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Britain's India, India's Britain: Self-Other Relations after Empire

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ABSTRACT

How have Britain and India constituted each other after empire? This paper presents the preliminary results of an analysis of British and Indian national identity discourses from 1950 to 2001. The findings are as follows: first, there has been no single prevailing image of the UK in India or of India in the UK but rather multiple, multi-vocal and often contradictory perspectives. Second, India has appears less frequently in British identity discourses than Britain in Indian identity discourses—a pattern that holds both overall and within individual years under study. Third, British constructions of India, and Indian constructions of Britain have primarily functioned as arguments about the Self—its aspirations and aversions. Fourth, identity discourses appear to be sticky: the character of critical evaluation of the Other has varied over time but not radically so. The concluding section discusses future research trajectories for this project.

INTRODUCTION[1]

How do the colonized and the colonizer configure each other after decolonization? This study considers this question using an archive of British and Indian national identity discourses collected under the auspices of the Making Identity Count (MIC) project. By accessing and analyzing mass and elite texts such as popular movies and novels, high school textbooks, and leadership speeches in ten year intervals from 1950 to 2010, this project supplies new information on the evolution of the Indo-British encounter after empire—that is, on 'Britain's India' and 'India's Britain' across the entire time period since India's independence. This information is produced via inductive discourse analysis. So, rather than analyzing the Indo-British encounter in texts dealing directly with the subject—texts penned by ruling elites such as Jawaharlal Nehru or Winston Churchill or, less typically, by women and Dalit writers— , the focus here is on the indirect and "overheard" constructions of the Other.

As one would expect, there is no single prevailing image of the UK in India or of India in the UK. Rather, there exist multiple, multi-vocal and often contradictory perspectives. Yet some reoccurring patterns do exist. First, India appears less frequently in British identity discourses than Britain appears in Indian identity discourses—a pattern that holds both overall and within individual years under study. Second, British constructions of India, and Indian constructions of Britain are driven by stereotypes that bring into focus both aspirational and aversive constructions of the national Self. Britain defines itself as modern and developed against India's backwardness, while India constitutes itself as peaceful against a militarist and aggressive Britain. Third, the character of critical evaluation has varied over time but not radically so. Britain's "retreat from empire" or "the rise of postcolonialism" did not significantly change the predominant British image of India as an unlucky country. Similarly, an Indian tendency to view contemporary Britain through the lens of its empire's atrocities stays the course in the wake of India's "liberalization" and its "emergence as a great power." Prima facie, this suggests that national identities are indeed sticky: Britain's India and India's Britain kept on functioning as representational Others against whom the Self could imagine itself as stable and secure.

The rest of this paper breaks into three sections. The first briefly motivates the study. The second part considers methodological issues, including the study's sampling rationale and the preference for a more inductivist discourse analysis. The third part discusses the preliminary findings. The concluding section includes a reflection on future research avenues.

THEORIZING CO-CONSTITUTION

The Indo-British encounter is well-known and important for world history. India was Britain's colony from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, and also Britain's most important colony since at least 1858 to 1947, the period of the British Raj. British imperialism in India had economic, political, cultural, religious and military dimensions, and was coordinated by a semi-autonomous central government as well as by local governments. Focusing on the economic dimension alone, we see that London forced a deindustrialization of the Indian economy, regulating trade and manufacture, especially in textiles, that left India dependent on the imperial metropole. When India won its independence after World War II, its leadership designed political and economic institutions for the

[1] I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided with the possibility to complete this working paper: first of all to my brilliant collaborators Amit Julka and Manali Kumar, then to the Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series editor Michelle Ann Miller, to the anonymous reviewer, who provided excellent comments and criticisms, and finally to Ted Hopf, whose work on identity inspired this project.

new polity as if to explicitly differentiate it from the former colonizer: explicitly republican, democratic, welfarist, and protectionist. Again focusing on the economic dimension, we see the government in New Delhi pursuing a program aimed at breaking colonial structures: industrial sector development, land reform, and investment in education. This of course occurred in the aftermath of the British-designed Partition, which caused mass-scale violence and destruction, including the death of hundreds of thousands of people and displacement of millions more, as India and Pakistan engaged in “population transfer” as well as in war over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Looking at how India, as the colonized, and Britain, as India’s colonizer, configured each other in the aftermath of India’s independence is of interest to several scholarly literatures. One is constructivist International Relations (IR) theory that views international relations as rooted in broader cultural infrastructures and in national identities above all.[2] One of the questions to be explored is the relative stickiness of national identity—that is, how, or whether, new identifies and identification emerge in and through power shifts. For example, what effect, if any, did the relinquishing of empire have on British identity? Were the British less likely to sustain feel-good narratives about their world power and leadership after Suez or “East of Suez”? How about after the Falklands/Malvinas reinvasion or Tony Blair’s “West of Suez” campaigns? Did “entry into Europe” in the 1970s make the British more or less aware of their colonial past? Similarly, in what contexts did India position itself as superior or at least equal vis-à-vis Britain: during the heyday of the Non-aligned Movement? Once it went nuclear? When the Indian Air Force became larger than the Royal Air Force? When Indian companies started gobbling up their UK counterparts? These and similar questions bring forward diverse theories of time, temporality and change—from those dealing with “big, slow-moving and invisible” institutional evolution to global “shock events” to practice theory.[3] As such, they are relevant for many non-constructivist literatures in IR, such as, for example, that on national role conceptions[4], and for many non-IR literatures, such as, for example, that on geopolitical visions in the field of critical geography.[5]

In addition to offering a pairwise comparison of two identities, this study also enables of analysis of their interactional constitution across time and space. This approach would be of interest to a number of scholarly literatures, postcolonial theory being an outstanding case in point. As argued by generations of theorists, from Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire to Ashis Nandy, Partha Chatterji, Dipesh Chakrabarty and others, the knowledge that accompanied Euro-American colonialism largely configured the rest of the world as the backward, inferior and therefore subordinate Other.[6] This false consciousness circulated from the West to non-West carrying the marker of universality, presenting itself as valid and useful for everyone, everywhere. This was part of the civilizing mission, to educate inferior peoples and so sustain a hierarchy that drove colonialism in the first place. The mission was in many ways successful, resulting in the idea and practice of self-orientalization, or, to paraphrase Fanon, a situation in which those with black skins were wearing white masks when looking at the world. Yet not to be denied is the agency of the subordinated Self, and its capacity to represent itself through its own ways, including through what social scientists would today call

[2] For a literature review, see Vucetic (2017). For example, we cannot understand the persistence of the UK-US “special relationship” in the postwar period without first gaining a basic understanding the content and circulation of symbols and practices of everyday national life in Britain (Vucetic 2011, 2016a).

[3] See, respectively, Pierson (2003), Sewell (2005), and Hopf (2017).

[4] Thies and Nieman, eds. (2017).

[5] Geopolitical visions are those practices and performances of territoriality that define the everyday life of state, nation or the ethnic group (Dijkink 1996). For possible uses of the MIC project outside IR, see Vucetic (2016b).

[6] I will not review postcolonial theory here. An excellent recent summary can be found in Go (2016).

indigenous and/or Southern theory.[7] Indeed, the postcolonial critique has been successful in the sense that more and more people are educated to be curb their Orientalist impulses, to be skeptical about the Eurocentric treatments of the Other, and to analyze self-serving narratives. What this research projects allows us to examine is the durability, depth and breadth of the Orientalist coloniality in the discursive encounter of India and Britain but within and between what Stuart Hall calls "nation-centered grand narratives."[8]

Of related interested in the literature that deals with classroom history. Confrontation between political and social historians over the degree to which the next generation of history textbooks should emphasize issues of class, race, gender and various 'critical' perspectives that accompany them, appeals for multi-national, multicultural, regional, and global approaches, as well as debates about the purpose and distinctiveness of history vis-à-vis other fields (women's studies, for example) are all examples of "history wars" that take place in almost all modern societies. Virtually every formerly colonial power suffers from a condition variously called 'post-colonial amnesia', 'conspiracy of silence', 'post-colonial melancholia' and 'selective myopia'. This can be seen as a social-cognitive-affective structure that prevents post-colonizing states and societies from critically evaluating their colonial histories.[9] In UK history education, for example, there appears to be a never-ending debate over the meaning of the British Empire—from the controversy surrounding England's 2013 National Curriculum guidelines to, at the time of this writing, the uproars over 'Rhodes Must Fall', 'Ethics of Empire' or the treatment of the Windrush generation under "Brexit".[10] Many if not most UK history educators still insist on, first, separating the domestic from the imperial, and, second, on depicting the latter as both universal and, on balance, beneficial.[11] Similarly, while postcolonial perspectives have long been articulated from either the former colonies or from within the post-colonial Britain, these are almost entirely absent in state-sponsored history education.[12] While empire is evaluated negatively in the Indian textbooks, amnesia is nevertheless present, particularly when it comes to the representation of Partition or of Muslim Indians.[13] What this project facilitates is analysis of the ways in which the symbols and discursive practices that purvey a particular view of a nation's past circulate in two national contexts as well as over time.[14]

Engaging with all these literatures is a long-term goal of this project. For now, I will simply present the methodology behind the study, followed by the empirical findings. This alone is a worthwhile task for two reasons. First, while several studies have examined British representation of India and Indian representations of Britain the period covered here, virtually all of these have been conducted from one side, without attempting to compare the two. This is a problem for postcolonial and decolonial approaches especially because there one of the main goals of analysis is to look for connections, entanglements and circulations of history and knowledge. Second, as I detail in the next section, most such studies are tightly focused on elite discourses directly targeting the Other. This is different from probing both elite and mass-level identities and geopolitical imaginaries with

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7 Ibid. Also see Inden (1992).

8 Hall (1996: 247).

9 Mycock (2016).

10 Bhambra (2017).

11 Mycock (2016).

12 Grindel (2013); Ballantyne (2010); Van der Vlies (2017).

13 Guichard (2013). Muslim Indians, for example, make up around 13 percent of India's population today, yet some textbooks construe them not as fully Indian but rather partly Indian or even as alien to India.

14 For recent movements in this this direction, see Berger, Melman, and Lorenz, eds. (2012).

an eye on their "vertical" similarities and contrasts, the nature of elite-to-masses "uptake" and how all of this evolves over time.[15]

RECOVERING THE OVERHEARD

MIC promises to add value to the social constructivist study of nationalism, nation-making and collective memory by generating the first constructivist and interpretivist national identity database.[16] This database is being assembled inductively from everyday texts such as newspapers, novels and movies. So, rather than relying on surveys that gather information following a codebook filled with pre-given ideas about Indian and British identity, analysts allow identity categories to emerge directly before they move to reconstruct what it means to be India or Britain. Analysts also count the number of times a particular category appears in the text in order to establish relative salience. This makes the interpretation more systematic and transparent, and also opens the door—if ever so slightly—for quantifying the findings and thus contributing to more quantitatively oriented scholarship on national identity.

MIC's core theoretical and methodological wager is straightforward: if at least some "habits of nationhood" are discursive, then it stands to reason that one could recover them through some form of discourse analysis of a sample of texts that widely circulate in modern states.[17] This is why MIC coders are instructed to pay special attention to the use of what Michael Billig calls the deictic words in their texts: "*We* have always been traders." "*Our* empire was essentially liberal." "*They* play by different rules."[18] This helps recover the routine, unreflective and, indeed, "overheard" ways through which nations become a presence in people's everyday lives.

MIC data comes in the form of inductively coded archives and accompanying "national identity reports" generated by human coders working with agreed-upon discourse analytic parameters. For the purposes of this paper, I have relied on the national identities of Britain and India for every tenth year from 1950 to 2010, that is, over for seven calendar years in total. I have authored or coauthored all seven reports for Britain, while for India I relied on the reports authored by my MIC collaborators. (The national identity reports for India remain work in progress for three years under study: 1950, 1960, and 1980.) Each report is based on a standardized sample of texts drawn from an assortment of everyday experiences and institutional centers, namely from 1) political leadership speeches, 2) newspapers, 3) high school history textbooks, 4) novels, and 5) movies. The main rationale for accessing and analyzing such different forms and media of communication was to capture common everyday ideas, at both elite and mass levels, about what it means to be a nation or its member in a given year. Whenever appropriate, we replaced some of these genres by the most similar cultural consumables: a TV show Tipu Sultan for India in 1990 in addition to the two movies.

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15 On the often subtle conceptual distinctions between representations, images, imaginaries, and constructions, and how they relate to discursive practices of national identity, see Allan (2016) and Vucetic (2016b).

16 Hopf and Allan, eds. (2016).

17 Allan 2016. For alternative methodologies for analyzing identity, see, *inter alia*, Abdelal et al 2009 and McCrone and Bechhofer 2015.

18 Billig 1995.

Table 1: UK Sources, 1950-2010

Year	Speeches	Newspapers	Textbooks	Films	Novels
1950 (Lab)	Attlee. The King's Speech, 1.3.	*Daily Express*	Carter & Mears. *History of Britain*.	*The Blue Lamp*	Christie. *A Murder Is Announced*
	Attlee. Margate, 3.10.	*Daily Mirror*	Rayner. *Short History of Britain*	*What the Butler Saw*	Shute. *A Town Like Alice*
1960 (Cons)	Macmillan. Scarborough, 15.10.	*Daily Express*	Barker & Ollard. *General History of England*	*Doctor in Love*	Fleming. *Dr No* (Bond series)
	Macmillan. The Queen's Speech, 1. 11.	*Daily Mirror*	Strong. *History of Britain & the World*	*Sink the Bismarck!*	Christie. *4.50 from Paddington*
1970 (both)	Wilson. HC Deb on Address 2.6	*Daily Express*	Titley. *Machines, Money & Men*	*Her Majesty's Secret Service*	Christie. *Endless Night*
	Heath. HC Deb on Add. 2.6.	*Daily Mirror*	Larkin. *English History*	*Battle for Britain*	MacLean. *Force 10 from Navarone*
1980 (Cons)	Thatcher. Brighton. 10.10.	*Daily Express*	Hill. *British Eco and Soc History*	*Life of Brian*	Forsyth. *The Devil's Alternate*
	The Queen's Speech. 7. 11.	*Daily Mirror*	Sked & Cook. *Post-War Britain*	*McVicar*	Smith. *Wild Justice*
1990 (Cons)	The Queen's Speech. 7. 11.	*The Sun*	Kavanagh & Morris. *Consensus Politics* & Richards & Hunt. *An Illustrated History of Modern Britain*	*Shirley Valentine*	Forsyth. *The Negotiator*
	Major. 'First Speech', 4. 12.	*Daily Mirror*	Connolly & Barry. *Britain 1900-1939* & May. *Economic and Social History*	*The Krays*	Smith. *A Time to Die*
2000 (Lab)	Blair. Brighton. 26. 9.	*The Sun*	Walsh. *Modern World History*	*Chicken Run*	Rowling. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*
	Blair. 'Britain speech' 28. 3.	*Daily Mail*	Culpin & Turner. *Making Modern Britain*	*Billy Elliott*	Rowling. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*
2010	Cameron. Shipley. 28. 5.	*The Sun*	Lynch. Access to History Britain 1945-2007	*Harry Potter: Dealthy Hallows I*	David Nichols. *One Day.*
	Cameron. Birmingham party conf. 6.10	*The Times*	*Collier & Rowe. AQA History Britain, 1906-1951*	*StreetDance 3D*	*Sophie Kinsella. Twenties Girl*

NOTES: The reports for 1980, 1990, and 2000 are co-authorships with, respectively, David Orr, Kristen M. Olver and Alyssa Maraj Graham, while Melanie Mitchell and Kalathmika Natarajan provided invaluable research assistance in identifying and collecting historical materials. Coding was done from June 2015 to December 2017. For more on source selections, including complete bibliography, see Appendix A. For complete reports, detailed coding guidelines and examples, and other supplementary files, go to the MIC project website https://www.makingidentitycount.org/

Table 2: India Sources, 1950-2010

Year	Speeches	Newspapers	Textbooks	Films	Novels
1950	Nehru's Independence Day	*The Times of India* (Bombay)	*Hindustan Ki Kahanian* (Urdu)*	*Samadhi*	*Gunahon Ka Devta* (Hindi)
	President Rajendra Prasad's Republic Day	*Hindustan Times* (Delhi)	*Early Stories From Indian History**	*Babul*	*Pinjar* (Hindi)
1960	Nehru's Independence Day	*Hindustan Times*	*Tareekh-e Hind* (Urdu)*	*Mughal-e Azam* (Urdu-Hindi)	*Jhoota Sach* (Hindi)
	President Rajendra Prasad's Republic Day Address	*Indian Express*	*A History of India for High Schools**	*Barsaat Ki Raat* (Urdu-Hindi)	*Rani Nagfani Ki Kahani* (Hindi)
1970	Giri. President's Republic Day Address. 26.1.	*The Times of India* (Bombay)	Dave et. al. *Our Country - India, Book Two.*	*Johnny Mera Naam*	*Mera Naam Joker* (English)
	Gandhi. Independence Day Speech. 15.8.	*Hindustan Times* (Delhi)	Yajnik, et. al. *Social Studies. A Textbook for Secondary Schools Vol I*	*Sachaa Jhootha*	*Os Ki Boond* (Hindi)
1980	Reddy. President's Republic Day speech 26.1.	*The Times of India* (Bombay)	*History And Civics. A Textbook for Class VIII.*	*Qurbani*	*Desai. Clear Light of Day* (English)
	Gandhi. Independence Day Speech. 15.8.	*Hindustan Times* (Delhi)	Chandra. *Modern India.*	*Aasha*	*Basanti* (Hindi)
1990	Venkatraman. President's Republic Day speech	*Times of India*	*Contemporary World History*	*Dil*	*Starry Nights* (English)
	Prime Minister V P Singh's Independence Day Speech	*Hindustan Times*	*Modern India by Bipin Chandra*	*Ghayal.* *TV Show: Sword of Tipu Sultan*	*Delhi: A Novel* (English)
2000	President K.R. Narayanan's speech	*Times of India*	*Contemporary World History*	*Kaho Na Pyar Hai*	*The Glass Palace*
	Prime Minister Vajpayee's speech	*Hindustan Times*	*Modern India by Bipin Chandra*	*Mohabbatein*	*An Obedient Father*
2010	Pratibha Patil, President's Republic Day speech	*Times of India*	*Our Pasts*	*Dabangg*	*The Palace of Illusions*
	PM Manmohan Singh's Independence Day speech	*The Hindu*	*Themes in Indian History*	*Golmaal*	*2 States: The Story of my Marriage*

NOTES: The reports for 1950 and 1960 are in progress. For more on complete reports, report authors, source selections (incl. complete bibliography), detailed coding guidelines and examples, and other supplementary files, go to the MIC project website https://www.makingidentitycount.org/

Tables 1 and 2 summarizes the sources used for the British and Indian national identity reports, 1950 to 2010. They are grouped in five "genres," represented as columns, whereby with the category "newspapers" is further divided into two subcategories. Newspapers editorials, op-eds and columns ("opinion" for short), together with leadership speeches and history textbooks are thus used as sources of elite political discourse, while letters to the editor are meant to help gauge mass discourse, together with novels and movies. (Letters to the editor offer insights into public debates, while also transmitting realities that sometimes work at cross-purposes with the more elite point of view presented in the opinion pages.) For each year under study, an effort was made to select historical documents that can be credibly described as bestselling, must-read, highest-circulating, or most-watched.

For the sake of space I cannot discuss the selection of texts in each of these genres, so instead I will showcase the selection of newspapers in the two cases. Newspapers are especially appropriate in this research project because they supply a record of ephemeral, day-to-day identity details of the historical context in which they were written. As scholars since at least Benedict Anderson have argued, newspapers are central to the relationship the rise of print capitalism and of the corollary innovations such as the newspaper that made possible the emergence of national communities. Written in vernacular language, newspapers reached people well outside the privileged elite, establishing themselves as a mass performance through which the national Self was imagined in the first place.

For Britain, I followed the rankings based on the Press Council and Audit Bureau of Circulations circulation figures or the closest equivalent. Accordingly I selected *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* from 1950 through 1980, *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror* for 1990 and *The Sun* and *Daily Mail* in 2000. I sampled the editions published on the 15th day of each month, including, when appropriate, Sunday equivalents of the selected newspaper (*Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday Express*, *Mail on Sunday* but not *News of the World*).[19] As for the Indian newspaper archive, the first step was to acknowledge that India is more diverse than the European Union, which means that there is an inherent limitation to including only English and Hindi sources.[20] The Audit Bureau of Circulations provides reliable figures for recent years, but for the period before 1980 one had to rely on the histories of media in India. Another rule of thumb was to include editions published in different cities, usually Bombay/Mumbai and Delhi.[21]

As a strategy for creating an archive of texts containing information on British and Indian identities, this approach has two obvious limitations. One is that some space and some segment of society is taken to be the dominant sites of the discursive production of national identity: England for Britain and for India, the so-called "cow belt" of the northern states, which stands for the Hindi-speaking heartland. The other limitation a less print-centric archive, not least because radio and, from 1970 onwards, television shows were at least as popular as movies in this period, and certainly in India. These sampling choices were driven by both principle and pragmatism. As Tom Edensor has shown, the nation is often hierarchical not simply in the sense that some places are more likely to be centers of the discursive production, but

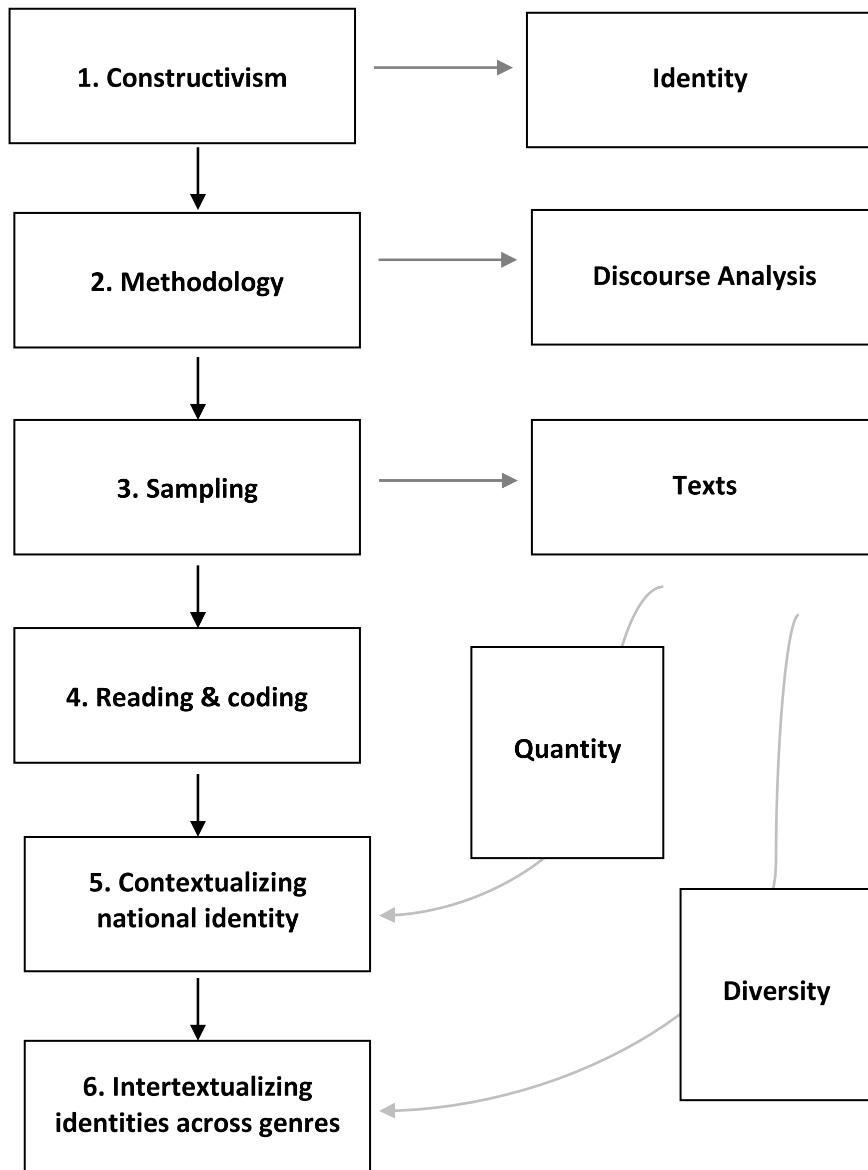
[19] With this selection, I achieved some variance in ownership structures and ideological orientations of newspapers known as "popular" or "mass-market" throughout the entire period under study.

[20] In addition to the fact that English was the language of India's ruling elite, it was important to keep in mind that before 1970 Hindi speakers were overwhelmingly less literate than those who read in Malayalam and Bengali.

[21] Similar considerations applied for the selection of novels. For 1950 and 1960 both novels are in Hindi, as they would have been more "mass market" than any number of English language novels. From 1990 onwards, as many newly affluent Indians became more and more comfortable in English.

also in the sense that some regions are constructed as more national or authentic than others.[22] Larger samples also cost more. Adding BBC's *To The Manor Born* to the British archive for the year 1980 would have greatly diversified the mass sample but it would also be prohibitive in terms of coding hours, especially considering the multimodal nature of discursive meanings contained therein.

Figure 1: Making Identity Count, From Theory to Findings



22 Edensor (2002).

Figure 1 visualizes the generation of national identity report as a step-by-step process (grey boxes, numbered, with notes on key definitions, assumptions, and aims in white boxes). The sampling strategy, shown as Step 3, is moving progressively from the project's constructivist "first principles" and discourse analytic methodology in, respectively, Steps 1 and 2. The sampling strategy simultaneously enables an inductivist analysis of national identity, Steps 4 through 6. Three basic inductive coding rules were used to code identity categories appearing in the actual texts: *valence*; *aspirational/aversive*—that is, if the identity is one that the Self aspires to or is trying to avoid; and *significant Other*. The last rule, which refers to any broadly national categories to which the Self compares itself in time and space, was of course especially important for the present study.

A distinct advantage of this method is that it forces coders to capture local particulars and contingent meanings that might otherwise be lost when analysis accepts either platitudes ("India is a civilization," "The British are militaristic") or, indeed, statements drawn public opinion research ("Young Britons rank Spain as top vacation destination"). Coders are likewise asked to differentiate mere themes ("leisure is good") from actual national identity categories ("all Indians like leisure time"). "Contextualization," represented in Figure 1 as Step 5, and "intertextualization," as Step 6, provide researchers with an opportunity to categorize coded identities both quantitatively and qualitatively.[23] For the purposes of this study, this involved a clustering of stereotypical 'images,' a.k.a. 'gestalts,' regarding Britain's India and India's Britain in each of the seven years under study.[24] These are integrated, condensed and simplified mental constructs or 'frames' that convey information and experience-based knowledge about the Other's capabilities (stronger/weaker), intentions (friendly/hostile), status within international society (superior/inferior) and trustworthiness (high/low). Much like identity discourses themselves, these images are at once cognitive and affective and serve to help actors situate themselves in the social world, thus enabling individual and institutional action and interaction, including in international relations. Consistent with constructivist ideas, this approach allows us to analyze the Indo-British encounter in a decidedly non-essentialist fashion, while also enabling identification its multiple and layered elements of through time, including its continuities, changes, and contrasts.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The Indian archive remains work in progress, but even as the analysis moves back and forth between speeches, newspapers, novels and movies it points to the coexistence of multiple and layered representations of the British Other, some complementary, others contradictory and still others bouncing off one another in ways that are yet to be interpreted fully.

The most continuous image of Britain is that of a shameless colonizer. Here, as with other images, "Britain" variously stands either for the English/British people or for the British government. A textbook from 1990 argues that "the English" learned how to rule India in their wars with the French, namely by taking advantage of the mutual quarrels of the Indian rulers, of the lack of nationalism in India, and of the superior Western military technology.[25] The same theory can be found in the popular TV show The Sword of Tipu Sultan: the British are ruthless, exploitative and cunning because the Indians are weak.

[23] For examples, see Hopf (2002), Hopf and Allan, eds. (2016), and Allan, Vucetic, and Hopf (2018).

[24] This very general conception of images follows Carrier, ed. (2003).

[25] Modern India by Bipin Chandra, Delhi. Publishers. 1990. P. 44.

("The Indians" are to be disaggregated in this case: the Hindu rulers are framed as effeminate and cowardly, in sharp contrast to sword-wearing Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the Muslim rulers of Mysore).

In addition to being a rapacious colonial power, Britain is also regularly configured as hypocritical. The same textbook makes this point forcefully:

> There was however, one exception to this excellent principle of equality before law. The Europeans and their descendants had separate courts and even laws…In practice, there emerged another type of legal inequality. Justice became quite expensive as court fees had to be paid, lawyers engaged, and the expenses of witnesses met…[26]

British hypocrisy is likewise hailed in a discussion of the massacre at Jalianwala Bagh in Amritsar: "People saw as if in a flash the ugliness and brutality that lay behind the façade of civilization that imperialism and foreign rule professed."[27] The same image travelled to other contexts as well. A good example is this *Times of India* column from 15 January 1980: "Their continued presence on Rhodesian soil is a gross violation of international law. It is indeed extraordinary that the U.K. which is usually so punctilious in upholding the sanctity of law should be party to such a palpably illegal act."

Competing images existed, however. The same 1990 textbook at one point characterizes the British as a force of modernity and unification of India, while also forcing the concept of equality before law: "Previously, the judicial system had paid heed to caste distinctions and had differentiated between the so-called high-born and low-born. For the same crime lighter punishment was awarded to a Brahmin than to a non-Brahmin…Now the humble could also move the machinery of justice."[28] Virtually all textbooks made the same connections, albeit with varying assessments of the long-term impact of the British conquest. A textbook from 1970 by Yajnik et al offers perhaps the modal view:

> British rule was inimical to the interests of almost all sections of Indian society...Almost all sections of Indian society realized that their interests were antagonistic to British rule. The people of India became aware that the development of their country was not possible unless British rule was ended. All these factors forged the people of India into a nation and this consciousness expressed itself in the struggle for national independence.[29]

Pre-independence and independence-era textbooks contained similar themes but were also likely to subject the Indian readers to a dosage of self-Orientalization. *Tarikh-e Hind* (*Jadeed*), a 1940 textbook that was used in India's Urdu language high schools well into the 1960s, portrays Indian history, culture and society as inferior their European equivalents and Britain as a legitimate ruler of India. The authors rather uncritically evaluate the profitability of the East India Company and the success of the British empire over the French: "The credit for British victory was due to the cooperation between the directors,

[26] Modern India, pp.85-86

[27] Modern India, p.227

[28] Modern India, p.85.

[29] Yajnik et al (1970). P.282

workers and soldiers of East India Company…Furthermore, due to the increasing strength of the British Navy, they made mincemeat out of the French."[30] And this is the explanation of the 1857 revolt:

> Lord Dalhousie played a key role in the establishment and expansion of British rule and by instituting social reforms he put India on the road to progress. However, the East and the West are as different as the Earth and the Sky. People of the west are engaged in a constant pursuit to invent new ways to channelize forces of nature. Thereby, they contribute to their nation. The lazy and backward looking East is only satisfied by procrastinating today's work to the next day. He builds castles in the air and views every change and new invention with suspicion. He views them not as progress but as a loss…He views the schools that remove ignorance and hospitals as evidence that the British are intent on converting us to Christianity.[31]

Likewise with the Jalianwala Bagh massacre, which is explained as an 'incident' (*hadsa*) caused by a rogue individual:

> General Dyer was a senior officer of the city. He did not give people enough time to disperse and showered bullets on them, killing a lot of unarmed Indians. Although the government later formed a committee to investigate the excesses of the officers and offered generous compensation to the family of the diseased, the gulf between the Indians and the British grew every day after that.[32]

The ambiguity of the British rule is confirmed in popular novels. In the 1990 novel *Delhi: A Novel* by Khushwant Singh, a Sikh mercenary fighting on the side of the British in the "Mutiny" of 1857 is discussing bravery with his commanding officer:

> 'The English are very bahadur [brave]…The best fighters in the world'…'Sikhs are also very bahadur. One Sikh is equal to 1,25,000 others.'
> Hodson Sahib didn't like that. He ran his hand over his bald head and asked 'What happened at Mudki and Pherushahr and Sabraon and Multan and Chillianwala and Gujarat?'
> 'Sahib, the Sikh army was betrayed by its officers.'
>
> 'That is what the defeated always say, we were let down by our commanders.' Hodson Sahib had a very short temper; I did not want to get him gussa [angry] by arguing with him.
>
> I said in my mind: 'If the Sikhs were led by good generals instead of traitors, they would have marched up to your London town and fucked your mothers.' I took off his socks

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30 Faruqi et al (1940), p. 25.

31 Ibid. p. 166.

32 Ibid. p. 210. The book nevertheless contains an entire chapter titled 'Sons of India' lists the achievements and efforts of nationalist leaders such as Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Tilak, Jinnah and others. While Gandhi is praised for his commitment to truth and non-violence, Tilak (who was more stringently anti-colonial and a part of the Congress' extremist faction) was also praised for his demand of complete independence from the British.

> and rubbed the soles of his feet. He shut his eyes and began to ghurr ghurr [purr] like a cat. After a while he said 'Theek hai [Alright]. You can go.' I saluted and left.[33]

In a chapter set in early mid-twentieth century, an Indian contractor who was close to the British government responds to people accusing him of being an Uncle Tom: ,

> Not even after the murders of their women and children in Delhi, Lucknow and Cawnpore after your so-called First War of Independence did they touch your women or children. They hanged a few people, levelled some bazaars to the ground. That was all.'
>
> 'That was not all,' they yell back at me. 'They treated us like dogs—worse than dogs because they are dog-worshippers. They called us niggers, had their 'Europeans only' clubs, 'For Europeans and Anglo-Indians only' compartments in railway trains. There was one law for the white man another for the black.'
>
> I shout back at them: 'There was no justice in India till the British came. There will be no justice in India after their impact has worn off. They gave you freedom to do your buk buk against them and only took action when you preached violence. Can you think of another race besides the British who would have put up with your Gandhis and Nehrus preaching sedition against them? If they had been Germans, French, Russians, Italians, Chinese or Japanese, they would strung up your Congresswallas on the branches of the nearest trees.[34]

The contractor is of course one the many voices in the book, which together reveal both the author's sense of irony as well as larger conversations and conflicts about modernity. What is on offer in the above passage is a standard conservative argument about the British empire: if empire as such is inevitable, you might as well hope to be ruled by the most liberal one.

The other key finding is a reoccurrence of the idea of "shared history." In newspaper articles as well as in textbooks, Britain relates to India as the former colonizer. The colonial past is invariably seen negatively, as in the following two *Hindustan Times* editorials from 1980, whereby the first is simultaneously a rejection of the Raj and India's pre-democratic past: "we don't want the British colonialists and the maharajas and nawabs back" (15 September) and "The British era was marked by the despotism of Governors General and Governors…" (15 November). A related aspect of shared history is the tradition of English language education in India, which in turn generates the largest English speaking population in the world after the US and UK. Britain is occasional seen as a fellow democracy as well as a source of Indian democracy—a good example of the Indian texts invoking the British Other not because they are interested in Britain but because they are interested in India.

From a middle class vantage point Britain was often constructed as close and familiar to India. Qurbani, a 1980 drama-thriller, is about Rajesh and Amar, a couple of (honorable) thieves whose one last robbery involves a plan to steal gold and jewellery from a rich, evil guy, and then hide in London, together with Sheela, the heroine. The plot assumes the viewer's familiarity with British geography, culture and

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33 Singh, pp. 278-279 (Kindle Edition).

34 Singh, Khushwant. Delhi: A Novel (p. 345).The dialogue continues with a harsh indictment of India after independence.

institutions. For example, when the robbers' scheme is foiled by collaboration between an Indian police officer and the Scotland Yard, the latter's name and mission is treated as self-evident. Similarly, *Clear Light of Day*, a bestselling novel for the same year, makes dozens of casual references to English/British culture, especially novels and histories, but also politicians and universities. Apart from the United States, which raises to prominence in latter years, no other country possessed the same cultural proximity in the Indian imagination as Britain did.

In sum, the Indians deployed representations of Britain and its empire in their arguments about present-day India. The two were distinguished: Britain was evaluated ambiguously and the empire negatively, that as a source of India's ills. In some cases, however, the Raj provided a moment to reflect critical on independence and in doing so even voice one's disappointments and disillusions. Furthermore, both tendencies can be found throughout the period under study: after independence, after the nuclear test and after liberalization.

Moving on to the British case, we see that India appears less frequently in British identity discourses than Britain appears in Indian identity discourses—a pattern that holds both overall and within individual years under study. In the sampled leadership speeches, India receives mentions only in the early years: Attlee's Margate speech of 1950, mentions "an important phase in Commonwealth affairs in the decision of India, although becoming a republic, to stay in the Commonwealth, while Macmillan, by way of the Queen Speech of 1960, talks about a plan to finance the construction of important works in the Indus River Basin, thus helping the "two great nations of the Commonwealth." Novels and movies are likewise short on India, with five discussions in total—a disproportionally small number compared to the number of mentions America, Europe, France and other entities receive in the same texts (fourteen discrete units).

The newspaper sample is similar: it mostly does not mention India or the Indians. When it does, it is to contrast British ways from their ways. A good example is a *Daily Mirror* editorial from 1950 that expresses shock that the Pakistan government decided to hold three British airmen as hostages against payment of compensation to the families of seven local people who were killed when their commercial plane crash-landed in Pakistan—tactics that no civilized government would pursue.[35] Another example, published a decade latter in the same newspaper, is a column by Cassandra comparing Britain's enlightened ways to the incompetence and authoritarians of local rules, specifically those in Ceylon:

> When the history of the decline and fall (and the ascent and success) of the British Commonwealth comes to be written, nothing will be more remarkable than the story of the release from Imperialism that we have given to India, to Pakistan, to Burma, to Malaya, to Ceylon, to Ghana— and for that matter to Cyprus.[36]

Latter years contain tabloid articles on "the Asians" in Britain, usually focusing on Muslims, as in the case of "the Luton louts"—a group of Muslim men of Asian descent who proved themselves astonishingly disloyal to Britain by disrespecting a British military parade held in 2010 in Luton.

[35] Daily Mirror, "Airmen are held as hostages," 15-2-1950, p. 3.

[36] Daily Mirror, "Cassandra says: The gift of freedom," 15-08-1960, p. 4.

India is a fixture in history classrooms, however. The two textbooks consulted for the baseline year 1950, both published in 1948, offer remarkably similar readings. Rayner's *A Short History of Britain* portrays India as a backward and uncivilized society, and Britain as the bearer of the "blessings of civilization": modern technology, infrastructure and communications.[37] The British government also took special care of Indians religious beliefs and promoted religious freedom, while also defending India's western frontier with Afghanistan, which was vulnerable from invasion by the Russian empire. As for resistance, the textbook notes that the "Mutiny" of 1857 was an act of few sepoys with the involvement of "one or two princes of minor importance," and that the Indian nationalist leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was basically an anti-Western extremist.

Carter and Mears's *A history of Britain,* similarly begins its story of India by characterizing its traditions and customs as "odious" and its rulers as "cruel" and "incompetent."[38] The British, in contrast, are skillful administrator and saviours. The former is exemplified in the case of the Sikhs who were turned from "dangerous enemies" into "loyal subjects."[39] The latter is self-evident: in addition to bringing in Western technological inventions like the railways and the telegraph, the Queen's Rule is said to have brought religious freedom to India for the first time.[40] Political freedom, in contrast, was missing from India because the Indians were simply not ready for "responsible government." A case in point was the "feud between Hindus and Moslems," which is why the authors end their story of India with a pessimistic note on the Labour government's decision in 1947 to restructure the colony into two new Dominions, India and Pakistan. As the authors put it: "One of the most complex problems which statesmanship has ever had to solve has been the relations between Britian and India in the twentieth century."[41]

Explicitly racist language disappeared by the 1970s, but articulations of a racialized worldview continued long afterwards. May's *An Economic and Social History of Britain* separates India from "the white dominions--Canada, Australia and South Africa,"[42] Richards and Hunt's *An Illustrated History of Modern Britain 1783-1980*, published in 1983, speaks of "greater ill-feeling between the races [that] was a lasting legacy of the Mutiny."[43] CP Hill's British Economic and Social History 1700-1975 observes that "there was from the 1950s a radical alteration in the pattern of migration, vividly revealed in the arrival of coloured immigrants from the Commonwealth, notably of West Indians and Pakistanis."[44]

[37] Rayner (1948), pp. 176-7, 231, 286, 298, 306-7, 352-357.

[38] Carter and Mears (1948), pp. 518, 610,614-617, 300-5, 516-18, 608-17, 739.

[39] The 1857 "Mutiny" is blamed on a small segment of the population bent on committing "devilries," not on the "loyal" Indian princess. Ibid., p. 617.

[40] This frame is commonplace in almost all textbooks. Lord Dalhousie did not annex Oudh because he was an imperialist but because of "his burning zeal to stamp out misgovernment and drive India along the path of progress." Richards and Hunt (1987), p. 322.

[41] Carter and Mears, p.1026.

[42] Trevor,p.193.

[43] Richards and Hunt, p. 323.

[44] Hill, p.10.

Both novels and textbooks talk about the "loss" of India, often uncritically. In Christie's *A Murder is Announced*, one protagonists laments the loss of India as a place of work for Britons, a feeling that echoes an observation in May's 1987 textbook about similarities between young Oxbridge graduates in the late 1950s and Frederick Lugard, "the great colonial administrator," whose number one career goal was to pass the Indian Civil Service examination.[45] This loss is sometimes seen as India's loss, too. In Wilbur Smith's novel *A Time to Die*, one empire nostalgic in 1988 talks about the order that was lost when the Europeans left Africa and Asia: "your average Indian or African living today in a former British colony is a damned sight worse off now than he was then. Certainly that goes one hundred times more for your average black man living in Mozambique."[46]

While noting that "the British became more cautious about 'westernising' reforms" after 1857, Richards and Hunt also write that the ninety years of post-Mutiny rule were a success, with 5,000 British civil servants governing a country of "300 million, most of them…illiterate peasants."[47] This is similar to Strong's textbook from 1956, which goes so far to argue that India became economically significant only under the conditions of late nineteenth century's New Imperialism, that is, when London decided to invest in it in "remarkable" ways.[48] May's textbook, which is harshly critical of imperialism, agrees: Britain developed India so that it would have an important export market: "the prosperity of Lancashire was chiefly based on the gigantic output of cheap stuff for the East."[49]

Most sampled textbooks blamed the dysfunction of Indian politics and society, both historical and contemporary, on the Indians themselves. For example, the aforementioned Strong first differentiates India, "the great dependency," from self-governing dominions, such as Canada. He then differentiates India's "moderate" and "cultured" elite, namely Hindus in the National Congress and Muslims in the Moslem League who both supported the Home Rule or Swaraj under the Act of 1919, from nationalists, namely Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign.[50] Indeed, Gandhi is depicted as the main obstacle in transferring of power to a "fully responsible government," in contrast to Prime Minister Nehru, a "distinguished graduate of Cambridge University," who proved himself able to govern wisely using insights from "a combination of Eastern and Western civilizations."[51] Indian agency is similarly denied in the case of Allan Hume, an Englishman who "mainly started" the Indian National Congress.[52]

Gandhi's reputation in British textbooks appears to shift only in the late 1970s. P. J. Larkin's *English History for Certificate Classes*, a textbook published in 1964, offers a perspective that closely tracks the textbooks read in the 1950s, going so far as to blame Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign for a failure of Indian reforms that caused violence and disorder. The first textbook to break this narrative in the sample is *Post-War Britain: A Political History*, a 1979 textbook by Sked and Cook, who make a simple

45 Trevor,p.413.

46 Smith, p.152, 669.

47 Richards and Hunt, p. 323.

48 Strong, p.123.

49 Trevor, p.330. The author specifically discusses Marxist theories of imperialism and their controversies (p. 194, for example).

50 Ibid., p. 201, 245.

51 Ibid., p. 245, 281.

52 Richards and Hunt., p. 324.

point that multiple interpretations of Gandhi are possible. Ten years later, Kavanagh and Morris' *Consensus Politics from Attlee to Thatcher* explicitly lauds Gandhi for his charisma, while Lynch's *Access to history: Britain 1945-2007*, the most recently published textbook in the sample, goes so far to call Gandhi a wise leader.

Treatment of Indian customs also changes over time. In Richards and Hunt's *An Illustrated History of Modern Britain*, India is described as "the land of an ancient and impressive civilisation, fertile especially in religious ideas and in art," albeit with an obligatory note about "evils" such as suttee and thuggee that reinforced British superiority.[53] What does not appear to change at all is the diagnostic frame for the murderous partition of India. Lynch's Gandhi is wise partly because his non-violent philosophy stands in contrast the politics of his Indian Hindu, Muslim and Sikh contemporaries whose power-hungry ways caused post-independence violence.[54] This is only a small departure from Strong's 1956 interpretation, where the bloody partition is presented as a function of the political, social and religious differences rather than of British actions. For Richard and Hunts, Lord Mountbatten were determined, charming but unfortunate, and the episodes of violence in 1947 "may suggest that Britain's departure from India was over hasty."[55]

The evaluation of the empire in general was similar. While the sample's more recent textbooks offer critical perspectives, they are always careful to assign blame either on the structural conditions—imperial rivalries—or on the specific individual and institutional actors with the British government. For Richards and Hunt, Britain's take-over of the continent in the late eighteen and early nineteenth century is explained in terms of rivalry with France.[56] Sked and Cook talk about the important differences in Conservative and Labour policies on empire (and India in particular), while Kavanagh and Morris single out the Conservative Party for being behind the times.[57] In each case, however, the end of empire is framed in material terms: the British gave up because of rising financial and administrative costs. Sked and Cook in particular offer a detailed cost-benefit analysis, including a discussion of a possible link between the granting of independence on the one hand and threat of mutiny within Royal Indian Navy on the other. The Commonwealth replaced the Empire, but it could not last, partly because of Britain's relative decline and turn to Europe, and partly because some newly independent states "were far from pro-British in their attitude."[58] Nevertheless, as Richard and Hunt argued in 1983, "a freely associated Commonwealth" was "a hopeful factor" in world politics and a net-benefit for Britain—a reminder of the glory of the empire as well as "good business," given that the British-provided aid kept coming back to Britain to buy British wares.[59]

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[53] Ibid., p. 320.

[54] Lynch, p.21.

[55] Richards and Hunt., p. 326.

[56] Ibid, p. 320.

[57] However, while the Labour Party under Prime Minister Attlee is described as opposing the Conservative "imperial rhetoric," the authors fail to mention Attlee's foreign minister Bevin and specifically Labour version of imperialism (the so-called Third Force).

[58] Richards and Hunt., p. 346.

[59] Ibid.

As in the case of India, representations of India in Britain primarily functioned as arguments about what it meant to be Britain or British. Britain consistently defined itself as modern and developed against India's backwardness, while mostly failing to critically interrogate the history of the Raj. Indeed, rather than revising their original images and moving toward greater and greater understanding of the empire from the perspective of the Other, most British textbooks simply added one or more counterpoints to the original narrative as they progressed through the twentieth century and after. Further research will determine if images in history textbooks tend to be more stable over time relative to those in other sources.

CONCLUSION

All nations maintain images of the Other, and these images are rarely homogenous. This study looked at Britain's images of India and India's images of Britain from the perspective of national identity discourses between 1950 and 2010. Judging by the main findings, polyvocality still allows for certain stickiness. While both nations have gone through immense political and economic transformations as well as a number of generational changes in this period, large segments of both elite and mass opinion have held onto historical antecedents and so a limited number of stereotypical images of the Other. In the Indian case, Britain was both a cunning colonizer and a model of efficiency orderliness. In Britain, India was a mess and imperial Britain was only partly responsible for it, if at all.

It is not surprising that the British and the Indians as post-empire nations had certain habitualized patterns of meaning-making with respect to their "shared history"—to use a commonplace political euphemism for the history of British colonialism. India's Britain and Britain's India inflected one another, while also serving specific purposes, political as well as social and cultural, within each national context. In a sense, "shared history" was itself an outside that both the British and the Indians could use to represent themselves in the present day.

The heterogeneous character of Britain's India and India's Britain is not surprising either. Viewed from the perspective the everyday life of the state and society, we know that the Other is constructed and maintained by many individual and institutional actors whose understandings of the world differ. These understandings also change overtime as actors experience shifts in their positions and revisit their priors. Here, it was clear that the imperial period of shared history evolved in both contexts. In India, self-Orientalization was more common in the early years under analysis as well as in mass discourse, where it was also deployed ironically. In Britain, the construction of the Raj changed over time, as did the image of Gandhi: the Indian leader went from being an extremist in the 1950s and 1960s to being one of the great men of the twentieth century in the 1990s and 2000s.

Preliminary as they are, these findings are relevant for the work I and my collaborators plan to do in the future, focusing primarily in IR theory. More empirical works awaits, however. In addition to completing the India national identity reports for all years, there is a need for a more fine-grained analysis of reactions to specific events—cricket matches or diplomatic summits, for example. This type of analysis would allow us to evaluate hypotheses on the plasticity of the construction of the Other—to what extent they might be susceptible to being shaped by leadership cues, mass media frames and the presence of third parties such as, in this case, China, America, Pakistan, or Europe. More importantly, it would expand our historical archive of British and Indian identity discourses, and so enable to think about not only how different actors constructed different representations of the Other, but also to what ends they put them, and why.

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