions and memorials within the language of the state's hyperbolical principles. In such circumstances, both quotidian interactions with and translocal imaginings of the state shaped the public's ideas about citizenship in the context of the census. The third sub-section demonstrates that at the local level, ethno-linguistic affinities ahead of reorganisation were essential to the articulation and

enactment of citizenship status and rights. But at the same time, those who were not considered 'locals' or did not belong to the majority 'community' could appeal to the constitutional guarantees and safeguards which the higher echelons of the all-India state were supposed to represent. Citizenship could thus take a number of different forms depending upon the particular perspectives of the individual or group concerned.

5.2.1 The 1951 Census: Class versus 'Community'

On 7 February 1951, the Chief Minister of Bombay B.G. Kher sent an 'Appeal' to the public ahead of the first day of enumeration for the ninth all-India census. According to Kher, 'A modern State, interested in the welfare of its people, cannot function efficiently and succeed in its objectives unless it has at its disposal accurate information about the number of people under its care and their socio-economic conditions'.[22] Hence, despite the advent of independence and the end of British colonial rule, a census was still seen as a necessity by the postcolonial administration to augment state knowledge of, and state power over, society. For Kher it was deemed a 'duty' incumbent upon all citizens to oblige in the census operation, and not to 'look upon the enumerator as someone who has come at his door to irritate and annoy him by requiring him to answer questions regarding himself and the members of his family'.[23] In this interpretation citizenship within India was therefore to be defined as much by Indians' responsibilities towards the state as the rights they had been guaranteed under the constitution of the previous year. This was also an all-Indian citizenship which, at least ostensibly, disparaged the efficacy of divisive communal identities by placing emphasis upon the Nehruvian imperatives of secularism, democracy and development instead. Kher went on to suggest that, 'The objectives of the present Census are particularly more broad [*sic*] based than those of the previous Census operations. The emphasis has now shifted from religion and caste to economic classification'.[24]

Supposedly departing significantly from colonial perceptions of Indian society as based on two primordially irreconcilable religious communities, and a stratified and hierarchical Hinduism, the 1951 Census appeared as the culmination of

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[22] MSA, Political and Services Department File 7699/46 – pt.V, 'B.G. Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay, "Appeal"', 7 February 1951.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*

Congress nationalists' efforts to have the collection of caste and religious statistical information abolished from the data record. However, despite this post-independence de-emphasis on the enumeration and compilation of information regarding communities, 'the Census authorities still made much of caste in their subsidiary descriptive reports'.[25] A separate chapter of the census continued to tabulate data and offer analytical remarks on the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), which was deemed critical in light of the special privileges granted to these communities under the constitution.[26] Meanwhile, statistical returns regarding language were still collected, and continued to thereby reflect older patterns whereby language was equated with ethnicity. With regards to western India, for example, the 1901 Census had conflated caste, language, territory and nationhood, by suggesting that

> 'the name Maratha ... has a threefold application. It is applied first to the section of India south of the Narbada and north of the Karnatak in which the Marathi language is spoken; second to the whole of the Marathi-speaking population; and third, in a narrower and more correct sense, to the bulk of the old fighting and now cultivating middle class of the country whose language is Marathi'.[27]

Ethno-linguistic affinities were considered critical ahead of reorganisation. Indeed, by 1954 'the Government of India [had] decided to obtain language data according to villages for all multi-lingual talukas ['sub-district' levels of administration] in India by means of a special sorting of the 1951 census slips'.[28] Despite the rhetorical flourish which accompanied the achievement of independence and the emphasis on secularism, democracy and development, the

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[25] Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 275.

[26] See, J.B. Bowman, *Census of India, 1951: Volume IV: Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch: Part I: Report and Subsidiary Tables* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1953), Chapter VII.

[27] H.H. Risley, *Census of India, 1901: Volume I: India: Ethnographic Appendices: Being the Data Upon Which the Caste Chapter of the Report is Based* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1903), p. 93; see also, H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1901: Volume I: India: Report* (Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1903), pp. 514, 526.

[28] J.B. Bowman, *Census of India 1951, Language Handbook: Dangs, Thana and Banaskantha Districts* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1955), p. i.

suggestion that 'the basis of classification was economic and not social' during the 1951 Census therefore proved at least a partial chimera.[29]

The Government of India's 1954 directive had coincided with the nationwide tour of representatives of the States Reorganisation Commission, who had been tasked with deciding whether India's provinces should be reorganised on the basis of linguistic, cultural, financial and security considerations. Meanwhile, the SRC's final proposals of 1955 were announced in the same year as these new 'Language Handbooks' were first published. In this way, the counting of heads on the basis of community echoed at least one of the criteria that had been put forward to Sir Cyril Radcliffe, as well as the Bengal and Punjab Boundary Commissions, tasked with delineating the two new nation-states of India and Pakistan in 1947. Muslim League claims within the Punjab, for example, rested upon demography: 'Muslims must, they argued, be given all the districts in Lahore Division, Rawalpindi Division and Multan Division, which according to the 1941 census were all Muslim-majority districts, majority determined simply by "counting of heads and by no other means"'.[30] The later emphasis upon communal demography during the 1951 Census ahead of linguistic reorganisation therefore reflected older precedents set by enumerative practices and intimately connected to the demarcation of Pakistan and the boundaries of partition. And in this sense, as noted in the previous section of this chapter, both the 1941 and 1951 censuses played a critical role within the much broader trend towards regional mobilisation and sub-national autonomy embodied within both the Pakistan demand and linguistic reorganisation.[31]

Societal and governmental references to the census continued to be critical to settling community disputes beyond independence and partition. The Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (Maharashtra Unification Committee) of the disputed city and district of Belgaum, for instance, made reference to population figures on the basis of mother-tongue within the 1951 Census to argue that Belgaum was a Marathi majority city.[32] And as we shall see in the Dangs District,

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[29] Bowman, *Census of India, 1951: Volume IV: Part I*, p. 1.

[30] Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 86-87.

[31] For more detail on these ideas, see the Introduction to this thesis.

[32] Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti, Belgaum, *Belgaum City: Integral Part of Maharashtra: Memorandum Submitted to the States Reorganisation Commission by the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti, Belgaum* (Poona: P.R. Damdhere, n.d.), p. 36.

both Gujarati and Maharashtrian claimants to the region sought to manipulate census figures in their favour to ascertain that the district's *adivasi* population were ethnically akin to Gujarati or Marathi speakers. Whereas across much of northern India (and often in Bombay Province too), the 1941 Census had served as a direct fight between advocates of Hindu and Muslim enumeration, the 1951 Census in western India became much more concerned with the politics of linguistic enumeration in the context of increased demands for provincial reorganisation. Of course, the importance of mother-tongue within the census had been articulated in the past, most notably in reference to the 'Telugu-Oriya question' and the religio-political connotations attached to the profession of Hindi, Urdu or Hindustani as mother-tongue ahead of the 1931 Census.[33] It had also proved increasingly significant within Bombay Province in the context of the increased welfare activities of indigenous governments under diarchic and then full provincial autonomy. But language had always been deemed relatively insignificant when compared to the colonial emphasis upon caste and religion. However, by 1951 the political context had changed significantly. The need to demarcate the boundaries of potential new provinces on the basis of the district, town or village's linguistic demographics, and the desire to access the possible benefits which would accrue to those who found themselves included within a communally-defined demographic 'majority' ensured that the census increasingly became a sight of contestation along the lines of language.

5.2.2 Local Census Enumerators and Trans-local State Principles

Behind the increased efficacy of linguistic identities were those enumerators and checkers who played a critical role in the everyday procedures which underpinned the effective operation of the all-India census. Tellingly, Chief Minister B.G. Kher was to refer to them as 'an agency through which a Census is taken'.[34] These intermediaries therefore occupied an important position between state and society, representing the state's authority to the wider Indian public. But their privileged location also allowed them to mediate the state's power and its formulation of knowledge, often seeking political, social and material advantage

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[33] See, NAI, Home Department File 4557/31-Pub, 'Note of J.H. Hutton, Superintendent of Census Operations', 17 September 1930; NAI, Home Department File 45/22/31-Pub, 'Indication of Literacy in Urdu and Hindi in the Present Census', 23 January 1931.

[34] MSA, Political and Services Department File 7699/46 – pt.V, 'Kher, "Appeal"', 7 February 1951.

in the process for themselves, their particular faction, alliance, or in the case of this chapter, their community. In the context of the census, for example, the recognition that continued to be afforded to the counting of mother tongues came to be manipulated by these intermediaries in favour of particular communities, ahead of the boundary demarcation that would accompany reorganisation. In fact, complaints regarding the conduct of enumerators or their supervisors in the recording of their respondents' mother tongue became increasingly commonplace in 1951. Towards the end of February, for example, after enumeration had been going on for just over two weeks, the Government of Bombay received a letter from two inhabitants of Sholapur, another district which contained sizeable populations of both Kannada and Marathi speakers.[35] The lawyer M.S. Sirdar and the politician N.B. Kadadi accused Sholapur City's enumerators of being involved in special efforts to influence the returns regarding their respondents' mother-tongue. According to Sirdar and Kadadi,

> 'the enumerators do not ask specific question as to the mother tongue of the person enumerated and ... consequently the mother-tongue of Kannadigas is entered as "MARATHI" simply because the person enumerated knows how to speak Marathi and begins to speak in Marathi when the enumerator goes to him or her as the case may be'.[36]

Part of the problem, Sirdar and Kadadi speculated, was that 90 per cent of Sholapur's enumerators were themselves Marathi-speakers, who intentionally avoided asking this relatively unambiguous question. Similar concerns were raised in Belgaum City by an organisation formed especially for the purpose, the Census Committee of the Kannada Population at Belgaum. In a letter to J.B. Bowman, the Superintendent of Census Operations in Bombay, they claimed to 'have heard of instances where questions are asked *not* as to language *spoken* by people as their mother-tongue but as to whether they understand Marathi'.[37] On one level, these representations and petitions to higher authorities served to highlight the contrasting everyday interests of these Kannada-speaking communities to the census officials taken from amongst the local Maharashtrian public, with the

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[35] The telegram from Sirdar and Kadadi with which this chapter began preceded the letter received by the GOB by two days.

[36] MSA, Political and Services Department File 7699/46 – pt. V, 'Letter from M.S. Sirdar, Bar-at-law, Sholapur, to the Collector, Sholapur', 23 February 1951.

[37] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from the President of the Census Committee of the Kannada Population at Belgaum, to the Superintendent of Census Operations for Bombay, "Urgent need for appointing impartial agencies and enumerators at the ensuing Census operations"', 16 January 1951.

former often seeking to have members of their own linguistic group substituted in the place of the latter. In the context of boundary demarcation, the opportunity to control the classificatory and enumerative process within the census was a valuable prize, potentially ensuring that their community would be classified and grouped within a larger Kannada-speaking community and able to access the benefits that came with constituting a 'majority'. The Census Committee at Belgaum noted this very fact when they suggested that, 'The data ... will have far reaching consequences, and may even be used for ... settling the boundaries of new provinces or states that are likely to be formed during the next decade'.[38] It was therefore not in their best interests that out of the 74 proposed enumerators, they claimed, 69 of them were Marathi speakers and only one spoke Kannada (the remaining four were said to speak Urdu). With regard to their seven supervisors, too, five were said to be Marathi speakers, and only two Kannadigas.

On another level, however, these appeals by Kannada speakers could and often did make reference to the ideologies and ideals upon which the state was ostensibly predicated, grasping the utility of its supposedly 'sublime' impartial nature to deprecate Marathi enumerators.[39] In appealing over local state representatives to higher administrative authorities at the provincial level, they emphasised the official state discourse of an inclusive citizenship where parochial loyalties were not welcome. The Census Committee at Belgaum, for instance, argued during the collection of data that 'there ought to be employed a system of checks by which vagaries and inconsistencies, are corrected by officers of unimpeachable integrity'. In this way, they echoed the central government's emphasis on the impartiality and national duty of enumerators, as an essential characteristic of the postcolonial state. This also proved essential to criticisms of current enumerative procedures. In Belgaum, where they had been entrusted to the city's municipal council, the Census Committee argued the council was itself not free 'from bias or preconceived notions'.[40] Only two years previous, for example, just after the Linguistic Provinces Commission had submitted its report suggesting it was an inopportune moment for provincial reorganisation, the Belgaum Municipality had passed a resolution which favoured inclusion of Belgaum in a future Maharashtra Province. This was deemed to impinge upon the

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[38] *Ibid.*
[39] Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai'.
[40] MSA, Political and Services Department File 7699/46 – pt. V, 'Letter from the President of the Census Committee', 16 January 1951.

ability of the municipal council to conduct the 1951 census in the city with due detachedness and objectivity.

Meanwhile, others sought to place emphasis upon national identity and Indian unity above other forms of community organisation, reflecting and redirecting the criticism of demands for provincial reorganisation as 'fissiparous' and 'separatist' that emanated from central government. The mamlatdar (a civil servant in charge of a taluka) of Athani in Belgaum District claimed to have appealed to the 'importance of census operations from a national point of view' during a public meeting, when he had tried to impress upon the local inhabitants the need to furnish accurate information to their enumerators.[41] Yet the mamlatdar also revealed that he had developed a local system of checks and balances, which was based around the idea that, 'The enumerator of each block is a person whose mother tongue is either Kannada or Urdu and the checker of each block is a teacher in [the] Marathi school'.[42]

The idea to divide local enumerators and supervisors on the basis of their community also received the backing, at various stages, of S. Nijalingappa, President of the Karnatak Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC), B.S. Hiray, President of the Maharashtra PCC, and Morarji Desai, who at the time was the Home Minister in Bombay's Congress Government.[43] In Belgaum meanwhile, a directive was issued by the District Collector to the President of Belgaum Borough Municipality in the context of fears over the local enumerative procedure, 'to increase the number of enumerators knowing Kannada to make it approximately 50 per cent with a view to doing justice to both the languages'.[44] Attempts to parcel out posts to enumerators on the basis of community had some longer precedents, again related to the context of regionalism and sub-national autonomy that accompanied partition. Ahead of the 1941 Census in Bengal, for example, the provincial Revenue Minister B.P. Roy had suggested that Hindu and Muslim enumerators should be paired together in view of continuing communal

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[41] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from the Mamlatdar of Athani to the Collector of Belgaum', 5 March 1951.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from President, Karnatak PCC, to Minister for Home and Revenue', 22 January 1951; *Ibid.*, 'Letter from A.J. Doddameti, Belgaum, to Shri Morarji Desai, Minister for Home and Revenue', 17 February 1951.

[44] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from R.K. Anpat, Collector of Belgaum, to J.B. Bowman, Superintendent of Census Operations for Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch', 1-2 February 1951.

rivalry, to supervise each other's work and ensure that the records were not falsified.[45] Yet the idea provoked a long and critical response from the all-India Census Commissioner M.W.M. Yeatts, who insisted it was essential that all census officers should be detached from any kind of partisan activity or assistance. To conduct a census in the manner suggested by Roy, 'would be to make the entire province during the census period a kind of battlefield'.[46] In 1951, too, the decision to employ enumerators on the basis of the 'linguistic divide' in contentious borderline villages, towns and districts, whilst presented as a form of secularism, was not based upon the 'separation of church and state'. Rather, it existed as an example of 'equal respect for all traditions', a form of Indian secularism, with important consequences which correlated with Yeatts' critique of 1941.[47] The census official's reasonableness, detachedness and disinterestedness in local enumerative practices, a proper separation of the state and communal society through which objectivity could be provided, was affected by the local procedures involved with the collection and classification of data. The census still survived as a site of communal political interest, a place for contestation between different communities. The networks of communal recognition contained within the classificatory and enumerative procedure – the decision to continue collecting data on mother tongue; the concept of communal checks and balances amongst enumerators; the very need for local knowledge to ensure the census was completed – ensured that 'pressure could [still] be applied to favour one's community' in the census returns.[48]

5.2.3 Citizenship at the Census

Local census procedures and the enumerative intermediaries of the state also played a critical role in the mediation and formulation of citizenship. For one thing, the continued emphasis upon community contrasted decidedly with the ostensible commitment to secularism and the state's supposed communal impartiality under the Nehruvian Congress at the all-India level, which apparently underpinned the idea of an inclusive Indian society. Here, minority communal

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[45] NAI, Home Department File 45/40-Pub, 'Home Department Note', 5 December 1940.

[46] *Ibid.*, 'Note of M.W.M. Yeatts', 21 December 1940.

[47] See also in this regard, William Gould, 'Contesting Secularism in Colonial and Postcolonial North India between the 1930s and 1950s', *Contemporary South Asia*, 14 (2005), 481-494 (p. 484).

[48] William Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence in India: Society and the State, 1930s-1960s* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 170.

groups, howsoever defined, were to be provided with extra rights and guarantees by the state, to ensure their protection within a democracy where 'majority rule' could otherwise impinge upon their interests. This approach to citizenship remained embedded, for example, within Kher's 'Appeal' to the western Indian public ahead of enumeration in 1951. Citizens were also informed by Kher that it was their 'duty' to respond accurately to the questions asked by their enumerators. However, these intermediaries were themselves participants within local society, with their own factional allegiances and communal loyalties.[49] For those members of western Indian society who would never come into contact with higher levels of officialdom it was the enumerator who represented the state's authority. And as citizenship developed (as the introduction to this thesis suggested) as a direct consequence of these localised interactions between local state actors and specific segments of society, citizenship was frequently mediated through the paradigm of 'community' and articulated through the capture of state resources for particularised interests.

Where communal recognition continued in the everyday workings of the census, notions of loyalty and belonging to a still relatively novel Indian nation-state could be mediated by enumerators through ethno-linguistic affinities. This was apparent within 'A Note Regarding the Boundaries of North Karnatak' prepared by the Collector of Belgaum and submitted to the Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948. The Collector included information on these contested marginal regions from the 1921 and 1931 Censuses within his 'Note', arguing that,

> 'The [table] shows uniform retrogression of Kannada in all Deccan States, except one or two solitary instances. What does this signify? In the absence of migration on the part of Kannada speaking people or the sudden influx of Marathi speaking population or the fall of birth rate in the case of Kannadigas, one is led to the irresistible conclusion that pro-Marathi enumerators deliberately showed Kannada as less in the census returns'.[50]

In anticipation of boundary demarcation on the basis of mother tongue, and in his efforts to deprecate the findings of the 1921 and 1931 Censuses, the Collector of

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[49] Fuller and Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State'.
[50] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2875/46 – pt. II, 'A Note Regarding the Boundaries of North Karnatak, submitted to the Linguistic Provinces Commission in verification of the oral evidence tendered by me on 28th October 1948 at Hubli when the Merged States Areas delegation was examined'. Appended to, 'Letter from the Collector of Belgaum to the Chief Secretary to the GOB, Political and Services Department', 3 February 1949.

Belgaum linked the contemporary manipulation of census data to a longer 'clash of civilisations' which had resulted in the historical dominance of Marathi-speaking peoples over the original inhabitants of the land, the Kannadigas. A direct influence here was the previous depictions of Marathas as a 'nation' or 'race' apart in the classificatory categories of past colonial censuses. And in this sense, the Collector's reasoning reflected similar thinking connected to the 1941 Census in the context of the Pakistan demand, which had seen 'the concept of religious minority, particularly vis-à-vis a notion of a unified Hinduism, [take] on board the cultural implications of ethnic separateness created by caste division'.[51] Likewise, Marathi and Kannada speakers came to be increasingly placed within the paradigm of irreconcilable ethnic difference, in which the definition of 'homelands' cast aside those who did not ethno-linguistically 'belong'. The Collector of Belgaum's 'Note' argued that these 'Boundaries of North Karnatak' had come to be 'misdescribed' as the 'Southern Maratha Country' because of the Maharashtrian ethnicity of the native princes of such territories as Kolhapur, Kurundwad, Miraj and Sangli:

> ' ... the Kanarese people have been displaced, to a certain extent, by the Marathi people and language in the Native States, only because these States were established by the aggressions of Marathas from the north whose local influence proved to be greater than that of the native rulers whom they dispossessed'.[52]

In this interpretation, the influence of the Kannada-speaking natives had thus been displaced by conquering Marathi-speaking 'outsiders' from the north, in what seems a direct transposition of the Aryan invasion to the Collector's contemporary context. Accordingly, the Kannada language had been on the back foot ever since the Maratha principalities of Kolhapur and Satara had been formed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and after the death of Aurangzeb and the decline of Mughal influence. Others invoked an even longer history of Kannada subjugation. In October 1936, for example, a letter entitled 'The Unification of Karnatak: A Moral Necessity' and published in the Bombay Chronicle, proclaimed that,

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[51] Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia*, p. 231.

[52] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2875/46 – pt. I, 'A Note Regarding the Boundaries of North Karnatak'. Appended to, 'Letter from the Collector of Belgaum', 3 February 1949.

'Under Mahomedan rule the Kanarese language suffered not due to the Urdu or Persian tongue of the rulers but due to the Marathi-language of the Maratha Sardars serving under the Mahomedan Kings. Then the Maratha rule and the Marathi language held the field for a century and a half. The net-result of the non-Kannada rule was that the Kannada people began to feel like strangers in their own land'.[53]

And it was the continued 'tyranny of the[se] minorities' under the British Raj that had put paid to efforts to create a Karnataka homeland, as they frequently saw in the demands for Kannada-speaking rights 'an attack on their [own] rights and begin to raise a row'.[54] Citizenship rights and status were to be thus mediated on the basis of linguistic 'majorities' and 'minorities' counted at the census. But this letter also deprecated forms of 'consociationalism' under colonial rule that provided minorities with special rights and dispensations, describing it pointedly as a 'tyranny' that needed to be 'extirpated for the good of the [Karnatak] province as well as the whole nation'.[55] A similar incentive seemed to underwrite enumerative practices in Sholapur City during the 1951 Census. The 1955 'Language Handbook' for Sholapur, Satara South, Bijapur and Kolhapur Districts which, as we have seen, sought to re-work the 1951 Census figures for mother tongue at the level of the village and town, 'disclosed a rather disquieting discrepancy' in this regard. The proportion of Marathi-speakers in Sholapur dropped from 47.1 to 38.9 per cent, Kannada-speakers likewise dropped from 14.8 to 12.8 per cent, and speakers of Telugu, Urdu and other languages saw their percentages rise as a result of this 're-sort'.[56] The cause of the error remained unknown, but it does suggest some truth in Sirdar and Kadadi's earlier claims about enumerative bias.

It seems that those minorities in Sholapur outside of the two largest linguistic communities saw their position squeezed as a result of the battle between Kannada and Marathi speakers over the city's ethno-linguistic allegiance. Guarantees of state impartiality in the enumerative process and the recognition afforded to minority languages under the constitution had been disregarded, as approaches to citizenship which emphasised ethno-linguistic affinities

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[53] 'The Unification of Karnatak: A Moral Necessity: (By H.S. Kaujalgi)', *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 22 October 1936.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*; Wilkinson, 'India, Consociational Theory and Ethnic Violence'.
[56] Bowman, *Census of India 1951, Language Handbook: Sholapur, Satara South, Bijapur and Kolhapur Districts*, p. ii.

overwhelmed all other considerations in the context of linguistic reorganisation. The advent of democratic rule and independence, in this view, was to complement the ideal of 'self-government' by the local majority in a new unitary linguistic province. This conceptualisation of greater rights and status for those who constituted a locally dominant or majority 'community' was perhaps most emphatically stated by G.K. Gokhale, the Kannada-speaking representative for Belgaum South in the BLA. For Gokhale, pandering towards minority interests was incompatible with his own notion of democracy, which meant 'majority rule'. Responding to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts to have the debate on the formation of Karnataka abandoned in 1938, on the basis of the potential problems it would create for communal minorities (howsoever defined), Gokhale asserted that,

> 'If Dr. Ambedkar has any faith in democracy and if democracy means rule of the majority, then minorities must honourably, whole-heartedly, sympathetically and heartily accept that particular rule, by applying their own honest efforts to the building up of that particular nation ... I [for one] will place all that belongs to me at the feet of the Karnatak Mata [mother]'.[57]

This, notably, would allow the Kannada speakers to control the province, to finally be able to access the rights that they deemed they deserved as both the original and the majority inhabitants of the region. Increasingly, then, an ethnicised interpretation of citizenship informed much of the local procedures related to boundary demarcation, including the role of census officials in the collection of data on mother tongue. Ethnicity as the crucial criterion behind access to rights and status within newly-constituted provinces could also inform the opinions of Marathi-speakers on reorganisation too. D.M. Kulkarni, a Marathi-speaking lawyer from Karwar in North Kanara District, for example, speculated that it would be 'unjust and unfair on the part of Government to impose upon [the people of Karwar taluka] a language like Kannad which is in no way allied to their own Marathi language, the former being of Dravidian stock and the latter of Aryan stock'.[58]

As we have seen, enumerators played a critical role in these definitions of citizenship, as they mediated and represented the authority of the state for many

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[57] Mr. K. G. Gokhale (Belgaum South), 4 April 1938. *Bombay Legislative Assembly* [henceforth *BLA*] *Debates*, vol. III (18-34), March-April 1938, p. 1728.

[58] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2026/46 – pt. IV, 'Letter from D.M. Kulkarni, Advocate, Karwar (Dt. N. Kanara), to B.G. Kher, Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Bombay', 10 May 1949.

citizens who would otherwise never develop close contacts with officialdom. They also sought to re-direct enumerative and classificatory procedures, looking to manipulate them in their own interests and those of their community. But they were able to do so because everyday enumerative processes still recognised the importance of communal allegiance to ensure the smooth running and completion of the census as a whole. Ostensible commitments to democracy, development and secularism, which were voiced in the census by an emphasis upon economic rather than communal classifications, as well as the state's supposed impartiality, existed alongside continued efforts to collect data on linguistic groups and STs and SCs, the parcelling out of enumerative posts on the basis of community, and the trust afforded to local knowledge in the formulation of wider state information. Despite central government rhetoric which suggested minorities would be protected by guarantees enshrouded within the constitution, the need to demarcate provincial administrative boundaries on linguistic lines ensured that ethno-linguistic affinities were essential to notions of belonging and rights at the local, everyday level. And this, as we have seen and shall consider in more detail in the next section, could have an important impact upon the social and cultural existence of a whole host of so-called minorities within western India.

5.3 Bhili, Gujarati, Marathi? Adivasis in the Dangs and Elsewhere

In similar circumstances to disputes amongst Marathi and Kannada speakers, the exact site of the line of demarcation between the proposed states of Gujarat and Maharashtra became a point of contention in the northern districts of Dangs, Thana and West Khandesh, too. The development of ideas about citizenship, which dwelt upon ethno-linguistic affinities as symptomatic of an individual's belonging and status, were therefore also to impact upon those whose mother tongue fell outside the ambit of the three primary languages (Gujarati, Kannada and Marathi) of the province. During the late 1940s and 1950s, disagreements broke out over the classification of the mother-tongue of these districts' adivasi (tribal) populations. In fact, after the cities of Bombay and Belgaum, the controversy over the Dangs became the next largest point of contention regarding linguistic reorganisation in the whole of western India. At the 1951 census, the enumeration and classification of the adivasis' language was therefore of critical significance.

The first sub-section focuses upon the manner in which educative efforts to 'uplift' the adivasis in the post-independence period reflected earlier interwar imperatives amongst some Indian and Hindu nationalists. It notes how, just as forms of 'uplift' looked to more firmly incorporate adivasis within the Hindu fold, imparting education through the 'official' language of the province or district, rather than the adivasis' mother tongue, served to more closely assimilate tribals with the 'majority' linguistic community. The second sub-section concentrates more carefully upon the machinations around the 1951 census in Dangs District. It highlights how the introduction of larger state processes to establish unambiguous data and the more local (and sometimes inadvertent) manipulation of statistics by local enumerators ahead of linguistic reorganisation privileged standardised, official languages at the expense of local tribal vernaculars. Everyday enumerative practices and procedures thereby served to emphasise an ethno-linguistic majoritarian notion of belonging as the primary benchmark for local enactments of citizenship. These local practices thus departed from the central state's constitutional commitment to guarantee the rights and interests of its tribal 'minority' citizens – including the protection of their mother tongue.

5.3.1 Adivasi 'Uplift', Religion and Language

Attempts to define the ethnicity of India's large adivasi population in the context of the census had longer antecedents, too, linked to Hindu communal mobilisation and notions of Hindu unity. With the new religio-political mobilisation of the Muslim League embodied within the Lahore Demand of March 1940, the 1941 Census had become 'a much more direct fight between advocates of Hindu and Muslim enumeration'.[59] In the process, the religious allegiances of tribal communities, whether classified as 'tribal', 'animist' or Hindu, came to be seen as particularly decisive in regions with large percentages of both Hindu and Muslim populations. For instance, high-caste Hindu nationalist organisations in Bengal 'were at pains to point out the long standing erroneous basis of colonial ethnographies, particularly in their apparent desire to set out the separate religious and ethnic identities of tribal and low caste groups'.[60] Some British administrators too, such as the Superintendent of Census Operations in Bombay for the 1921 Census L.J. Sedgwick, expressed similar sentiments to the Hindu nationalists in this regard:

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[59] Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia*, p. 232.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

'The Bhils, who contribute most to the figures, are practically Hindus, and the other castes seem to be so also. I have therefore no hesitation in saying that Animism as a religion should be entirely abandoned, and that all those hitherto classed as Animists should be grouped with Hindus at the next Census, Hinduism being defined as including the religious or semi-religious beliefs of those jungle tribes who have not definitely embraced Islam or Christianity'.[61]

In many ways, this was a longstanding concern, first expressed with conviction in U.N. Mukherji's *Hindus: A Dying Race* (1909), which had suggested a steady decline in Hindu numbers in the census figures of Bengal at the expense of the province's Muslim population.[62] Efforts to have tribal communities' religious beliefs classified as within the ambit of Hinduism at the census complemented wider efforts amongst some Indian nationalists to 'uplift' a wide spectrum of 'low-castes' from their present 'backward' state. The problem of 'untouchability' was to be defined by many as a specifically Hindu concern, distinct from Muslim interests. For example, the *Bombay Sentinel* reported in November 1935 that

'Commotion [had] prevailed for a time at a mass meeting of Harijans held last night at Deolali attended by some Muslims when Pandarinath Maratha a Caste Hindu speaker uttered a word of warning to Muslims to keep aloof from the domestic troubles of the Hindus ... Pandarinath regretted that Muslims should take unfair advantage of "the sorry state of affairs, purely of domestic nature in the Hindu family. Their jubilation over our troubles were not becoming. Their one idea is to proselytise and kill Hinduism"'.[63]

For Gandhi too, this was a Hindu religious issue, to be overcome by religious solutions. In late 1935 Ambedkar threatened to lead his followers in a mass Dalit conversion renouncing Hinduism, by proclaiming that he was 'born a Hindu but would not die a Hindu'.[64] In response to Ambedkar's efforts to overcome the social and economic subjugation of Dalits at the hands of caste Hindus, Gandhi commented in October of that year, 'I am convinced that a change of faith ... will not serve the cause which they have at heart ... especially when it is remembered

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[61] Sedgwick, *Census of India, 1921: Volume VIII: Part I*, p. 67.

[62] Pradip Kumar Datta, 'Dying Hindus: Production of Hindu Communal Common-Sense in Early Twentieth-Century Bengal', *Economic and Political Weekly* [henceforth *EPW*], 28 (1993), 1305-1319.

[63] 'Commotion at Harijan Meeting: Sequel to "Hands Off" Warning to Muslims', *Bombay Sentinel* (Bombay), 11 November 1935.

[64] Ambedkar had been threatening the possibility of conversion since the 1920s. He finally chose to convert to Buddhism in 1956, just before his death in the same year. Many of his supporters, particularly those from the Mahar Dalit community in Maharashtra, followed him into the Buddhist religion. See, Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: Tracts for the Times/8* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1994), pp. 44-45, 51.

that their lives for good or evil are intertwined with those of caste Hindus'.[65] Ahead of enumeration at the 1941 Census in Bengal, special efforts were made to stress the Hindu ethno-religious allegiance of low-caste and adivasi communities.[66] 'Orthodox' Hindus or Sanatanists, who still resisted efforts to remove 'untouchability' and grant Dalits equal access to temples, wells and other public conveniences, were condemned as 'mainly instrumental in driving their co-religionists from the Hindu fold [because they] do not believe in numbers'.[67] Hinduism was thus perceived by Hindu nationalists as being 'under threat' from external efforts on the part of both Muslims and the colonial state, as well as 'internally' both by the perils of mass 'untouchable' conversion and a recalcitrant Hindu orthodoxy. Meanwhile, for the more ostensibly 'secular' pretensions of the Congress, emphasis upon the separate identities of low-caste groups potentially undermined their efforts to cultivate and represent Indian unity.

Ongoing discussions about low-caste and tribal 'backwardness' were frequently couched within the often complementary discourses of western 'modernisation' and high-caste Hindu 'uplift', in which educational reform would wean the adivasis from their 'habitual vices' such as drinking, uncleanliness, excessive borrowing and petty crime.[68] And 'uplift' and its connotations of incorporation within the Hindu 'fold' continued to find favour in the post-independence period, despite the state's secular claims to communal impartiality. The Report on Educational Expansion in the Adivasi Areas of the Thana District in Bombay, for example, suggested that, 'It is only through proper education that a new society, intelligent and able, industrious and persevering, honest and faithful, self-reliant and self-respecting, clean and tidy can be created'.[69] These endeavours frequently emphasised the necessity of emulating higher status communities, thereby underscoring notions of social inadequacy amongst the adivasis by seeking to inculcate the norms and traditions of the upper castes and classes amongst

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[65] 'Untouchability on Last Legs: Mr. Gandhi Deplores Dr. Ambedkar's Speech', *The Times of India* (Bombay), 16 October 1935.

[66] Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 192-200; Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia*, pp. 234-236.

[67] 'To the Editor of "The Chronicle"', *The Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 16 October 1935.

[68] Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 380.

[69] *Report of the Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay for a Programme of Educational Expansion in the Adivasi Areas of the Thana District* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1948), p. 8.

them.[70] A particularly perceptive social commentator, who sent a letter to *The Times of India* in January 1936, noted that the uplift programmes of the 1930s often ensured that low-caste groups were thought of as 'impure or polluted and as such the treatment given to them by selfish and orthodox Hindu society is fully justified'.[71] Attempts to improve the social welfare of low-caste Hindu groups such as the adivasis was repeatedly undercut by efforts to incorporate tribal groups within the Hindu fold, whilst also remaining intimately linked with the processes of classification and enumeration at the census.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, an increased emphasis upon ethno-linguistic unity amongst Maharashtrians and Gujaratis had a similar impact upon social reform in western India. This time, ostensible commitments to improve the welfare of adivasis residing in the Dangs and certain talukas of Thana and West Khandesh Districts were adversely affected by efforts to include them amongst Marathi or Gujarati speakers ahead of provincial reorganisation. Again, the census was to play a key role in this process, despite its supposed new emphasis upon economic classificatory categories. And these developments were also to have a significant part within the formulation of ideas about citizenship amongst those in the locality, focusing upon local notions of belonging linked to ethno-linguistic affinity which contravened and disregarded the ostensible principles of the state to protect 'minority' interests. The decision to enumerate the inhabitants of Bombay Province on the basis of their mother tongue had, like the matter of religion, often been a rather contentious issue. In the same year as he deprecated the continued efficacy of the category 'Animism' to describe the religion of the province's adivasi community, L.J. Sedgwick also suggested that the enumeration of language should be ended at the next census.[72] Yet despite his efforts, mother tongue was still being counted and classified in the census in 1951, during which time cogent and vocal movements for the linguistic reorganisation of provincial administrative boundaries had now emerged.

Between the inter-war period and the post-independence era, another notable and interlinked change had taken place. In the Dangs, the number of adivasis who had been recorded as speaking the local adivasi vernacular, known as either Bhili

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[70] C.J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 256.

[71] 'Harijan Uplift: To the Editor of the Times of India: P. Balakrishnan', *The Times of India* (Bombay), 14 January 1936.

[72] Sedgwick, *Census of India, 1921: Volume VIII: Part I*, p. 151.

or Dangi, had seemingly completely disintegrated. In 1931, figures for the Dangs had shown 32,350 Bhili speakers, 731 Gujarati speakers and 613 Marathi speakers. In stark contrast, the 1951 enumeration classified 45,017 inhabitants of the district as professing Marathi as their mother tongue, 1,802 speaking Gujarati, and no notable representation of Bhili or Dangi at all.[73] These changes were reflected elsewhere in Bombay, albeit not quite on the same rapid scale, with East Khandesh seeing Bhili speakers within the district decline from nearly three per cent to 0.67 per cent between 1911 and 1951, and Surat District going from 3.28 per cent to 0.95 per cent over the same period.[74] In his official report on the census returns of 1951, Census Superintendent J.B. Bowman suggested that this decline reflected 'the spread of communications and the growth of education', which was ensuring that 'the standard languages are tending to drive the dialects out'.[75]

Yet this sweeping tide of standardised languages also threatened to abrogate the ideological imperatives of Article 29.1 of the new Indian Constitution. Seeking to guarantee the rights of Indian 'minorities', it read as follows: 'Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same'.[76] Whilst in the previous chapter of this thesis we noted how this commitment was primarily conceived and applied in the interests of India's Muslims in the north and the protection of their distinctiveness through Urdu, it could also be re-contextualised elsewhere in the subcontinent and applied to linguistic minorities. The linguistic medium through which education was to be imparted proved a matter of concern for the Survey Committee for West Khandesh District Backward Area Education, who were appointed to make recommendations for the improvement of adivasi's social, economic and political conditions in 1954. The Survey Committee noted that,

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[73] Bowman, *Census of India 1951, Language Handbook: Dangs, Thana and Banaskantha Districts*, pp. ii, 1.
[74] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1154/H (1954), 'Table II: Linguistic Data: Statement showing percentage of population speaking Bhili, Marathi and Gujarati as mother tongue since 1911', n.d.
[75] Bowman, *Census of India, 1951: Volume IV: Part I*, p. 147.
[76] 'Article 29(1)', The Constitution of India, p. 14 <http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/coi-indexenglish.htm> [accessed 6 July 2013].

'The language spoken by these tribes are local dialects which differ from each other to some extent. The men folk can understand Marathi for practical purposes. Some of them can speak it also. But the Women folk and especially the small children find it difficult either to follow the regional language or communicate their thoughts in any language except their own dialect. This has made the problem of imparting elementary education in the initial stages rather difficult'.[77]

However, despite noting the continuing importance of the adivasi vernacular (Bhili), the Survey Committee recommended that the children of the tribal community in West Khandesh would only be taught with the help of Bhili during their 'preparatory' and 'first standard' years of primary education. Beyond these early stages, the rest of their primary education was to be conducted in Marathi. Adivasi vernaculars, then, were to be gradually replaced by the major regional languages as a concomitant of the educational 'civilising'/'uplift' process, thereby mirroring the substitution of adivasi customs and traditions with high-caste alternatives that augmented efforts to include low-caste groups within the broader Hindu community. The wider implications such a recommendation had upon the protection of minority languages and customs, whilst acknowledged by the Survey Committee, were ultimately overruled: ' … we have to qualify the application of this principle in the case of dilects [*sic*] which are spoken only by a few thousands or a few lakhs of people, in a comparatively small area and which have no prospect of ever becoming regional or state languages'.[78] Favouring Marathi as the district's official language, as well as those who could communicate through it, had important implications for citizenship in the district, privileging an ethno-linguistic majoritarianism which departed from both guarantees provided to communal minorities and the state secularism favoured by Nehru's central government.

The medium through which to conduct education amongst the adivasis was also deemed critical in the Dangs District. Reporting in January 1949, for example, the District Collector noted that in an area consisting of only 335 villages, of which none had more than 1,000 inhabitants, as many as 80 new Marathi schools and 40

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[77] *Report of Survey Committee for West Khandesh District Backward Area Education* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1954), p. 7.
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

new Gujarati schools had recently been opened.[79] In both West Khandesh and the Dangs, these attempts to impart the majority of education amongst tribal groups through the major regional languages can be linked to larger processes, whereby the ethno-linguistic affinity of the province's adivasis became a site of contestation between proponents of Maharashtra and Gujarat as linguistic provinces. In this manner, efforts at 'uplift' in western India amongst Maharashtrians and Gujaratis echoed similar attempts amongst high-caste Hindus to ensure adivasis were recorded as Hindus in the context of Hindu-Muslim enumeration in 1941. The sudden collapse in numbers of those inhabitants of the Dangs who were recorded as speaking Bhili at the 1951 Census must therefore be understood within this wider, interlinked context of 'uplift', communal incorporation and census demographics. Before considering the 1951 Census in the Dangs in detail, however, it is necessary to provide some historical context regarding this particular patch of territory, as to why it was so keenly contested.

5.3.2 The Dangs – Language and Citizenship ahead of Linguistic Reorganisation

The Dangs had always maintained a rather special, ambivalent relationship with the rest of Bombay Province after it had been subjugated and pacified by the East India Company in 1842. First and foremost, it remained apart from British India, as the various indigenous tribal rulers of the Dangs maintained some measure of sovereignty and autonomy in their actions. However, from an early stage, the British imposed upon these princes their right to extract the region's timber in exchange for a hereditary annuity. And even though British laws and regulations theoretically did not apply, by the 1930s 'the area [was] virtually administered by a British Officer who administers justice in the spirit of British Indian laws and codes'.[80] So whilst the Dangs was not officially part of British India, it was in many ways entirely different from other princely states too. It was in many ways already a district of Bombay in all but name, albeit with forms of special 'protective' legislation implemented ostensibly in the interests of the region's tribes.[81] Before

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[79] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2026/46 – pt. II, 'Letter from the Collector, Dangs District, to the Secretary to the GOB, Home (Special) Department, "Weekly Confidential Report"', 10 January 1949.

[80] MSA, GOB, Reforms Office File 239, 'Political and Reforms Department Note', n.d.

[81] Historians have stressed the importance of huge variations in the relationship between the colonial authorities and the native princely states, in an effort to

1903, it was under the administrative control of the District Collector of the predominantly Marathi-speaking area of West Khandesh, but after this period, it was included afresh within the jurisdiction of the principally Gujarati-speaking Surat District.[82] Historical fluctuations in its administrative location thus helped sow the seeds for later disagreements. In the aftermath of independence, the princely states came to be integrated under the national Indian government. The Dangs was formed into a separate district within Bombay Province, despite it being relatively small at only 650 miles, and populated by a mere 45,000-odd people. However, with its amalgamation, it also became necessary for the Bombay Government to sanction the new district's official language. And it was this requirement that was to prove to be the first bone of contention between Marathi and Gujarati speakers in post-colonial Bombay, particularly in the context of demands for provincial reorganisation.

The Dang Seva Mandal (The Dangs Service Association), based at Nasik, for example, argued that, 'All Government correspondence addressed to the villager should only be made in Marathi', as the tribal population 'speak and understand well Marathi, even children and women'.[83] On the other hand, a meeting held under the auspices of the Gujarati timber merchants proposed 'that they should get a competent cine-photographer who would take talking pictures [i.e. cine-film] of the Dangs and its people', as well as hiring language specialists as a means to prove that the region's inhabitants were ethno-linguistically Gujarati.[84] By May 1949, the issue was becoming so heated that the Marathi-speaking Prime Minister B.G. Kher and the Gujarati-speaking Revenue Minister Morarji Desai toured the Dangs in an effort to form an impression as to the language of the people and therefore put an end to the controversy. They ultimately decided that the official language of the Dangs should be Marathi and 'that the responsibility for primary education of children in the Dangs district should be undertaken by the Government and carried out either departmentally or through a Board which may

overcome approaches which stereotype and treat them in a reductionist manner. See, Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati, 'People, Princes and Colonialism', in *India's Princely States: Peoples, Princes and Colonialism*, ed. by W. Ernst and B. Pati (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-14.

[82] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2026/46 – pt. II, 'Letter from Assistant Secretary, Church of the Brethren Mission, Ahwa Dangs', 23 July 1931.

[83] *Ibid.*, 'Letter to Dr. B.G. Kher, Prime Minister of the GOB, from the Dang Seva Mandal, Nasik', 18 October 1948.

[84] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2026/46 – pt. I, 'Extract from the Weekly Confidential Report of the District Magistrate, Dangs', 12 April 1949.

be trusted with this work'.[85] This Board was to provide facilities for learning in either the Gujarati or Marathi state languages where more than 20 children petitioned that they required it, meaning some villages were to have more than one educational medium. Just as in Khandesh, however, there was no provision for the local Bhili/Dhangi vernacular within these schemes.

The hugely diminished returns for Bhili in the 1951 Census was in part the responsibility of Kher and Desai, who had been so vocal in their declaration that the district's official language was Marathi. But the returns also reflected larger processes whereby the census continued to serve as a site of communal political interest, despite the central government's efforts to emphasise economic classifications instead. Perhaps most importantly in this regard, certain 'contractions' had been introduced in the 1951 Census within Bombay, with the emphasis now focusing upon establishing relatively unambiguous data with regards to mother tongue ahead of provincial reorganisation.

> 'For instance, in the case of the question on mother tongue, the enumerator was asked to write 1 for Marathi, 2 for Gujarati and 3 for Kannada. Since the language question in the Dangs had been settled before the Census took place in the most sensible way possible by two important and impartial persons giving their award [Kher and Desai], the enumerators recorded "1" i.e., Marathi as the mother tongue in the case of people who spoke the language spoken in the Dangs. In many cases the speakers themselves would not put the label "Marathi" on the language they speak any more than they would put the label "Hindu" on the religion they practice'.[86]

Efforts to collect straightforward data on the three-way divide between the major administrative languages within Bombay Province therefore provided the structure through which local tribal vernaculars could be absorbed by the proponents of Maharashtra and Gujarat at the census. Yet it was the enumerators themselves who were central to this transformation in the statistical returns, as it was these everyday census officials who fleshed out the larger enumerative and classificatory processes of the census at the local level.[87] In 1921, Census

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[85] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2026/46 – pt. II, 'Draft Press Note', 18 May 1949.

[86] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1154/H (1954), 'Copy of a Note from the Superintendent of Census Operations, Bombay State', n.d.

[87] For more on the intermediary position of these enumerators between state and society, see the previous section of this chapter entitled 'Boundaries, Enumerators and the Census of 1951'.

Superintendent L.J. Sedgwick had circulated supplementary instructions to these intermediaries in Bombay ahead of enumeration, which had focused in particular on mother tongue. He advised the enumerators to 'Remember that you are to enter the language which each person talks in his home and not the language in which he talks to you … Bhils and some other wild tribes speak languages of their own'.[88] Despite such recommendations, Sedgwick noted that in practice, local classificatory procedures would often depart significantly from the state's claims to communal impartiality: 'Enumerators who speak Marathi or Gujarati enter any Bhil whose dialect they understand as a Marathi speaker, or a Gujarati speaker as the case may be'.[89] Thus, even inadvertently, census officials, who were invariably from non-tribal communities, could privilege standardised, official languages at the expense of local tribal vernaculars.

By mediating adivasi voices at the census, these enumerative 'outsiders' ensured there was no real opportunity for the state to garner tribals' own outlook on their mother tongue. Indeed, representatives of the state at the local level frequently expressed condescending attitudes towards the tribal community, which suggested they were not really interested in what the adivasis themselves believed. The District Collector of the Dangs, for example, argued in 1948 that, 'The people of this tract, in my opinion, are not so much interested in the matter of official language inasmuch as they are most primitive, uncivilized, backward and most illiterate (as will appear from the 182 thumb impressions affixed to this petition)'.[90] In these circumstances, census data frequently departed from the opinions of British and Indian philologists on tribal languages. For example, with regards to the tribal vernacular in East and West Khandesh, known as 'Ahirani' or 'Khandeshi', 'In 1911 we get the following: Ahirani 113, Khandeshi 133, Rangari 32, Gavli 125, Chitodi 60; Possible total 463. Yet the Linguistic Survey estimates the number of speakers at 1,253,066, all of which would be in Khandesh and the regions immediately adjoining'.[91]

The difficulties in establishing the correct figures from local enumerative practices became even more apparent at the 1951 Census where, as we have seen, the

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[88] Sedgwick, *Census of India 1921: Volume VIII: Part I*, p. 151.

[89] *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.

[90] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1154/H (1954), 'Letter from Collector, Dangs District, to the Chief Secretary to the GOB, Political and Services Department', 10 December 1948.

[91] Sedgwick, *Census of India, 1921: Volume VIII: Part I*, pp. 156-157.

classificatory structure surrounding mother tongue in Bombay was based around numerical 'contractions'. The 1951 Census Superintendent J.B. Bowman suggested that, 'The Enumerator's reasoning is probably as follows: "My mother-tongue is Marathi or Gujarati. I can understand this man's language perfectly. Therefore he speaks Marathi or Gujarati"'.[92] But the matter was even further complicated by the continuing demands for linguistic reorganisation, in which the ethno-linguistic allegiances of the adivasi community became of critical importance ahead of boundary demarcation. During a debate within the Bombay Legislative Assembly in August 1954, Morarji Desai, who had now become the Chief Minister, put the shift in the Dangs district from Bhili/Dangi to Marathi down to 'provincial jealousies and manoeuvres'. This had obscured the fact that, 'Really speaking, the language spoken in the Dangs is Dangi'.[93] For those who argued that the adivasis' mother tongue was Gujarati or Marathi, but for whom the census figures did not concur, recourse was made instead to suitable linguistic authorities or historical factors. A letter received by the Government of India from the Gujarat Vepari Mahamandal (Gujarat Chamber of Commerce), for example, made reference to the findings of both the Gujarat Research Society and George Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* (11 volumes, 1903-1928), to argue that the language spoken in the Dangs 'was basically Gujarati or allied to Gujarati'.[94] In both the census returns and in references to historical ties and ethno-linguistic affinities, the state's ostensible efforts to protect the interests of adivasi minorities were therefore being overridden by the growing tide of ethnic majoritarianism within western India as the primary benchmark for local enactments of citizenship.

This rise in an ethnic interpretation of citizenship was deprecated by the Gujarati leader of the Praja Socialist Party in Bombay Dr. Amul M. Desai, during a debate on the States Reorganisation Bill within the Bombay Legislative Assembly in April 1956. At pains to stress that he had always been against linguistic reorganisation despite now introducing an amendment that suggested the Dangs should go to Gujarat, he argued that the 'guiding principle' behind reorganisation should be what the adivasis themselves wanted. Too much importance had been placed

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[92] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1154/H (1954), 'Political and Services Department Note', n.d.

[93] *Ibid.*, 'Debate in the BLA regarding language of Dangs District', 25 August 1954.

[94] NAI, Home Department File 51/87/51 – Pub, 'Letter from Gujarat Vepari Mahamandal to the Secretary, Revenue Department, GOB, "Proposals for reconstitution of talukas and mahals"', 28 September 1950.

upon 'what their grand-fathers were or where they came from, from the north or from the south or whether they were Dravidians or Aryans. Today the people have to decide their own fate'.[95] He went on to argue:

> 'I do not for a moment want to make a claim that the language of the Adivasis in Umbergaon Taluka [Thana District] is the Gujarati language. Unfortunately, things have not been put in the correct perspective. One side should have put forward the claim that the language of Adivasis in Umbergaon Taluka is influenced more by Gujarati language and the other side should have put forward the claim that it is influenced more by Marathi language. And it would have been a very rational approach if the final decision had been left to a final authority'.[96]

The sudden diminishment in the figures of those adivasis being recorded as speaking Bhili/Dangi in the Dangs and elsewhere in western India, as well as the concomitant increase in the number of Marathi and Gujarati speakers in these areas, can therefore be tied in with the circumstances of provincial reorganisation. Mother tongue demographics were deemed critical to a 'politics of numbers', whereby the ethno-linguistic affinities amongst the tribal populations of these peripheral districts would potentially determine precisely where the line of demarcation would be drawn. Everyday enumerative practices and processes in these regions therefore served to emphasise an ethnic majoritarianism which favoured the major, official provincial languages above and beyond the state's special commitment to protect the rights and interests of its tribal minorities. In such circumstances, these hitherto neglected areas of the province took on a new importance in 1951. Yet these developments around the census also interacted with larger processes whereby western India's tribal populations in the Dangs, Thana and West Khandesh were to be 'uplifted' and 'civilised'. Educational 'reform' not only emphasised high-caste Hindu norms and practices as an exemplary mode of behaviour, but also ensured the gradual replacement of tribal vernaculars such as Ahirani, Bhili, Dangi or Khandeshi with standardised versions of Gujarati and Marathi. So whilst these reforms reflected attempts to improve the social welfare of adivasis, they were frequently undercut by efforts to incorporate tribal communities within Maharashtrian or Gujarati society in the context of classification and enumeration at the census. In the circumstances, the distinctive blend of Gujarati, Marathi, Rajasthani and

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[95] Dr. Amul M. Desai (Valsad), 5 April 1956. *BLA Debates*, vol. XXXI, pt. II (ii), February-March 1956, p. 1877.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 1879.

'aboriginal' influences that made up such tribal languages as Bhili were fast disappearing.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has suggested that the classification and enumeration of communities at the census was always a dynamic process, fluctuating in response to prominent local exigencies and concerns. Whereas in previous decennial censuses, for example, the collection of data on mother tongue had been a relatively uncontroversial process, in 1951 it became critical ahead of linguistic reorganisation. In many ways the increased controversy over mother tongue in western India reflected similar concerns and preoccupations to those that developed around religion in 1941. And in some senses, mobilisations around 'community' identities in the north-east and north-west in 1941, and around language in Bombay a decade later, were both manifestations of ideas about self-government and local democracy articulated in a regional milieu. But by focusing upon Bombay rather than the north, this chapter has simultaneously looked to decipher an alternative set of circumstances through which citizenship was conceptualised and enacted that departs from the emphasis upon the 'Hindu-Muslim Question' and the creation of Pakistan in much of the existing literature.

The collection of data on various forms of 'community' therefore continued to be utilised for political purposes beyond independence, despite central government rhetoric which emphasised state detachedness and communal impartiality. Key to the performance of enumerative and classificatory processes at the census, as we have seen, were the local census officials, who acted as the intermediaries of the state for many ordinary Indians. Local circumstances thereby ensured frequent fluctuations and transformations in the state's knowledge of Indian society. The privileged position of enumerators, mediating the state's power and its formulation of knowledge often allowed them to seek political, social and material advantage in the process for themselves or their particular community. Rumours abounded that census figures on mother tongue were being manipulated by enumerators ahead of the boundary demarcation that would accompany provincial reorganisation. Representations and petitions received by the provincial government argued for greater control over the selection of census

officials, sometimes demanding the substitution of enumerators for those from their own linguistic community instead, or that local enumerators should be divided equally on the basis of their mother tongues. At other times, petitioners appealed to the state's supposed impartiality and 'unimpeachable integrity', emphasising the enumerator's role as one of detachedness and disinterestedness in the enumerative process. However, the very need for local knowledge to ensure the census' ultimate comprehensiveness ensured that pressure could still be applied to favour one's community in the census returns.

The impending linguistic reorganisation of provincial boundaries also had an important impact upon the social position of 'minorities', howsoever defined, within western India. An increased emphasis upon ethno-linguistic unity amongst Maharashtrians and Gujaratis, for example, ensured that the affinities of adivasis in the Dangs, Thana and West Khandesh were to become sites of contestation between proponents of Gujarati- and Marathi-speaking states at the census. Over the course of the inter-war period and into the post-independence era, the number of adivasis who had been recorded as speaking local tribal vernaculars such as Ahirani, Bhili or Dangi had declined dramatically, at the expense of the official provincial languages. This owed something to local enumerative procedures, whereby census officials, as 'outsiders', would privilege official languages, often because of their own linguistic affinities. But it was also related to the processes of 'uplift', which mirrored earlier efforts to inculcate high-caste norms and habits amongst the 'backward classes'. In an analogous manner, educational reform amongst adivasis in western India frequently sought to impart education in Marathi or Gujarati rather than tribal vernaculars. By doing so, an increased emphasis was put upon the linguistic cohesiveness of the region and its inhabitants. Both local educational and enumerative procedures thereby departed from the state's constitutional commitment to protect the cultural and linguistic rights and interests of India's minorities.

In this sense, this chapter has had something important to say regarding citizenship, too. Whilst the central state was ostensibly committed to both communal impartiality and the protection of minority interests at the census, at the everyday level its message was mediated and redefined by local census officials who were themselves drawn from amongst local society. Articulations of citizenship amongst the ordinary public engaged with both these everyday actions of local state actors and an imagined state which adhered to its norms, values and

guarantees. But the manner in which they did so depended upon the particular perspective of the individual or 'community' concerned. So whereas those citizens who considered themselves 'locals' or who represented a majority 'community' in a particular constituency might express their citizenship on the basis of ethno-linguistic affinity with a region or their rights to self-governance, those who felt threatened by these displays of cultural chauvinism and majoritarianism might be more likely to engage with the 'sublime' principles of the state as a guarantor of minority rights and interests. Notions of citizenship amongst ordinary Indians, formulated in these interactions with and imaginings of the state, also depended upon their own take on local social tensions and concerns in the midst of larger historical changes and processes.

6: Introducing Hindi: National and Vernacular Languages in India

'The story of the Ganges, from her source to the sea, from old times to new, is the story of India's civilisation and culture, of the rise and fall of empires, of great and proud cities ... of ups and downs, of growth and decay, of life and death'.

Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2004 [1946]).[1]

In January 1965, India's new Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri attempted to introduce Hindi as the sole official language of the Indian Union. In response, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) of the southern Indian province of Tamil Nadu launched a campaign of protest, burning 'Hindi books and the relevant pages of the constitution', vandalising Hindi signs at railway stations and post offices, and indulging in collective strikes and *bandhs*.[2] The DMK's leader C.N. Annadurai was to reject the imposition of what he perceived as a regional vernacular (albeit a vernacular spoken by more Indians than any other) as official language, on the grounds that: 'If we had to accept the principle of numerical superiority while selecting our national bird, the choice would have fallen not on the peacock but on the common crow'.[3] For Annadurai, real freedom and democracy was not to be based upon the right to rule by the supposed 'cultural mainstream'. The 1965 agitation against Hindi in southern India was the culmination of opposition to attempts by the Congress and others at the centre over the last four and a half decades to introduce an indigenous language to replace English as India's *lingua franca*. Throughout this period, opposition to Hindi was at its most vociferous in the south. Indeed, the idea of secession and the creation of a separate Dravidastan (akin to Pakistan, but seceding on the basis of ethno-linguistic rather than ethno-religious difference) received varying levels

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[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004 [1946]), p. 35.

[2] Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 2007), p. 392.

[3] A.S. Raman, 'A Meeting with C.N. Annadurai', *Illustrated Weekly of India*, 26 September 1965. Quoted in *Ibid.*

of support during the 1940s and 1950s from those areas of the subcontinent that were part of the former colonial province of Madras.[4]

As David Washbrook has pointed out, one of the reasons for the refutation of Hindi in Tamil Nadu and other parts of southern India related to particularised ideas about self-government, nationhood and citizenship. Here, 'concepts of self-rule, betterment and justice were not always synonymous with the creation of pan-Indian forms of government'.[5] This chapter argues that the perceived threat of north Indian majoritarian forms within the language of all-India unity and harmony oft provoked the configuration of alternative ideas about citizenship and nationhood at the regional and local level. However, not all of these were expressed, like the calls for Dravidastan, in overt demands for separation from the Indian Union. Others looked more subtly towards the creation of autonomous spaces *within* it, where the state's obligations to protect the rights and interests of its citizens would revolve around 'local' interests and priorities. In Bombay, for example, these local incentives continued to condition the actions of the provincial Congress Government, despite simultaneous commitments towards nation-building within an all-India milieu. This chapter therefore addresses three major issues within its two subsequent sections, which provide the context through which to analyse how ideas about citizenship and belonging were formulated and enacted in western India.

The first section begins by interrogating the first of these chief concerns of the chapter. It looks to demonstrate how forms of north Indian majoritarianism were evident within the writings and practices of the highest echelons of the Congress organisation during the interwar period. This phase of the nationalist movement was marked by an (at least rhetorical) shift under Gandhian auspices, in which the Congress moved away from an older stereotype which depicted it as an elite and constitutional organisation and instead looked to portray itself as representative of and accountable towards the interests of the peasant 'masses'. Both the introduction of Hindustani rather than English and a focus upon communal

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[4] J.B. Prashant More, *Muslim Identity, Print Culture, and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004), p. 160.

[5] David Washbrook, 'Towards a History of the Present: Southern Perspectives on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, ed. by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar and Andrew Sartori (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 332-357 (pp. 347-348).

impartiality and social egalitarianism within the party were supposed to mark this transformation. But the policies, practices and historical polemics of the Congress remained primarily oriented towards north Indian social circumstances and concerns and were consistently misapplied elsewhere in the subcontinent.

As noted in Chapter Three, a Congress candidate's representativeness was considered critical to their ability to mobilise voters behind the party. But this representativeness was frequently judged by the local Congress organisation on the basis of 'community' affinities. In a similar manner the imposition of Hindustani as a provincial administrative language within the services, under orders from the Congress High Command (CHC), threatened to derail the opportunities for local civil servants to develop their knowledge of the regional vernacular and thus hinder their representativeness and accountability towards the local public. The responses of civil servants to this introduction of Hindustani within the services are analysed in the second section of this chapter.

The second section therefore considers two other major points of interest for this chapter. First, it looks at how both the public and local state actors received 'national' ideas and imperatives in western India. There was nothing necessarily inevitable about their depiction as north Indian majoritarian symbols. But in the context of the gradual realisation of self-government, particular local societal groups and communities in Bombay demanded forms of privilege and protection to combat both the encroachment of 'outsiders' within the services and the application of incompatible all-India directives to regional settings. In this sense, this chapter touches upon a number of congruent points to those raised earlier in Chapter Four. Second, the section also considers the difficulties which provincial Congress governments encountered when trying to balance local concerns with all-India prerogatives. It provides examples of instances where the Congress Government of Bombay [GOB] both looked to implement central policies within a provincial administrative setting, and where it continued to privilege 'local' interests instead.

6.1 Hindustan and the Deccan

This section explores the presence of north Indian majoritarian premises and themes contained within the efforts of prominent Congress politicians to stress

Indian society's national unity and communal harmony. Thus the emphasis upon egalitarianism and universalism was often inconsistent with the more parochial interests and hidden agendas that were submerged within national rhetoric. The first sub-section concentrates upon Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, a history conceived by Nehru as a 'political riposte to British instincts' that contended 'that without British rule to enforce cohesion, there would have been no India to speak of'.[6] However, despite Nehru placing great stress on India's historical coherency or 'unity in diversity', this was almost entirely approached from a north Indian perspective – when references are made to south India, it serves as a site of orthodoxy and backwardness rather than adaptation and initiative. The second sub-section focuses on the efforts of Gandhi and others to introduce a truly 'national' language to replace English as the Congress's *lingua franca*. Hindustani was perceived to be not only a symbol of anti-colonial nationalism, but also an emblem of both the party's broader social support base and interreligious unity. However, Hindustani was a primarily north Indian language, and its representation of Hindu-Muslim harmony was less efficacious in areas where caste and language rather than religious issues conditioned local societal contestations and cleavages.

This section of the chapter thus begins to suggest that the public in western India could at times perceive forms of regional majoritarianism that coalesced within the Congress's efforts to emphasise societal unity and its deployment of 'national' symbols. This is something which will be considered in much greater complexity later in the chapter. But with regards to this section, it is worth noting that even those Congressmen who have been traditionally lauded for their communal impartiality and social egalitarianism could implicitly favour particular groups and interests in their policies and writings. By focusing on the depictions and developments within the relationship between the Deccan, or peninsula India, and the Indo-Gangetic plain to the north, often referred to as Hindustan,[7] this section thus highlights how both the arguments within Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and the attempts of the Congress under Gandhi to introduce Hindustani as a 'national' *lingua franca* were oriented around north Indian influences and exigencies.

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[6] Sunil Khilnani, 'Introduction', in *The Discovery of India* [2010 edition], pp. xx-xxi.
[7] Revealingly, the term 'Hindustan' has also come to be often equated with India as a whole.

6.1.1 Regional Perspectives in Nehru's *The Discovery of India*

Part memoir, part political commentary, Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* embarks upon an unedited account 'that spans Indian history from the Indus Valley to the Quit India Movement of 1942'.[8] Throughout, Nehru takes a particular regional perspective on India's past despite his efforts to emphasise India's abilities to synthesise, absorb and accommodate difference. This sub-section of the chapter contends that *The Discovery of India* frequently alludes to north India's dominance over the rest of the subcontinent, and oft presupposes that the north serves as the centre of India's 'vitality' and creativity, whilst the south remains 'static' and backward. For many, Nehru is seen as the human epitome of the 'unity in diversity' maxim which ostensibly defined Indian citizenship and nationhood. But by emphasising how even Nehru's own writings and philosophical musings implicitly favoured the north, this sub-section reveals how the official discourse on a universalistic form of Indian citizenship could be perceived to favour more parochial interests and concerns.

Nehru was obviously far from being the most vociferous proponent of a Hindu, high-caste and north Indian leadership of the newly independent nation-state. Nehruvian ideals of state-driven industrialisation and national integration were formulated in part around the rhetoric of secularism and egalitarianism – caste, linguistic or religious political identities were to be opposed.[9] We have noted in previous chapters that these interests often stood in stark contrast to more local, everyday state and political party machinations. Yet they also departed significantly from the interests of many other more conservative-minded leaders within the CHC. Whilst publicly presenting themselves as committed to the secular, egalitarian and impartial principles upon which the state was ostensibly predicated, these Congress leaders were often implicitly the most vociferous proponents of a north Indian, high-caste social conservatism.

Forms of cultural majoritarianism could develop around resistance to the implementation of the recommendations of the Backward Classes Commission in 1955.[10] They also emerged as a consequence of the debates over the Hindu Code

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[8] Khilnani, 'Introduction', in *The Discovery of India*, p. xviii.
[9] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 1999).
[10] William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 314-316.

Bill during the early 1950s.[11] Perhaps most noticeably, they developed in reaction to continued questions over the loyalties of Indian Muslims after Partition and the creation of Pakistan, raised not only by parties of the Hindu Right, but also amongst Congressmen such as Vallabhbhai Patel, Purushottam Das Tandon and Govind Ballabh Pant.[12] By supporting Nehruvian state secularism and national integration, they sought to deprecate the right of the state to interfere in the communal affairs of its citizens, whilst simultaneously sustaining their own communal dominance.[13] In this view, the very principles of freedom and democracy as embodied in the Constitution, where communalism and casteism had been supposedly eradicated, were, therefore, utilised in support of upper-caste Hindu dominance.

Cultural majoritarian forms of citizenship at a national level could also apply in the context of language, with the attempted imposition of Hindustani, and then Hindi, as India's new *lingua franca*. There was nothing necessarily inevitable about this – as Francesca Orsini has pointed out, Hindi was not always associated with forms of Hindu majoritarianism. During the interwar period, for some Hindi politicians in the United Provinces (UP), 'like Madan Mohan Malaviya ... Hindi was a cultural marker and part and parcel of Hindi-Hindu nationalism. For others [however], like Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Hindi was the "people's language" and the means to reach the popular public in the non-constitutional arena'.[14] Some Hindi-wallahs believed Hindi therefore 'had the strength to be open and accommodating'.[15] In this sense, however, an emphasis upon Hindi's inclusivity could also parallel a similar conception of Hinduism as an all-embracing and tolerant 'system of thought' (an almost 'Indianised' form of secularism) amongst some Indian nationalists.[16] Nehru, in his *The Discovery of India*, was to replicate such

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[11] Eleanor Newbigin, 'The Hindu Code Bill and the Making of the Modern Indian State', PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge (2008).

[12] See, for example, Vallabhbhai Patel, *For a United India: Speeches of Sardar Patel, 1947-1950* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1967), p. 9.

[13] T.K. Oommen, 'Insiders and Outsiders in India: Primordial Collectivism and Cultural Pluralism in Nation-Building', in *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Bidyut Chakrabarty (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 232-255.

[14] Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 341.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 362.

[16] See also in this regard, William Gould, 'Contesting Secularism in Colonial and Postcolonial North India Between the 1930s and 1950s', *Contemporary South*

depictions of Hinduism despite, paradoxically, his efforts to emphasise both the Congress's and the postcolonial state's communal impartiality in the protection of all citizens' rights (regardless of religious affiliation). Whilst suggesting that it was 'incorrect and undesirable to use "Hindu" or "Hinduism" for Indian culture', especially as they 'are apt to mislead today when they are associated with a much narrower, and specifically religious, concept'[17], he also wrote:

> 'Hinduism, as a faith, is vague, amorphous, many-sided, all things to all men. It is hardly possible to define it, or indeed to say definitely whether it is a religion or not, in the usual sense of the word. In its present form, and even in the past, it embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest, often opposed to or contradicting each other. Its essential spirit seems to be to live and let live'.[18]

A comparable approach towards region and language, which parallels this emphasis upon a primarily Hindu religious 'syncretism', is also evident in Nehru's work. As suggested by the extract from *The Discovery of India* with which this chapter began, it is the Indo-Gangetic plain or more generally northern India, which serves as the site of India's 'vitality', whilst the Deccan is regularly perceived in the book as stagnant and underdeveloped. Nehru, as a Kashmiri Brahman residing in UP, admitted his own personal predilection towards viewing India from a north Indian perspective:

> 'When I think of India I think of many things ... above all, of the Himalayas, snow-capped, or some mountain valley in Kashmir in the spring, covered with new flowers, and with a brook bubbling and gurgling through it. We make and preserve the pictures of our choice, and so I have chosen this mountain background rather than the more normal picture of a hot, sub-tropical country'.[19]

Throughout the manuscript, all the opportunities for cultural and ethnic synthesis, from the ancient Aryan 'invasion', including the infiltration of Islam, and culminating in the advent of the Mughals, seem to emanate from the north-west, as foreign influences navigate the Khyber Pass before descending upon the north Indian plains. 'The first great cultural synthesis and fusion took place between the incoming Aryans and the Dravidians', for example, in the north-western region of

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Asia, 14 (2005), 845-860; Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: Tracts for the Times/8* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1994), p. 14.

[17] Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 71, 69.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

the subcontinent amongst 'the representatives of the Indus Valley civilisation'.[20] Buddha's philosophy and teachings, stressing good deeds, devotion and ascetic renunciation as paths to spiritual liberation rather than priestly intercession, emphasised an ethical egalitarianism which for Nehru came 'like the breath of the fresh wind from the mountains after the stale air of metaphysical speculation', and coincided with the 'Foreign elements [who] continued to stream into India from the north-west and were absorbed'.[21] Relatively more recently, 'The coming of Islam ... widen[ed] the mental horizon of the people and compel[led] them to look out of their shells'.[22] And the middle Gangetic valley continued to serve as the site of Indian vitality, as the centrepiece of resistance to colonial rule and as the flourishing foundation for Congress support. For Nehru, the 48 districts of UP were the 'heart of Hindustan ... the melting pot of so many races and cultures, the area where the great revolt of 1857 blazed up and was later ruthlessly crushed'.[23] As noted in the introductory chapter to this thesis, there were compelling reasons for privileging a northern regional 'instituted perspective' of Indian history. However, Nehru's focus upon the north-west, the Himalayas and the Indo-Gangetic plains stood in stark contrast to the relatively sporadic references made to southern India in the text.

When southern India is mentioned, it is depicted, by and large, as backward and dilapidated. In a brief anecdotal sub-chapter entitled 'South India', which packs one thousand years of south Indian history into less than a page, Nehru submits that 'The repeated invasions of North India did not affect the South directly'.[24] Rather, it 'became a centre of the old artistic traditions while the north was more affected by new currents which the invaders brought with them. This process was accelerated in later centuries and the south became the stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy'.[25] Whilst the north emerged as a site of energy and vigour as it interacted with foreign ideas and initiatives, the south represented all that was wrong with Indian society, a place of 'backward' religious customs that emphasised hierarchy and tradition rather than egalitarianism and change. Nehru's approach therefore generally neglects both south Indians' interactions

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 278.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[25] *Ibid.*

with those residing outside the subcontinent, and the 'energising' impact of those 'outsiders' that chose to make the Deccan their new home.

The Discovery of India's relative neglect of the south marks a considerable contrast with more contemporary scholarship which has demonstrated its existence as a site of cross-cultural exchange throughout this period. Sugata Bose, for example, has characterised the Indian Ocean in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as an 'interregional arena', 'tied together by webs of economic and cultural relationships', 'where port cities formed nodal points of exchange and interaction'.[26] Both India's Coromandel and Konkan/Malabar Coasts served as interfaces for the south to connect with Africa, Arabia and South East Asia. Yet when there are references to Indian interactions with South East Asia in *The Discovery of India*, they are primarily 'Aryan' in dimension, and saturated with imperialist connotations that suggest a one-way hegemonic dialogue.[27] Nehru writes that in the region, 'there is a feeling of respect and friendship for India, for old memories endure and people have not forgotten that there was a time when India was a mother country to these and nourished them with rich fare from her own treasure-house'.[28] In contrast, there is a distinct lack of reference to South East Asian influences upon migrant Indians. For Nehru, South East Asia in this period is 'Greater India', where 'Trade and adventure and the urge for expansion drew [Indians] to these eastern lands'.[29]

Within India, when Nehru's northern pluralists deigned to avert their attention towards the south, the story of synthesis which structures the interactions between indigene and invader is replaced by subjugation as the pioneering force behind sub-continental unity.[30] In this way Nehru's history replicates the imagery associated with the Deccan as a prime site for subjugation – Stewart Gordon has revealed how the term 'translates as "south" … and suggested an area suitable for conquest. Throughout history, "Deccan" has retained these overtones, the

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[26] Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (London: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 6-7.

[27] For these references to the predominantly 'Aryan', north Indian, Brahmanic and Sanskritic nature of Indian colonising incursions into South East Asia, see, Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 213-217, 220.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 219, 221, 222

[30] See, for example, Nehru's references to the conquests of Ashoka over much of southern India in, *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

perspective of a northern conqueror considering possible domains'.[31] The Hindu epics the Mahabharata and Ramayana, for example, are depicted in *The Discovery of India* as part of northern 'Aryan' efforts to defeat the south, a one-way account where the northerners embody Nehru's 'spirit of the age'. An ethnicised northern Indian community thereby symbolise the notion of Indian unity which Nehru enshrines and sponsors:

> 'In the Mahabharata a very definite attempt has been made to emphasise the fundamental unity of India, or Bharatvarsha as it was called, from Bharat, the legendary founder of the race. An earlier name was Aryavarta, the land of the Aryas, but this was confined to Northern India up to the Vindhya mountains in Central India. The Aryans had probably not spread beyond that mountain range at that period. The Ramayana story is one of Aryan expansion to the south. The great civil war, which occurred later, described in the Mahabharata, is vaguely supposed to have taken place about the fourteenth century B.C. That war was for the overlordship of India (or possibly northern India), and it marks the beginning of the conception of India as a whole, of Bharatvarsha ... Dilli or Delhi, not the modern city but ancient cities situated near the modern site, named Hastinapur and Indrapastha, becomes the metropolis of India'.[32]

Nehru thus invoked the Hindu epics as a source of Indian unity and national citizenship. Likewise, M.K. Gandhi cited Ram Rajya as an Indianised version of the ideal state, which could otherwise be referred to as 'Divine Raj' or (referencing Tolstoy) the 'Kingdom of God', and which would relate to the 'sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority', 'self-introspection' and 'respect for all religions'.[33] Whilst there was nothing inevitable about Muslim separatism and many Muslim 'nationalists' retained their Congress membership, it has become a commonly articulated verity amongst historians that such references to Hindu symbolism in the mobilisational strategies of Congressmen helped contribute towards ultimate Muslim alienation from the mainstream nationalist movement.[34]

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[31] Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 10.

[32] Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 106-107.

[33] M.K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* [henceforth *CWMG*], 100 volumes (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Navajivan, 1958-1994), vol. 47, p. 41; *CWMG*, vol. 70, p. 232; M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 19 October 1947, p. 378; M.K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 26 October 1947, p. 387.

[34] William Gould, *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

However, such references to Ram were also ineffectual at fully mobilising the support of other Indian subject-citizens professing Hindu religious beliefs but residing outside the Hindi heartland. And in this sense, an understanding of the primarily Indo-Gangetic origins of such symbolism complements this thesis's efforts to reorient our understanding of the conceptualisation of citizenship in regional environments distinct from the all-India arena and the north. For Tamils, rather than symbolising Indian unity, Ram served as a figure of their subjugation at the hands of northern 'outsiders'. Meanwhile, 'for many Maharashtrians he represents a ruler whose support of the orthodox caste system involved the killing of an Untouchable boy, Shambuk, for the sin of trying to follow Brahmanic ways to salvation'.[35]

Just as the employment of primarily Hindu-based symbols could foreground concerns about the rights and status of Muslims and ultimately lead to demands for Muslim self-government, the use of north Indian idioms could have an analogous impact upon perceptions of citizenship amongst those residing in the south and west of the subcontinent. This sub-section has chosen to concentrate upon Nehru because of the ways in which he is perceived to embody the Congress's and the postcolonial state's commitments to secularism, social egalitarianism and political democracy. These apparent principles and standards, as we have seen in previous chapters, conditioned many of the appeals and petitions made by members of the public to the higher echelons of both the party organisation and the state. But by highlighting the consistent emphasis upon Hindustan as a site of initiative and communal harmony within *The Discovery of India* at the expense of a backward and traditionally orthodox southern peninsula this sub-section has demonstrated how Nehru implicitly favoured the north despite his ostensible support for inclusive forms of an all-Indian citizenship. Even amongst its upper echelons the state was no less impervious to employing the images and revolving around the interests of particular factions, groups and 'communities' at certain moments in time – with ultimately important consequences for how independence, self-government and democracy were perceived in Bombay, as the next section of this chapter will suggest.

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[35] Gail Omvedt, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: the Non-Brahman Movement in Western India, 1873 to 1930* (Bombay: Scientific Socialist Education Trust, 1976), pp. 105-106.

6.1.2 Introducing Hindi/Hindustani

This sub-section of the chapter focuses upon the Congress's efforts to locate a 'national' language in the interwar period to replace English, as a corollary of the party's shift towards 'mass' Gandhian anti-colonial activism. The choice of Hindustani was to serve as both a symbol of anti-colonial nationalism and interreligious unity across the north of the subcontinent. But outside the Hindi/Hindustani/Urdu-speaking heartland of the north, its efficacy as a 'national' language was less evident. Here the threat of a north Indian majoritarianism, which the imposition of Hindi/Hindustani could potentially symbolise, was countered by regional demands for sub-national autonomy and local self-government.

In November 1921, during the height of Gandhian power and influence within the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) introduced a resolution in regard to India's *lingua franca*. The resolution suggested that, 'as far as possible', with regards to the affairs of the Congress and in the publication of its circulars and reports, 'only Hindustani in both Devanagri and Urdu scripts should be used and that all proceedings should be conducted in Hindustani'.[36] This reflected wider efforts by the party to replace English with a truly 'national' language for communication within the Congress, whilst broadening the party's potential support base and membership beyond only those able to converse in the tongue of their colonial rulers. As Francesca Orsini has suggested, the focus upon locating a 'national' language owed something to the imperatives of non-constitutional politics and the shift in the Congress's rhetorical emphasis towards the 'common people': 'At least in words, English was devalued in favour of the vernacular; the very ordinariness of Hindi writers seemed to place them closer to the "true nation" and give them an advantage in communicating with the masses'.[37] For M.K. Gandhi,

> 'Hindi was the language of village India, a *spoken* language that cut across literacy and script divides ... He called it Hindi-Hindustani or simply

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[36] New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library [henceforth NMML], All India Congress Committee [henceforth AICC] Papers, Part I, File 70 (1946-47), 'Lingua Franca, Working Committee, Bombay – Resolution II', 22-23 November 1921.
[37] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 322.

Hindustani whenever he felt that the point about script needed to be made explicitly, especially in the increasingly communalized 1930s'.[38]

Importantly, Gandhi had only ultimately secured Congress support for his methods in 1920 by allying Non-Cooperation with the post-war Khilafat movement, which had emerged in the post-Great War milieu as a particularly cherished cause amongst Indian Muslims.[39] Support amongst most prominent Indian nationalists for Hindi in the aftermath of the Great War as a symbol of national independence in contrast to English had provoked considerable Muslim consternation – Hindustani thus emerged amongst some Congressmen as a politically neutral compromise. From the outset then, and throughout this period, Hindustani was conceived by Gandhi and his supporters as an authoritative example of national unity and political consensus across a primarily religious divide. The Maharashtrian Congressman B.G. Kher, for example, proclaimed in December 1939

> 'It is clear ... that neither is Hindi the language of the Hindus, nor Urdu the language of the Musalmans. It is not proper for the Musalmans to oppose Hindi or for the Hindus to oppose Urdu ... Just as the language of England is English, of Italy Italian, ... of Bengal Bengali, ... in the same way the language of Hindustan may rightly be settled as Hindustani ... Hindustani language can be written both in Nagari as well as Persian script ... '.[40]

Significantly, a Gandhian emphasis upon interreligious unity through the *spoken* language departed from the agendas of other Congressmen such as M.M. Malaviya and P.D. Tandon who were more eager to stress Hindi as the 'national' Indian language because of what they perceived to be its essentially Hindu core – for them, the relatively novel support for Hindustani seemed to jeopardise the historical efforts of organisations such as the Nagari Pracharini Sabha and journals such as *Sarasvati* to present Hindi as the pre-eminent and purified literary language of India. This highly polemical debate between supporters of Hindi and Hindustani over India's 'national' language was to continue into the postcolonial period. During the 1950s, for example, K.M. Munshi 'was rebuked by Nehru for

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[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

[39] Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

[40] B.G. Kher, *Bombay Chronicle* (Bombay), 25/12/1939. Quoted in, Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Political and Services Department File 2541/34 I, 'Hindustani Textbook: Note by J.E. Sanjana (Oriental Translator to Government)', 8 January 1940.

publicly suggesting that Urdu should only be promoted if in the Nagri script'.[41] We clearly need to be careful about positing a straightforward polarisation between Urdu-speaking Muslims and Hindi-speaking Hindus across northern India, not least because 'even within Hindi there were more open-ended notions of language than that pushed for by Hindi literary associations and scholars'.[42] Yet discussions around the various merits and deficiencies of both Hindustani and Hindi within organisations like the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (control of which fluctuated between pro-Hindustani and pro-Hindi Congressmen during the interwar period and after) also often carried with them communal connotations. In fact, some proponents of Hindi were to place an increased emphasis upon Urdu's 'foreignness' in connection with pre-British Muslim 'invaders' and despots.[43]

However, the primary focus upon the efficacy of Hindi as 'national' language in the context of the 'Hindu-Muslim Question' within the Indo-Gangetic plains of the north has obscured another important consequence of the privileging of what is actually a regional vernacular. So, whilst Hindi was favoured by Indian nationalists as a powerful symbol against British imperialism, it also raised further structural divisions within the anti-colonial movement *elsewhere* in the subcontinent, which were ultimately manifested in an analogous manner to the Pakistan demand. In both these instances, calls for sub-national autonomy as an attendant consequence of independence placed much emphasis upon the necessity of avoiding the potential for cultural majoritarianism within an Indian Union. But whereas in the north these concerns were predominantly raised around the matter of religion (in which Hindi and Urdu were ultimately sealed off into communally-defined hermeneutic boxes), beyond the Hindi-belt they coalesced more clearly around language.[44] The conceptualisation of citizenship was thereby

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[41] NMML, K.M. Munshi Papers, File 153, Reel 59, 'Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to K.M. Munshi', 22 December 1955. Referenced in Gould, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 295.

[42] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 128.

[43] Gould, *Religion and Conflict*, pp. 212-215; Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, pp. 134-135.

[44] In Madras/Tamil Nadu, this involved the promotion of Tamil as the regional mother-tongue worthy of provincial (and even separate national) patronage and usage, and the rejection of Hindi as a north Indian imposition. See, Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891-1970* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997); Sumathi Ramaswamy, 'En/Gendering Language: The Poetics of Tamil Identity', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35.4 (1993), 683-725.

altered by the significance of the particular provincial environment in which the individual was located.

This is evident if we reconsider some of the points raised in the preceding paragraphs of this sub-section afresh. So whilst the introduction of Hindustani as the 'national' language of the Congress instead of English in its resolution of 1921 encouraged the widening of the party's membership, the regional composition of its central leadership was fundamentally reoriented towards north India. Between 1920 and 1939, only one representative from the south (Srinivasa Iyengar in 1926) served as Congress President.[45] Meanwhile, in fourteen of these twenty interwar years, Congress Presidents were chosen from the Hindi-speaking provinces of UP, Punjab and Bihar.[46] Likewise, J.E. Sanjana, the Oriental Translator to the Bombay Government, responded to Kher's definition of Hindustani in December 1939 by suggesting that the conflation of 'Hindustan' (which could refer to the entire subcontinent and/or the Hindi-speaking heartland) and 'Hindustani', 'sounds perilously like, and is only one step from, [Hindu Mahasabha leaders] Mr. Savarkar's and Dr. Munje's definition of Hindustan, -- "as Afghanistan is the country of the Afghans, and Turkistan of the Turks, in the same way Hindustan is the country of the Hindus'.[47] Kher's focus on the potential for Hindustani to overcome the religious cleavage between Hindus and Muslims in the context of wider nationalist purposes neglected the fact that it was also necessary for Hindustani to be introduced as the 'national' language in areas outside of the Indo-Gangetic plain.

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[45] No Maharashtrian members were to serve as Congress Party President during this period.

[46] Punjab obviously also contained a sizeable representation of Punjabi-speakers, although the area that now constitutes the present-day province of Haryana was primarily Hindi-speaking. Meanwhile the 'minority' languages of Bihar (Maithili, Bhojpuri) are often seen to be closely akin to Hindi and in some circumstances have been amalgamated with Hindi in the pronouncements of the provincial government – see, Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 109-110. The Congress Presidents from these Hindi/Urdu-speaking provinces included the following: Motilal Nehru (1919 and 1928, UP); Lala Lajpat Rai (1920, Punjab); Hakim Ajmal Khan (1921, Delhi); Muhammad Ali Jouhar (1923, UP); M.A. Ansari (1927, UP); Jawaharlal Nehru (1929-1930 and 1936-37, UP); Madan Mohan Malaviya (1932-33, UP); and Rajendra Prasad (1934-35, Bihar).

[47] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2541/34 I, 'Hindustani Textbook: Note by J.E. Sanjana (Oriental Translator to Government)', 8 January 1940.

6.2 Civil Servants, the State and the Introduction of Hindi

In 1938, the CWC were to release the following statement to clarify Article 19 of the party's constitution, which related specifically to the 'national' language:

> 'Hindustani according to the practice of the Congress is the language of the bulk of the people of the North and written either in Devanagari or Urdu script. Indeed it has been the policy of the Congress more and more to insist on the use of Hindustani at all meetings and in the proceedings of the Congress Committees. The Working Committee hopes that by the end of the year Congressmen will prepare themselves to speak and write in the national language so that it may become unnecessary thenceforth to Congress Committees [to use English] so far as inter-provincial communications are concerned ... '.[48]

This statement coincided with a period of Congress Party rule across many of the provinces of British India, after the Congress had accepted governmental office following the 1937 provincial elections. Under pressure from the CWC, provincial Congress governments were expected to introduce Hindustani as a provincial administrative language and as the medium for inter-provincial communication. In June 1938, Bombay's new Home Minister K.M. Munshi identified and suggested four areas which he deemed essential to Hindustani's successful introduction at the provincial level:

> '(a) Hindustani either in Devanagari or Urdu script should be recognised as a language of the province in all districts; (b) Every Government servant within two years of confirmation should pass a paper test in Hindustani before he is eligible for promotion; (c) Every grant-in-aid High School must teach Hindustani; (d) The University must be written to have an essay paper in this language'.[49]

This section of the chapter focuses primarily upon the implementation and repercussions of point (b), regarding the new Congress Government's efforts to introduce Hindustani within the provincial administrative services in Bombay. It therefore looks to analyse the nature of the state in what was a period of immeasurable change, with indigenous and democratically-elected politicians

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[48] AICC Papers, Part I, File 70 (1946-47), 'Hindustani, Working Committee, Delhi', 22 September – 2 October 1938.
[49] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2549/34 I, 'Home Minister Minute', 19 June 1938.

replacing British officials as the governmental executive in the provinces.[50] In doing so, it utilises anthropological literature on the 'everyday' state in contemporary India to demonstrate how the state existed as a site of contestation and dispute between a variety of political and social actors.[51] It focuses in particular upon the transformations in the relationship between political parties, the public, and what Robert E. Frykenburg described in the 1960s as the *do-bashi* (literally two-language, bilingual) mediator, a 'double agent' or 'go-between' linking together rulers and ruled.[52] Significantly, these local administrators were 'themselves citizens of the state, who made their own demands of it'.[53]

As we saw in the last section, central state directives and principles could sometimes obscure more parochial interests and concerns at the national level. In part, then, reaction to the introduction of Hindustani within the provincial services was a response to fears among citizens of Bombay about the implications of a north Indian majoritarianism. But these concerns could also simultaneously serve as an expression of ideas about forms of swaraj in the context of the gradual realisation of self-government during the interwar period. Bureaucratic recruitment customs at the provincial level were already structured around local societal circumstances and exigencies. But with the growing demands for independence, these recruitment practices were to be newly associated with ideas about the locally accountable nature of quotidian state actors able to interact with society through the vernacular.

This, as we shall see, at times contrasted with and conditioned the application of the Congress High Command (CHC)'s emphasis upon Indian societal harmony and national cohesiveness. The first sub-section focuses upon the way in which

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[50] In this sense, the arguments made here about the transformative impact of Congress 'office acceptance' in the relationship between the party and government servants parallel similar discussions around the impact of independence and partition in the work of William Gould, Taylor C. Sherman and Sarah Ansari. See, Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the "Everyday State" in the Post-Partition Government Services of India and Pakistan', *Past and Present*, 219 (2013), 237-279 (p. 240).

[51] C.J. Fuller and John Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 1-30; Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State', *American Ethnologist*, 22.2 (1995), 375-402.

[52] Robert Eric Frykenburg, 'Elite Groups in a South Indian District, 1788-1858', *Journal of Asian Studies* [henceforth *JAS*], 24 (1965), 261-281 (p. 263).

[53] Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter', p. 242.

Hindustani was presented by the Congress as a more 'accountable' and 'national' alternative to English as an administrative link language. But it demonstrates how its application in western India had the opposite impact, where a stress on learning the various provincial vernaculars was ultimately of greater importance. The second sub-section examines the continuing prominence accorded to the 'local' within provincial recruitment practices. It highlights instances where the application of contrasting all-India imperatives for recruitment to the provincial services provoked disquiet amongst members of the Bombay public. Both sections thus focus on the discrepancies between all-India and local practices and reactions to attempts to reconcile these differences. Another strand of interest running through this section is thus to trace how the provincial Congress in Bombay (and briefly, elsewhere) navigated these contrasting idioms about belonging, status and citizenship during the gradual transition from colonialism to independence.

6.2.1 Language and Accountability

Before accepting office the relationship between Congressmen and bureaucrats during the interwar period had been one generally characterised by hostility. In an environment in which the Congress had frequently avoided cooperation with the Raj, local government servants were decried as imperial stooges and collaborators, especially during the Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience campaigns. Meanwhile, despite the ostensible rhetoric of social and political impartiality, the indigenous intermediaries of the Raj would have been expected to back and implement elements of the imperial agenda within the localities. In fact, many had played an important role in monitoring and punishing particular expressions of party politics ahead of the 1937 provincial elections – R.G. Soman, the Chairman of the Satara District Congress Parliamentary Board, gave a number of examples of harassment of Congress candidates, including the requirement to present themselves before the local authorities and submit to questioning about their status, income and landholdings.[54] Likewise, the *Hindustan Times* was to note that 'allegations of interference by officers of the Government in favour of pro-Government parties and against progressive parties and individuals are fairly

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[54] New Delhi, National Archives of India [henceforth NAI], Government of India [henceforth GOI], Home (Political) Department File 24/13/36, 'Letter from R.G. Soman, to the Hon. R.D. Bell, Home Member to the Government of Bombay', 17 January 1937.

common'.[55] At issue here were the difficulties in separating government and state.

During this interim period of provincial indigenous autonomy but central colonial control, the Congress and the Raj continuously clashed in their efforts to control bureaucratic networks as sources of political power and patronage. Between 1937 and 1939, bureaucrat's political loyalties were thus undergoing a process of contestation and reinvention. One of the ways in which the Congress could symbolically 'occupy the state' was to remedy the heavy reliance upon English for verbal and written transactions amongst these provincial administrators and introduce Hindustani as a truly 'national' language instead. Of course, Bombay was a multilingual province, in which both the Education and Home Departments had been subdivided into three separate divisions roughly on the basis of language (Northern Division – Gujarati- and Marathi-speakers; Central Division – Marathi-speakers; and Southern Division – Kannada- and Marathi-speakers), and in which it was general departmental policy not to move representatives of the intermediate and lower levels of the services from one division to another. In this situation, intra- (as well as inter-) provincial state communication relied upon English as an administrative *lingua franca*.

For the Congress, the use of English for administrative transactions rendered the state's representatives distanced and detached from local society and thus unaccountable towards the 'masses'. Seeking to portray itself as more fully representative of broader societal interests and aspirations, the Congress looked to gradually replace the preference for English within the administration with Hindustani instead, thereby replicating constitutional changes within its own organisation at the beginning of the interwar period. Six months prior to Munshi's note on the introduction of Hindustani in Bombay Province, the new Congress Government drafted an additional regulation in the Vernacular Exam Rules for Mamlatdars (civil servants stationed at the *taluka*, sub-district level) in Bombay, which stated: 'Every Mamlatdar whose mother-tongue is not Hindustani or who has not already passed in Hindustani a test of higher standard shall pass, within two years from the date of joining his first appointment an examination in Hindustani according to the colloquial test'.[56] Whilst English was to remain for the

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[55] 'Insidious Forces at Work', *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), 13 August 1936.
[56] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2549/34 I, 'Political and Services Department Note', 8 January 1938.

time being, the eventual objective was to ensure Hindustani would be situated in prime position to serve as the administrative link language across an ultimately independent subcontinent.

For many Congress politicians, this emphasis upon Hindustani instead of English was also presented in the language of increased state accountability towards its citizens, thereby reflecting larger paradigmatic transformations which accompanied the gradual shift from colonial rule to self-government.[57] Gandhi's stress upon the *spoken* Hindi/Hindustani of the masses had been part of a 'change from a "non-kisan [non-peasant] age" to a "kisan [peasant] age"' within the Congress, with nascent low-class movements prompting 'a section of the Hindi nationalist press and some Congress activists to turn decisively towards socialism and engage directly in peasant and labour organization' by the 1930s.[58] Meanwhile in Maharashtra the Congress under the influence of Keshavrao Jedhe and N.V. Gadgil had seemingly reinvented itself as the party of the low-class, non-Brahman rural 'masses' (see Chapter Three of this thesis). With a Congress government in power, popular claims upon the provincial state could thus potentially proliferate.

These 'sublime' expectations of the state, however, contrasted with the quotidian disappointments experienced over the various Congress provincial governments' practical limitations and socially conservative actions when in office.[59] In Bombay, Munshi was not averse to orchestrating organised state violence to maintain order, insisting in a speech directed at working-class militants in Sholapur City, 'that they should not think that there will be no occasion for *lathi* charges under Congress Raj'.[60] Meanwhile in the countryside, the support of Maharashtrian

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[57] William Gould, '"The Dual State: The Unruly Subordinate", Caste, Community and Civil Service Recruitment in North India, 1930-1955', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 20 (2007), 13-43; Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012), pp. 98-99.

[58] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, pp. 325, 331.

[59] Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, pp. 31-67.

[60] 'Lathi Charges Under Congress Raj: Are Munshi's Utterances Worthy of the Principle of Non-Violence which he is Expected to Uphold?', *Bombay Sentinel* (Bombay), 19 August 1937; For more on the forms of state repression utilised by the Congress to quash working-class politics in Bombay, see, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 414.

Congress Socialists for a radical programme of land redistribution met with strident opposition from the *khots* (landlords who maintained proprietary rights in the villages of the coastal Konkan districts), many of whom were important local Congress leaders. Rather than advocate for the total abolishment of the *khoti* system, the Maharashtra Congress Peasant Enquiry Committee of 1936 instead simply pledged that *khoti* would be brought under a uniform system of control. It was argued that the depression of the 1930s had not only hit the tenants hard, but also the *khots*.[61] Likewise the emphasis upon Hindustani as an emblem of accountability crumbled when applied to local circumstances in both the north and elsewhere.

Central to these displays of social conservatism and the maintenance of the *status quo* was the impression of social harmony and national unity ahead of independence. Autonomous political agendas on the part of the peasants were to be subsumed within the nationalist organisation. So whilst the Congress was prepared to present itself as the party of the entire nation and actively encouraged 'mass' participation in the anti-colonial movement, it was more ambivalent towards introducing socially ameliorative forms of legislation and championing forms of working-class action, which threatened to potentially alienate its support amongst landlord and business interests. Francesca Orsini has suggested that in northern India this dual posture on the part of the Congress was 'linked to the issue of openness and exclusion in the Hindi public sphere'.[62] The emphasis upon a *spoken* Hindi/Hindustani and the novel infiltration of socialist language within the writings of such Hindi-wallahs as Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in Bihar contrasted decisively 'with prevailing notions about the harmony of Indian (Hindu) society'.[63] Here, the focus upon creating cohesive social units through *sangathan* (literally 'organisation') within other more socially conservative elements of the Hindi press obscured what was actually the expression of elite prerogatives and concerns in a standardised yet highly Brahmanic, Sanskritic, and 'purified' form of Hindi.[64] The representativeness of and accountability towards the low in class and status amongst the provincial Congress Governments of the north, in places such as Bihar and UP, was thus

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[61] *Report of the Peasant Enquiry Committee of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee* (Poona: Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, 1936), pp. 55-60.
[62] Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 324.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 332.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 229.

notably diminished. And as we have already seen, the emphasis upon Sanskritic grammatical styles within this form of Hindi could potentially alienate Muslims who were more used to employing Perso-Arabic loanwords and idioms.

Similar concerns about the potential efficacy of Hindi/Hindustani as a tool to improve the state's representativeness and accountability, despite the Congress's political rhetoric, also pervaded the analyses of those who were asked to judge the efficacy of its implementation as a provincial language outside the Hindi/Hindustani heartland. In Bombay, for example, the respective Commissioners of the three major Divisions of the province were asked to provide their thoughts on the aforementioned Congress plans to introduce Hindustani as a compulsory language for *mamlatdars*. The Northern Commissioner of Bombay noted that *mamlatdars* in his Division had to already pass examinations in Gujarati and Marathi (as the Division was constituted by both primarily Gujarati-speaking districts such as Surat; and the primarily Marathi-speaking district of Thana), as well as being proficient in English. He suggested that the 'addition of a third examination would be an additional burden to them ... and would practically mean a fourth language'.[65] In the Southern Division the Commissioner also collected the views of his senior-most administrators, the collectors of the division's six districts. The Collector of Kanara opined ' ... this language not being in use in the Southern Division, there would scarcely be any occasion for the Mamlatdars to make any practical use of their knowledge of this language'.[66] Likewise, the Collector of Ratnagiri argued, 'Unless [the *mamlatdars*] get opportunities to come into contact in their every day life with that language they are apt to forget it no sooner than they pass the examination'.[67] From the perspective of these administrators, therefore, rather than augmenting a sense of the state's social responsibilities towards its citizens, the introduction of Hindustani was more likely to hinder state accountability. It was the Southern Commissioner himself who perhaps most ably summarised the problematic of Hindustani's introduction within his division. In his reply to the provincial government, he suggested that

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[65] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2549/34 I, 'Letter from the Northern Commissioner to Secretary, Political and Services Department, Government of Bombay', 1 March 1938.

[66] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from the Collector of Kanara to the Southern Commissioner', 23 March 1938.

[67] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from the Collector of Ratnagiri to the Southern Commissioner', 22 March 1938.

'This futile knowledge of Hindustani will be used as a reason consciously or unconsciously for not getting down to a real knowledge of the colloquial without which a Mamlatdar is useless. I am presuming the proposal is not based on the necessity of speaking to the Mussalmans in their own language. In my experience the ordinary Mussalman from Jacobabad to Poona really knows only the colloquial language of the area. His knowledge of Hindustani is, for practical purposes, nil'.[68]

The Southern Commissioner's response to the potential introduction of Hindustani within the provincial services has a number of important implications when we consider the nature of the state during this period. The perception encouraged in this period by nationalist politicians that by replacing the Raj with the Congress the state would be more accountable towards and representative of its citizens was fraught with its own problems when implemented on the ground. First, by suggesting that 'ordinary' Muslims in western India were not suitably proficient in Hindustani for its introduction to be worthwhile, the Commissioner's comments allude to the less consequential impact of the 'Hindu-Muslim Question' in this part of the subcontinent (in this regard, see the previous section of this chapter). Second, whilst English as the language of administration served the interests of a colonial elite rather than the general populace, in an equivalent manner the introduction of Hindustani in Maharashtra also served the interests of nationalist leaders who sought to emphasise the harmony and unity of India rather than dwell upon the amelioration of localised social incongruities.

Following on from this point, the Commissioner's comments are therefore revealing of the manner in which the local state also existed as a site to be contested and captured by a range of different political and social interests. Whilst local state actors could express allegiance towards the Raj or (increasingly) the Congress, these loyalties were frequently mediated by local concerns and interests. Drawn from amongst local society themselves, these civil servants were to implicitly suggest in their responses that forms of state accountability and representativeness were best developed through those capable of communicating in the local vernacular. In the context of an impending independence, the articulation of ideas about local self-government thus conditioned the generally unenthusiastic responses of these administrators towards the introduction of Hindustani.

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[68] *Ibid.*, 'Letter from the Southern Commissioner to Secretary, Political and Services Department, Government of Bombay', 23 April 1938.

6.2.2 Recruitment and Reallocation: Intra- and Inter-Provincial Locals and Outsiders

This sub-section of the chapter looks at the practical difficulties provincial Congress governments encountered in trying to reconcile their commitments towards nation-building with local circumstances and conditions. This thesis has already demonstrated elsewhere (see Chapter Two) how recruitment to the provincial services in Bombay was shaped by local exigencies and concerns. But the potential introduction of Hindi/Hindustani as an official provincial language and the medium for interprovincial communication in Bombay created new imperatives for public service employment in the province, which contrasted with the provincial government's erstwhile commitments to privilege 'local' constituencies in its recruitment strategies. The sub-section will therefore also briefly consider how these new imperatives impacted upon conceptualisations of citizenship amongst the public in western India. It suggests that reactions against the recruitment of provincial state employees from elsewhere in the subcontinent fed into broader narratives that anticipated forms of autonomous self-government for 'locals' within sub-federal provincial arenas as a concomitant of independence. Meanwhile, such public perceptions of the local state as a site through which to prioritise 'local' interests continued to condition government actions beyond independence, as linguistic affinities came to be considered the primary means through which to judge administrative allegiance after the reorganisation of provincial boundaries.

It was here that the potential advantages that would accrue to native Hindustani speakers in accessing service employment across a homogenised and centralised subcontinent, where Hindustani would serve as the national *lingua franca*, came to the surface. In this regard, two examples will suffice to highlight the potential repercussions of the introduction of Hindi/Hindustani upon the composition of the various provincial services across the subcontinent. First, in December 1939, the Superintendent of Government Printing and Stationary relayed to the Political and Services Department the necessity of employing two individuals from UP within the provincial administrative services, as they possessed sufficient knowledge of Hindi. Explaining his decision, the Superintendent suggested that when he had employed citizens of Bombay Province to fulfil the tasks and requirements included within the posts of 'Reader' and 'Copy-holder' in Hindi,

they had proved 'incapable of carrying out their duties'.[69] The shift towards an indigenous and truly 'national' *lingua franca* under the Bombay Congress Government created new recruitment requirements within the provincial services. As William Gould, Taylor Sherman and Sarah Ansari have argued in a different context, new recruitment practices for the services 'also exposed a tension between the imperative of creating cohesive national communities and the habit of doling out government jobs as a means of currying favour with specific groups'.[70]

Second, therefore, the recruitment of north Indians to fulfil roles within Bombay also provoked consternation amongst 'locals' who had previously enjoyed privileged entitlements to provincial government employment. In June 1946, Y.G. Page, a resident of the suburb of Dadar in Bombay City, argued that with regard to recruitment in the police, the 'Congress Ministry has made a rule in the year 1938 … that every recruit should be taken from the Bombay Province and not from outside. Now Mr. D.K. Godwin is avoiding this rule and recruits generally from outside the Province specially from Punjabi Sikhs, UP, Bihar, etc'.[71] The Home Department were unable to locate any such rule, but did recognise that amongst ex-servicemen, recruitment (except in Gujarat) to the police had been nearly entirely drawn from natives of the province.[72] Compiling a table on general police recruitment for the six months from January to June 1946, it was discovered that nearly 70 per cent of the new recruits came from Ratnagiri District, while a further 21 per cent were from districts that would go on to constitute part of Maharashtra. 7.5 per cent, however,

> ' … have been men from the Punjab … Punjab Muslims have been accepted for the Armed Police in order to provide a reasonable quota of Muslims in that Section. Experience has shown that Muslims belonging to Bombay City and the Bombay Province do not come forward in sufficient numbers to

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[69] MSA, Political and Services Department File 2541/34 I, 'Letter from Superintendent, Government Printing and Stationary', 19 December 1939.
[70] Gould, Sherman, and Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter', p. 259.
[71] MSA, GOB, Home Department File 1580/5, 'Letter from Mr. Yeshwant G. Page, Dadar', 10 June 1946.
[72] They were ultimately unable to trace Mr. Page, and believed instead that the persona had been invented!

provide the accepted quota in the Armed Police of one Muslim to four others'.[73]

Page's representation and the Congress Government of Bombay (GOB)'s response highlight the difficulties in squaring all-India imperatives with local conditions and circumstances. First, they continue to demonstrate the inadequacy of the 'Muslim Question' as the defining principle of social relations in western India. Indeed, Muslims had to be found from outside the province to fulfil the specific quota set aside for them in the Armed Police. Second, they hint at the linguistic/regional lines upon which ethnic/cultural divisions were primarily perceived and provincial representation primarily delineated in western India instead. According to the statistics, Maharashtrians dominated the provincial police, whilst Gujaratis were not even provided with access to the prescribed benefits accruing to ex-servicemen.

On one level, this owed something to older patterns of colonial knowledge, in which the Marathas had been recruited to the police on the basis of their loyalty as a 'martial race', whilst Gujaratis were perceived as inherently more effeminate and, during the interwar period, in thrall to the Gandhian Congress.[74] But on another level, patterns of bureaucratic recruitment now came to be invested with new meanings ahead of independence. In this shifting environment, opportunities for jobs in the services were linked to ideas about the nature of *swaraj*, forms of local self-government and increased state accountability. Reactions against the imposition of civil servants from elsewhere in India were therefore part of broader efforts to define autonomous spheres of regional interest where 'natives' would be better entitled to receive a greater share of administrative roles. But this was also especially the case in Bombay Province because intra-provincial jealousies between linguistic 'communities' on the basis of 'local' representation permeated both public and 'everyday' state perceptions about recruitment to the services, too.

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[73] MSA, Home Department File 1580/5, 'Letter from P.B. Wilkins, Commissioner of Police, Bombay, to the Under Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Home Department, "Recruitment to the Bombay City Police Force"', 5 July 1946.

[74] Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism*, p. 417; S.J.M. Epstein, *The Earthy Soil: Bombay Peasants and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1919-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 84-85, 88; Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994).

Earlier within this section of the chapter we noted how the provincial services in Bombay were broadly split up on the basis of language into three separate divisions of administration, and that it was general departmental policy not to move civil servants from one division to another. This rule owed something to general colonial perceptions about local 'customs of governance', in which the 'fixity' of the lower levels of the bureaucracy was 'tied into notions about ... [their] link to the locality and local traditions in the exercise of power'.[75] During the Second World War, for example, the Assistant Director of Recruiting for the Southern Area, Colonel Franks, suggested 'that a Mamlatdar who is a Mahratta should be posted in Maharashtra and not say in [the principally Gujarati-speaking] Northern Division'. He deprecated a separate incident within the provincial administration in Bombay whereby 'a special educational officer who was Mahratta [was] transferred from Mahad in Kolaba District to Gujerat'.[76] A particular perception of the local state as a site through which to prioritise the interests of Marathas thus emerged, in stark contrast to its public presentation as a detached entity capable of impartially adjudicating social conflict.

These perceptions of the local state as a site through which to prioritise local interests and rights continued beyond independence, despite the Congress's commitment towards representing a cohesive national community and its guarantee concerning equality of opportunity in public employment within the Constitution. In the summer of 1956 the decision taken by the GOI to create a bigger bilingual Bombay of Gujarati- and Marathi-speakers (see Chapter One) meant that the Marathi-speaking districts of Vidarbha and Marathwada were separated from the provinces of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Hyderabad and reallocated to Bombay. In MP, the delineation of the predominantly Marathi-speaking portions of Vidarbha and principally Hindi-speaking areas of Mahakoshal as two distinct spatial entities was accompanied by efforts on the part of the MP Government to reallocate provincial servicemen on the basis of this new reality. Whilst tensions between Hindi- and Marathi-speakers in MP had long been accompanied by claims of linguistic partiality on the part of local state

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[75] Gould, '"The Dual State: The Unruly Subordinate"', pp. 15-16; see also, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c.1850-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 227.

[76] MSA, Political and Services Department File 1673/34 XIII, 'Letter from Assistant Director of Recruiting, Southern Area, Poona, to the Home Department, Bombay', 28 August 1944.

representatives,[77] reorganisation reconfigured these arguments and allegations on the basis of novel ideas about regional status and belonging amongst both citizens and servicemen.

Rather than relying upon the personal preferences of individuals, the MP Government instead assigned civil servants to either Bombay or MP on the basis of their mother tongue. Amongst the *tahsildars* (local tax-collectors) within MP's Revenue Department, for example, 47 posts for Vidarbha and 82 posts for Mahakoshal had to be allotted between 63 Hindi speakers, 49 Marathi speakers, and 17 *tahsildars* whose mother tongue was neither of these. This obviously resulted in some overlap: five Marathi speakers were included within the Mahakoshal allocation; and two Hindi speakers were allocated to Vidarbha.[78] But ultimately linguistic affiliation came to be considered as the primary means through which the MP Government sought to judge local administrative allegiance.

This section of the chapter, then, has looked to demonstrate the reception accorded to 'national' concerns within the provincial administrative services in Bombay and within the context of the gradual realisation of various forms of self-government in India. It has examined the complications which the Congress GOB encountered as a result of its particular provincial location, through which it looked to balance all-India prerogatives and more localised obligations. So, for example, whilst introducing Hindi/Hindustani within the provincial administrative services during the late 1930s, the provincial government simultaneously continued to accord privileges to self-styled 'locals'. This was not only about the imperatives of imperial control. Particular societal groups and communities petitioned and demanded forms of privilege and protection from the provincial government to combat the encroachment of 'outsiders' throughout this period. Meanwhile local state actors, drawn from amongst provincial society themselves, rejected the imposition of Hindi/Hindustani on the basis of the difficulties it would cause, not only for them, but also for a society that primarily conversed in regional vernaculars.

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[77] D.E.U. Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province: The Central Provinces and Berar, 1919-1939* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[78] MSA, Home Department Triliteral File EST-1156 (1956), 'Schedule (Tahsildars and Naib-Tahsildars). Names and Particulars of Officers Allocated to', n.d.

The emphasis upon Hindustani rather than English was theoretically expected by Congress politicians to symbolise the increased representativeness and responsibility of the 'national' (rather than colonial) state towards its citizens. But its practical application in western India was perceived to be as likely to hinder state accountability amongst provincial civil servants, where the definition of language around distinctive ethno-religious 'communities' was less severe. Citizenship in Bombay thus came to be constructed and articulated in the interstices between national imperatives and local concerns. Reactions against the recruitment of provincial state employees from elsewhere in the subcontinent and the imposition of Hindi/Hindustani were part of wider objectives that anticipated forms of 'local' self-government as an upshot of independence.

6.3 Conclusion

In June 1955, Article 344 of the Indian Constitution was formally enacted and an Official Language Commission was appointed by the Congress GOI, under the leadership of the former Chief Minister of Bombay Province, the Maharashtrian B.G. Kher. The Commission's findings were finalised and published in July 1956, thus coinciding with the reorganisation of many of India's provinces on a linguistic basis. The Commission backed the provisions made in the Constitution for the adoption of Hindi as the official language of the Indian Union, as representing 'the only practicable course'.[79] In the context of the achievement of independence and the realisation of democracy, it was deemed inconceivable by the Commission 'that we should continue to carry on the country's administration in all its higher reaches in a language [English] which is not understood by 99 per cent of the country's population'.[80] Hindi was perceived as the most viable alternative, as 'apart from the 42 per cent of the total population returned as speaking this language as their mother-tongue, it is understood to a considerable extent ... outside the Hindi-speaking areas, in the market places in cities, at Railway stations and in places of pilgrimage'.[81]

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[79] Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Report of the Official Language Commission, 1956* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957), p. 401.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

These justifications supporting the introduction of Hindi rather than English as the official *lingua franca* of India by the Official Language Commission replicate earlier sentiments expressed by the Congress during the interwar period. This chapter has highlighted how the Congress's attempts to stimulate a 'national', all-Indian consciousness and present the party as more accountable towards and representative of all India's citizens were in part predicated upon the inauguration of Hindi/Hindustani as a truly 'national' language of India. However, the chapter has revealed that when applied to local and provincial circumstances in regions beyond the Hindi-heartland of the north, the introduction of Hindi/Hindustani often had the opposite effect, dramatising its inapplicability and the detachedness of the state in many ordinary Indians' everyday lives. The Commissioners within Bombay, for example, argued state accountability would be more effectively realised by a firm knowledge amongst its staff of the local vernaculars.

The Official Language Commission deemed it inevitable that some would have to learn a new language – but it somewhat condescendingly pointed non-Hindi speakers towards 'the widespread and sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties of the non-Hindi-speaking regions with which we met in the Hindi areas', as well as the implementation of constitutional safeguards.[82] Such recommendations and concessions were deemed 'far from democratic' by the two dissenting voices amongst the Commission's members, and likely to have important consequences upon the practical experience of citizenship amongst non-Hindi speaking communities.[83] For Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the centrality assigned to Hindi was likely to 'bring about the immediate creation ... of Two Classes of Citizens in India – Class I Citizens with Hindi as their language, obtaining an immense amount of special privileges by virtue of their language only, and Class II Citizens who will be suffering from permanent disabilities', particularly in the matter of recruitment to public services.[84]

As the note of dissent by Chatterji suggests, and as we have seen elsewhere in this chapter, the prominence accorded to Hindi could be perceived to potentially threaten the rights and interests of vast swathes of the non-Hindi speaking population elsewhere in the subcontinent. The first section of this chapter picked

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[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

[83] 'Note on the Report by Dr. Chatterji', in *Report of the Official Language Commission*, p. 276; see also, 'Minute of Dissent by Dr. P. Subbarayan', in *Ibid.*, pp. 315-319.

[84] 'Note on the Report by Dr. Chatterji', p. 276.

up on the underlying north Indian majoritarian themes within both Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and in the implementation of Hindustani as the language of interprovincial communication between the various Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs). Reactions amongst the public typically involved petitioning and demanding from the state forms of protection and privilege for 'locals' within provincial arenas of government, including favours within provincial service recruitment. These drew upon longstanding customs on the part of provincial governments to privilege 'local' constituencies and communities in their recruitment strategies, and which, as we have seen, continued to determine provincial Congress policies into the postcolonial period. However, they were newly conditioned by the implications of the gradual realisation of forms of self-government and came to incorporate ideas about citizenship rights and status. Demands for state recruitment practices to continue to be concerned with local societal circumstances therefore fed into larger narratives about local 'self-government' as a concomitant of independence and democratisation.

7: Conclusion

The fundamental objective of this thesis has been to reorient and broaden our understanding of the construction of citizenship in India during the formative and critical period which marked the transition from British colonialism to independent nationhood. In the last decade or so, the ability of historians to analyse, decipher and understand the manner in which the events of independence and partition in 1947 have come to impact upon ideas about rights and status in India has become increasingly accomplished and refined. This thesis has looked to supplement and enhance this work by approaching these transformative decades from an alternative spatial perspective. Research has shown how the transfer of power from the Raj to the Congress was accompanied by fresh efforts on the part of the postcolonial Indian state to precisely identify and characterise which individuals constituted its citizenry. And in the context of partition and the creation of Pakistan, this scholarship has highlighted how those Muslim 'minorities' who remained behind in India 'in the midst of massive, ongoing displacements', were rewarded with an 'ambiguous status' by the new nation-state in which their loyalties and allegiances were openly called into question.[1] Yet this novel definition of 'minority citizens', as Joya Chatterji has recently argued, was not solely the result of 'bureaucratic rationality' or 'governmentality', but was simultaneously shaped by the ideas, demands and actions of refugees as 'non-state actors'.[2] These refugees exerted considerable pressure on local state representatives, who were thus forced 'to backpedal, to improvise and revise strategies to deal with the rapidly changing realities on the ground'.[3] Meanwhile, as these local state agents 'were themselves citizens of the state', drawn from the very same public which they were to encounter in their

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[1] Vazira Fazila-Yaccobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 70.

[2] Joya Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946-1970', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), 1049-1071 (pp. 1049, 1051); see also, Taylor C. Sherman, 'Migration, Citizenship and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946-1956', *Modern Asian Studies* [henceforth *MAS*], 45 (2011), 81-107.

[3] Chatterji, 'South Asian Histories of Citizenship', p. 1051.

everyday practices, their own constructions of citizenship often came to reflect similar concerns and prerogatives.[4]

What, then, were the implications of this previous scholarship for this thesis? As the more recent emphasis in this work has been upon the impact of local society and lower-level state functionaries on the construction of ideas about citizens' status and rights, this thesis has also looked to dwell upon the nature of the public and lowest echelons of the bureaucracy, but in the specific region of Maharashtra. In doing so, it has moved away from concentrating on those parts of the subcontinent that were directly partitioned in 1947, as well as those areas that saw gigantic levels of migration, had to dedicate their energies towards refugee rehabilitation, or retained sizeable Muslim 'minority' populations. By focusing upon western India instead, this thesis has deciphered how citizenship could also be constructed around a different set of circumstances ahead of linguistic reorganisation, which drew upon the specific local societal structures and tensions within this locale.

What impact, then, did independence and partition have upon ideas about citizenship here? By considering the varied and changeable meanings behind ideas and calls for self-government, democratisation and *swaraj*, this thesis has suggested that Pakistan was one particular manifestation of wider demands for forms of provincial autonomy within a federal government system.[5] However, whilst the 'Pakistan demand' privileged religion as its point of socio-political contention, we have seen how calls for forms of self-government in the south and west of the subcontinent were structured around language – a potential Maharashtra province was to protect the rights and interests of Marathi-speaking 'locals' from forms of democratic majoritarianism at the centre. And because local state actors were almost always drawn from the specific regional sites in which they served, they often shared the same particularised visions of *swaraj* as

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[4] William Gould, Taylor C. Sherman, and Sarah Ansari, 'The Flux of the Matter: Loyalty, Corruption and the "Everyday State" in the Post-Partition Government Services of India and Pakistan', *Past and Present*, 219 (2013), 237-279 (p. 242).

[5] In this sense, it has built upon and extended the older work of Ayesha Jalal and David Gilmartin, as well as the more recent ideas of Sana Aiyar. See, Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); David Gilmartin, 'Partition, Pakistan and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57 (1998), 1068-1095; Sana Aiyar, 'Fazlul Huq, Region and Religion in Bengal: The Forgotten Alternative of 1940-43', *MAS*, 42 (2008), 1213-1249.

members of the local public. One argument of this thesis has therefore been to suggest that these localised pictures of rights to self-government shaped the workings of the 'everyday' state in Maharashta, and ensured its practices could at times depart from both the rhetorical principles of the colonial and postcolonial states at the all-India level, and the ways in which citizenship was conceptualised further north.

This thesis has demonstrated how citizenship can be performed in a variety of different spatial locations, including at the level of the region – the nation-state is not its only referent. But this does not mean that it has argued that the central government's theoretical commitment to accountability, objectivity and egalitarianism had no purchase. Throughout this thesis we have seen moments when those who were sidelined from the privileges that would potentially accrue to 'locals' or 'majorities' in provincial governmental arenas conceptualised their rights on the basis of the state's supposed obligations to protect a variety of 'minority' groups. At other moments, they appealed to the language of national solidarity. If it helped or protected citizens' interests to make recourse to the higher echelons of the state, petitions, appeals and memorandums could therefore also be presented in the language of state impartiality and secularism.[6] Various notions of citizenship were thus formulated in the discrepant spaces between the state's high-sounding morals and values, and its regionally specific customs and practices on the ground, whilst they could fluctuate depending on the particular situated perspective of those concerned and in relation to larger historical processes.

Almost all the chapters of this thesis have demonstrated that ideas about citizenship were already emerging during the early twentieth century, especially as a concomitant to the gradual devolvement of colonial power and the growing anticipation of forms of self-government. They have traced both the connections and dissonances between colonial and postcolonial periods, particularly in the context of the continuing impact and protracted aftermath of partition. Chapter

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[6] C.J. Fuller and John Harriss, 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State', in *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India*, ed. by C.J. Fuller and Véronique Bénéï (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), pp. 1-30; Thomas Blom Hansen, 'Governance and Myths of the State in Mumbai', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 31-67; Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State', *American Ethnologist*, 22.2 (1995), 375-402 (p. 390).

Three provided an in-depth analysis of the processes behind the selection of Congress Party candidates in this context and ahead of provincial elections. The argument here was that the Congress's reliance upon political powerbrokers to organise popular support and mediate political authority ensured that the party's overarching principles were often turned into something unrecognisable when conditioned to complement local electoral contingencies.

Older colonial forms of knowledge and customs of governance, envisaged and devised around the perceived efficacy of 'community'-based interests and carried over into the postcolonial political arena, were central to these developments. However, this was not to argue, *pace* Partha Chatterjee, that these norms were imposed upon Indian subjects purely in the interests of political elites.[7] Indeed, Chapter Three also revealed how the invocation of 'community' was simultaneously reinterpreted and contextualised to define and articulate the rights and interests of Maharashtra's citizens on their own terms, too. The demands for the creation of a unilingual province of Maharashtra, and its importance in the context of choosing Congress Party candidates for the 1951 elections served as one such example. Here, preference was frequently shown towards Marathi-speaking 'natives' defined on the basis of ethno-linguistic affinities and justified around the idea of self-government for 'locals'. Concurrently, therefore, the provincial Congress organisation also became a site to be 'captured', co-opted and colonised in the interests of the locally dominant Marathas. Finally, then, the chapter also highlighted the tensions and contestations within vernacular-speaking society. There was certainly nothing fixed about 'community'-based political mobilisations and strategies – individuals frequently appealed to both the Raj and the Congress on the basis of distinct 'minority' concerns which had been subsumed within the Marathi or Maratha category. Rather than homogenising the vernacular-speaking 'masses' as distinct from an English-speaking elite, this thesis has been critically aware of class- and 'community'-based contradictions and contestations within this category.[8]

As was seen in Chapter Four, this thesis's awareness of distinctive interests amongst the 'masses' has been applied not only within the Marathi-speaking

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[7] Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 30.
[8] Craig Jeffrey and Jens Lerche, 'Dimensions of Dominance: Class and State in Uttar Pradesh', in *The Everyday State and Society*, pp. 91-114.

districts of Bombay Province, but also when contextualising the differences between intra- and inter-provincial circumstances. This chapter suggested that by playing closer attention to the discrepancies in reservation policies both within the Bombay Provincial Administrative Services, and between Bombay Province, other provincial administrations and the Government of India, we are able to develop a broader understanding of the various ways in which rights to forms of affirmative action were conceived amongst the public in India. At least ostensibly, state objectivity and individual merit served as the watchwords of recruitment practices within the highest echelons of the services. But beyond this highest administrative stratum, it was considered efficacious by the colonial state to introduce forms of affirmative action in the recruitment process, to ensure that every community 'gets its proper share' in the public services.[9] In this context, this chapter suggested that the 'provincialisation' of governmentality during the interwar period had vastly important consequences. So, whilst in the north and at the all-India level, these reservations were primarily based around the state's 'duty' to protect Muslim 'minority' interests, in the south and west of the subcontinent affirmative action policies assigned much greater importance to caste. In the reservations provided within the Subordinate Services, in particular, 'Intermediate' classes were provided with greater percentages of reservation (as much as 60 per cent in the Southern Division) where the non-Brahman movement was at its strongest.

Because it was with these lower and more immediate spatial representatives of the state within the Subordinate and Inferior Services that most individuals were more likely to interact with and to influence, Chapter Four also argued that it was at this localised level that citizenship came to be primarily enacted. Individuals who sought to access bureaucratic reservations as either 'Intermediate' or 'Backward' classes addressed their appeals, petitions and memorandums to the state in the language of 'community' interests. But the manner in which these were broached often depended upon the particular 'situated perspective' of the individual concerned. Whereas some called upon the state to protect 'minority' community rights, others employed the language of 'self-government' by calling for recruitment on the basis of local demographics. The chapter argued that the latter approach preceded later developments around 'majority' forms of

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[9] Mumbai, Maharashtra State Archives [henceforth MSA], Government of Bombay [henceforth GOB], Political and Services Department File 1643/34 II, 'Political and Services Department Note by V.H. Vachhrajani', 19 September 1938.

representation on the basis of caste in both the north and at an all-India level, therefore providing a longer historical perspective on the introduction of reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) during the 1990s. At the same time, by conceptualising citizenship on the basis of caste rather than religious interests, the way in which rights and status were invoked diverged notably from the contemporaneous manner in which it was defined in the north.

Chapter Five, meanwhile, focused upon the classification and enumeration processes of census officials in Bombay Province at the 1951 Census. Continuing with the broad thematic of this thesis raised in the previous chapters, it suggested that, whereas at the 1941 Census in the north-east and north-west of the subcontinent the collection of data on religion served as the central subject of controversy, during the 1951 Census in Bombay it was efforts to record citizens' mother tongue which aroused the biggest debate. Both these controversies were linked to broader preoccupations and concerns about forms of local self-government and democracy – to the Lahore Resolution of the previous year in 1941; and to the ongoing demands for the creation of a unilingual Maharashtra in 1951. Superficially, the census had undergone a process of transformation in the transition from colonial to national forms of government. Theoretically, statistics on 'community' were thrown out, to be replaced by a new emphasis upon socio-economic classifications, as part of the broader objectives of the Nehruvian Congress Government to ameliorate social poverty through centrally-coordinated agricultural and industrial development initiatives. Yet it was still considered necessary to continue to collect statistics on Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for the state to be fully able to ameliorate their 'backwardness', whilst language data was deemed necessary to effectively delineate new provincial administrative boundaries.

Central to the rather mundane performance of collecting and classifying the statistics were the local census officials. Thus, Chapter Five has also indicated how the very need for local expertise to ensure the state ultimately comprehended the composition of Indian society ensured that these intermediaries occupied a rather privileged position in this process. Able to mediate the state's power and its formulation of knowledge, whilst being drawn from amongst local societies in which they maintained their own specific interests, these intermediaries could potentially acquire political, social and material advantage for themselves or their particular 'community' through the census's quotidian practices. Concentrating

upon those areas of Bombay with sizeable representatives of at least two linguistic groups ahead of provincial reorganisation, the chapter highlighted a number of instances in which the provincial and all-India governments received complaints about the manipulation of data by enumerators. Many of these made much of the state's supposed principles of communal detachedness and disinterestedness. Others mentioned the state's commitment towards the protection of 'minority' interests. However, the local manipulation of data often had negative consequences for such groups – in Dangs, Thana and West Khandesh Districts, the number of *adivasis* who were recorded as speaking local tribal vernaculars such as Ahirani, Bhili or Dangi declined dramatically in the context of demands for the creation of both Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Much of the thesis has thus focused upon how the founding principles and ambitions of the state were transformed into something unrecognisable when practically applied and conditioned by interactions between 'everyday' state actors and particularised local societies. It has also noted the occasions in which specifically situated citizens have appealed to the benevolence of the higher echelons of the state to seek redress for lower-level bureaucratic malfeasance. But this is not to argue that those at the apex of government were impervious to more parochial group interests. In this regard, Chapter Six looked to identify the signs and symbols of north Indian majoritarianism within the Congress's attempts to stimulate and represent a 'national', all-India consciousness and more accountable state during the interwar period. The chapter therefore demonstrated both the focus upon the north's 'vitality' and 'initiative' at the expense of the south's 'orthodoxy' and 'backwardness' within Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* and the 'Jekyll and Hyde Character'[10] of Hindi/Hindustani as both a potentially 'national' *lingua franca* and regional vernacular. When attempts were made by the Congress Government of Bombay to introduce Hindustani as a language of the provincial administration in 1938, civil servants expressed their opinions that it would ultimately hinder interactions between the local state and society, highlighting its inapplicability in many ordinary Indians' everyday lives.

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[10] As Hindi was described by the representative of West Bengal on the Official Language Commission, Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, in his minute of dissent within its report. See, 'Note on the Report by Dr. Chatterji', in *Report of the Official Language Commission, 1956* (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1957), p. 298.

The introduction of Hindustani within Bombay Province also stimulated new bureaucratic recruitment strategies for the Congress, which could potentially contradict the erstwhile commitment to balancing out different local 'community' interests within the services (see Chapter Four). Chapter Six revealed how demands for preferences to be shown to 'locals' emerged both as part of broader efforts to define autonomous spheres of regional interest where 'natives' would be able to circumvent north Indian majoritarianism, and fed into larger narratives about local self-government as a concomitant of independence and democratisation. The opportunity to conceptualise and articulate ideas about citizenship, then, was not solely the prerogative of a bourgeois-dominated and European-derived central nation-state, distanced and detached from ordinary society. Neither did ideas about citizenship emerge fully-formed and inclusive at the moment of independence – the process was much more complicated, longer and difficult than that. By tracing the development of ideas about Indians' rights and statuses back into the colonial period, locating them in the processes of the gradual devolution of power, and highlighting their emergence not only at the centre, but in regional and local arenas of governance too, this thesis has broadened our awareness and understanding of how citizenship came to be constructed. In demonstrating its development in a locale affected rather differently by the anticipation and aftermath of independence, partition and linguistic reorganisation than in conventional accounts on refugee rehabilitation, mass migration and the 'Hindu-Muslim Question' in the north, it has provided a new context and paradigm through which citizenship can be both analysed and defined.

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List of Abbreviations

AICC – All India Congress Committee

BCC – Backward Classes Commission

BLA – Bombay Legislative Assembly

BLC – Bombay Legislative Council

BPCC – Bombay Provincial Congress Committee

BSP – Bahujan Samaj Party

CHC – Congress High Command

CPI – Communist Party of India

CP – Central Provinces (later Madhya Pradesh)

CWC – Congress Working Committee

CWMG – Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi

DCC – District Congress Committee

DMK – Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

EIC – English East India Company

EPW – Economic and Political Weekly

GOB – Government of Bombay

GOI – Government of India

GPCC – Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee

ICS – Indian Civil Service

IESHR – The Indian Economic and Social History Review

IMC – Indian Merchants' Chamber

IOL – India Office Library

IOR – India Office Records

JAS – Journal of Asian Studies

KPCC – Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee

LPC – Linguistic Provinces Commission

MAS – Modern Asian Studies

MLA – Member of Legislative Assembly

MLC – Member of Legislative Council

MPCC – Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee

MP – Madhya Pradesh (earlier Central Provinces)

MSA – Maharashtra State Archives

NAI – National Archives of India

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

NWFP – North West Frontier Province

OBC – Other Backward Caste/Class

PCC – Provincial Congress Committee

PSP – Praja Socialist Party

PWP – Peasants and Workers Party

RSS – Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

SCF – Scheduled Caste Federation

SC – Scheduled Caste

SMP – Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad

SMS – Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti

SRC – States Reorganization Commission

ST – Scheduled Tribe

SWJN – Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

UP – United Provinces/Uttar Pradesh