The violence of the Partition of India and Pakistan, 1946 - 1948.

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Summary

British India became independent in August 1947. It was partitioned along religious lines into two countries: India and Pakistan. The Partition was accompanied by excessive violence, even though the transition of power was peaceful. Approximately one million people were killed and twelve million people migrated as a direct result of the Partition. The extent of the violence sounds rather paradoxical. Therefore, the following question is asked: how can the violence of the Partition be explained? Theories from the field of conflict studies were combined with historical sources to formulate an answer.

Three structural causes that made India and Pakistan prone to violence are identified. These causes are ethnic geography, weak states and intra-state security concerns. The new-born states of India and Pakistan were ethnically diverse weak states, lacking capable political institutions and sensible borders. The absence of proper armies led to intra-state security concerns. Altogether, both India and Pakistan were very predisposed to violence.

However, violence did not happen everywhere, despite the violence-prone conditions. There were large differences between certain states. In the princely state of Malerkotla, the period of Partition was quite tranquil. In the neighbouring princely state of Patiala, many people died because of Partition-related violence. The commitment theory explains that the differences in outcome are mainly a result of whether the princes of Patiala and Malerkotla would benefit of a certain involvement in the violence or not.

The role that individuals played is explained by the motives of fear and greed. Many people acted out of fear. Misjudgement of the intentions of others and the absence of reliable information led to arms racing. Besides that, some people acted in order to get economical or personal gains. The lawlessness of the Partition period made it easy to loot or solve personal issues. The violence that accompanied the lootings also increased the fear by itself and the arms racing, creating a vicious circle.

Altogether, there were many factors that influenced the violence of the Partition. The combination of causes presented in this thesis explain why the Partition of India and Pakistan was accompanied by violence on a very large scale.

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Introduction

On August 15th, 1947 British rule in India came, after almost two hundred years, to an end.[1] On June 3th, 1947 it had become clear that the former British Indian Empire would not only become independent, it would also be partitioned into two separate nations: India and Pakistan.[2] The division was made along religious lines. The areas with a majority of Muslims became Pakistan (including East-Pakistan, which became Bangladesh in 1971); the area with a majority of Hindus became India. Two provinces, Bengal in the east and Punjab in the west, could not easily be divided. These provinces had a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims, without a clear majority of one of the two religious groups. The majority of India's Sikhs was also living in Punjab.

In a period of only six weeks, the borders within these regions had to be decided. The British judge Cyril Radcliffe was appointed to lead the commissions that would determine the borders between India and Pakistan in Bengal and Punjab. He did not have the time to visit the places where the borders would be situated and he based his decisions on an outdated census, comparing statistical proportions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.[3] The borders were only made publically known on August 17th, two days after the independence. They zigzagged through the provinces without taking into account the present infrastructure, such as railways and roads. Industrial plants were cut off from their resources and communities could no longer reach their sacred pilgrimage sites.[4] Suddenly millions of people became a minority if they were Hindus or Sikhs living in the area that became Pakistan, or if they were Muslims living in the area that became India. Even though official policies stated that minorities were free to stay in their country, many people decided to migrate. Some migrated because of ideological reasons, others because they feared for their lives. The Partition was accompanied by excessive ethnic violence. Groups of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims attacked each other's villages and refugees. Neither of the two new countries had the power to maintain order. Estimates of the number of victims vary between roughly 200,000 and two million. Furthermore, approximately twelve to fifteen million people migrated and hundreds of thousands of women, often of a very young age, were abducted, abused through rape or physically molested.[5]

It sounds paradoxical that the peaceful transition of power was accompanied by violence on such a large scale. Even though there had been ethnic violence of some sort in most of India's history, the scale of these outbreaks of violence was unprecedented. Therefore, I examine the following question:

[1] Large parts of India were under the rule of the East India Trading Company from 1757 onwards. After the Indian rebellion of 1858 the British Crown took the direct control over India.
[2] Umar Ali Rabia, 'Planning for the Partition of India 1947: A Scuttled Affair.' *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 30.1 (2009) 126.
[3] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition . The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven 2007) 105.
[4] Ibidem, 126.
[5] Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition* (Cambridge 2001) 90.

How can the violence which occurred during the period of Partition in India be explained? I use a combination of primary and secondary sources on the Partition and theories from the field of conflict studies to answer this question.

The period which is taken into account spans the time from August 16, 1946, "Direct Action Day"[6] until the death of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948. These dates are chosen because they cover the most violent period of the Partition. Although there were outbreaks of violence before Direct Action Day, the Calcutta Killings that followed this day were the first major acts of violence, resulting in thousands of deaths. The death of Gandhi is chosen as the end of the period because the number of violent riots dropped significantly after he was assassinated.

The Partition of India and Pakistan was a major historical event for the three countries most involved: India, Pakistan and the British Empire. Historians from these three countries wrote a large number of articles and books from the 1940s onwards about the Partition.[7] Especially the earlier studies often serve a nationalistic goal: trying to explain that the Partition, despite its deadly outcomes, was the inevitable outcome of independence. For example, early Pakistani historians used the Two Nation Theory[8] to 'prove' this inevitability. More recent studies on the Partition are in general primarily concerned with the question of political outcomes on a national level, but they also take the social and economic context into account. Quite a few studies put emphasis on the influence of individuals such as Nehru and Jinnah, the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League.[9]

Many books and articles by pro-Indian and pro-Pakistani historians focus specifically on the violence of the Partition. Articles and books written in the first decades after the Partition are often aimed at providing a justification of how the violence of the Partition goes against the fundamentals of Indian (or Pakistani) tradition and history.[10] Most of these studies treat the violence of the Partition as something given, and research on the violence is most of the time limited to descriptions of outbreaks

[6] Direct Action Day was a public holiday, called out by the Muslim League provincial government in Calcutta. The goal of the day was a complete *hartal* (strike) to demonstrate the support for Pakistan. It turned out in the most violent riots between Hindus and Muslims ever remembered in India.
[7] See, for example: Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab* (London 1965); H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain, India and Pakistan* (London 1969); K.K Aziz, *The Historical Background of Pakistan, 1857-1947: an Annotated Digest of Source Material* (Karachi 1970); Joya Chatterji, *Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge 2007); Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven 2007); Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History* (Cambridge 2001); Paul R. Brass, 'The Partition of India and Retributive Genocide in the Punjab', *Journal of Genocide Research* 5 (2003) 71-101.
[8] Two-nation theory: India was divided based on the 'two-nation theory' which stated that religion was the primary identity of Muslims in British India. Language, ethnicity and other similarities with Hindus were seen as unimportant. Supporters of this idea considered it impossible to live in a single nation under a Hindu majority. Therefore, an independent Islamic country was seen as the only realistic option if the former colony would become independent.
[9] Ayesha Jalal, *The sole spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge 1994)
[10] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 3.

of violence. Attempts to explain the violence are uncommon. This makes it an interesting object of research.

The majority of primary sources, such as letters between the political leaders involved, local newspapers and official reports are only available in archives in India or Pakistan. I am not able to visit these archives, therefore I am limited to the primary sources that are available online. These mainly consist of the personal stories of refugees and other victims of the violence.[11] These stories are useful to illustrate the forms of violence and how perceptions of "the other" changed. These are also useful to show the consequences of a sense of insecurity and general confusion on an individual level. The limitation of these personal stories is that they only deal with the violence on a personal level.

In addition to personal stories, there is a fairly large number of documents which are made available by the British national archives and the British Library, including official documents such as the Independence Act and letters of influential individuals like Jinnah and Nehru. I use these sources to get a better understanding of the policies that influenced the scale of violence from a top-down perspective.

As well as primary sources, I use books and articles written by historians to get an understanding of the context. As already mentioned, a lot has been written about the Partition. I focus mainly on "The Great Partition" by Yasmin Khan and "Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History" by Gyanendra Pandey." Both books are regarded as important studies of the Partition.[12,13] I also take books and articles into account written, among others, by Joya Chatterji, Ian Copland, Anna Bigelow, Daniel Marston. These studies deal with different aspects of the Partition. For example, Joya Chatterji focuses on the Bengal area, while Anna Bigelow focuses specifically on the princely states of Punjab. I take the insights they provide about the violence of the Partition into account.

Lastly, I use literature of the field of conflict studies to further analyse the violence. I focus on articles and books written by, among others, Michael Brown, David Lake and Donald Rothchild, James Fearon and David Laitin, and Jolle Demmers. Their theories provide useful insights in ethnic violence

[11] See, for example, www.1947Partitionarchive.org

[12] Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal, 'review of The Great Partition: the making of India and Pakistan, by Yasmin Khan (New Haven 2007).' *Political studies review.* 8, no. 1 (2010): 143.; Harsh V. Pant, 'A Bloody Mess. Review of The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan, by Yasmin Khan (New Haven 2007)' *The Review of Politics* 70, no. 04 (2008): 672-674.; Stanley Wolpert 'review of The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan, by Yasmin Khan (New Haven 2007)' *The international History Review*70, No. 2. (2008) 423-424.

[13] Dick. Kooiman, 'Review of the book Remembering Partition: violence, nationalism and history in India, by Gyanendra Pandey (Cambridge 2001)' *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 48 (2003) 297-300; Tony Ballantyne, 'Bookreview History, Memory and the Nation: Remembering Partition, by Gyanendra Pandey (Cambridge 2001)' *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 5 (2003): 195-205.

in general. My research is based on implementing these theories on the available knowledge about the Partition.

The main part of this thesis is divided in three chapters. In the first chapter, I will give a broader context of the violence. Furthermore, I will focus on three structural causes: weak states, intra-state security concerns and ethnic geography. These causes make certain states more prone to conflict than others.[14] In the second chapter, I will discuss why violence occurred in some areas of India that were prone to conflict but not in others. This is explained through the commitment problem. In the third chapter, I will explain why violence occurred in violent-prone India and Pakistan on a local scale by taking into account the security dilemma and the role of greed. At last, concluding remarks will be presented in the conclusion.

[14] Michael E. Brown, 'The causes of internal conflict: An overview', *Nationalism and ethnic conflict* (1997) 3.

Chapter I: Structural causes that made India and Pakistan prone to violent conflict.

Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on three structural causes that make some places more predisposed to violence than others: ethnic geography, weak states and intra-state security concerns. [15] These causes made the new-born states of India and Pakistan prone to violent conflict. Firstly, I will discuss the ethnic geography of India and Pakistan during the Partition: how the institutionalisation of ethnicity and symbolism contributed to the perspective that ethnic groups were unchangeable entities, which contributed to a higher risk of violence. Secondly, I will discuss how the reorganisation of the army and the quick transition from a British colony into two independent states made India and Pakistan weak states, and how this led to intra-state security concerns.

Ethnic geography

Institutionalisation of ethnicity

The ethnic geography of a state describes whether a state is ethnically homogenous or is consisting out of several ethnic groups. An ethnic group is a communal group lager than a family or clan.[16] In British India, ethnicity was primarily linked to religion. There were two major religions in British India: Hinduism and Islam. Furthermore, there were several minor religions. At the end of World War II, there were roughly 300 million Hindus, 100 million Muslims, 6 million Sikhs and a small number of Buddhists, Christians and Jews.[17] Marrying within the own religious group was strongly promoted and there was an emphasis on own histories and myths.[18] The British Raj, the British rule in India, had been promoting the differences between ethnic groups by institutionalising these differences in both social life and politics. For example, drinking taps at train stations were often labelled ´Hindu-water' and 'Muslim-water.'[19] In politics, separate electorates were given to the different religious groups.[20] These regulations contributed to a process in which social identities were turned from changeable to unchangeable. This process is called *reification.*[21]

Ethnic groups are often treated as the protagonists of ethnic conflict. However, the main protagonists of most ethnic conflicts are not ethnic groups as such but various organisations, including governments, paramilitary organisations and political parties. These organisations claim to speak in

[15] Brown, The Causes of Internal Conflict, 4.
[16] Ibidem, 24.
[17] Catherine Rey-Schirr, 'The ICRC's activities on the Indian subcontinent following Partition (1947–1949)', *International Review of the Red Cross* 38, no. 323 (1998): 270.
[18] Khan, *The Great Partition,* 21.
[19] Ibidem, 19.
[20] Ibidem, 20.
[21] Jolle Demmers, *Theories of violent conflict: An introduction,* (New York 2012) 27.

the name of an ethnic group. However, ethnic groups as vast, concrete entities do not exist, they are made through reification. Ethnicity is often seen as a communal bond given by nature and therefore unchangeable. This tendency to see social categories as inevitable and unchangeable is called *everyday primordialism*.

In British India, there was awareness of the ethnic differences between Hindus and Muslims because of the institutionalisation of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism as different ethnicities during the British Raj. The All India Muslim League further emphasised the ethnic differences between Muslims and Hindus to enhance their political support. The party was established in 1909. Initially the party remained small and was an insignificant player in its first decades. During the 1940s, their support grew fast and soon they had more than two million members.[22] The Muslim League claimed that Muslims would only be free if they would have their own independent state. According to their Two Nation Theory, religion was the primary identity of Muslims in British India.[23] Language and other similarities with Hindus were seen as unimportant.[24] Since the Muslims were a minority in India, they considered it impossible to live in a state with a Hindu majority. Therefore, the Muslim League was of the opinion that an independent Islamic country was the only realistic option if the former colony would become independent.

The emphasis on the differences between Hindus and Muslims in the early 1940s was further enhanced by the fact that less and less people saw the Indian National Congress as a representation of all Indians regardless of their religion.[25] Congress had historically been the Indian party that represented the independence movement on a secular basis. It won the 1937 provincial elections in most states, being supported by Hindus as well as Muslims.[26] However, once in office, Congress was often involved with Hindu religious life, for example by proposing a ban on cow slaughter. Muslim members of the Congress could not take the fear away that a country led by the Congress would automatically mean that Muslims would be a suppressed minority for ever.[27] In the early 1940s, the Muslim League's call for Partition became louder and the debate about whether India should be divided intensified when King George declared in 1945 that India would become independent.[28] In

[22] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition*, 18.
[23] Jinnah on Partition: "The question of a division of India, as proposed by the Muslim League, is based on the fundamental fact that there are two nations- Hindus and Muslims- and the underlying principle is that we want a national home and a national state in our homelands which are predominantly Muslim and compromise the six units of the Punjab, the N.W.F.P., Sind, Baluchistan, Bengal and Assam. This will give the Hindus their national home and a national state of Hindustan, which means three-fourths of British India." The National Archives, London. Move to Partition Punjab and Bengal: Text of Mr. Jinnah's Statement New Delhi 4th May 1947, retrieved from http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/fo371-635331.jpg
[24] Anand K. Verma, *Reassessing Pakistan : Role of Two-Nation Theory* (New Delhi 2001) 55.
[25] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 37.
[26] Ian A. Talbot, 'The 1946 Punjab Elections,' *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 01 (1980) 65-91.
[27] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 37.
[28] Ibidem, 30.

1946, The British decided to have provincial elections to make the Indians more familiar with governing. This was also a method to figure out which parties were supported most by the Indian public, and thus should be taken into account for negotiations. With two major parties, the Muslim League supporting Partition and Congress opposing Partition, the vote was soon seen as a vote in favour or against Pakistan. *Everyday Primordialism* became deeply embedded in Indian society. It became increasingly more difficult for Indian citizens to identify themselves in another way than along religious lines, even for those who were not practising religion. *Fatwas* circulated stating that Muslims who voted against Pakistan were not real Muslims and would not get an Islamic burial.[29,30] Self-identification along religious lines aggravated. Even clothes were seen as specifically 'Muslim' or 'Hindu' instead of for example 'Punjabi' or 'middle class'.[31] Congress won the 1946 provincial elections in the Hindu-majority areas. Contrary to the 1937 elections, the Muslim League won almost all the seats available to Muslims. This resulted in an absolute majority in Bengal and Punjab. [32][33]

Symbolism

Symbolism was used to further *reify* ethnicity and provoke violence. Groups do not use violence randomly, but follow cultural models of appropriate action. Violent actions need to be legitimized. The most important legitimisation of violence is its historicity.[34] Prior violence has symbolic value, and is employed to legitimise violence in the present. This is done through violent imaginaries, the emphasising of the historicity of present-day confrontations.[35] Violent imaginaries can take three different forms. Firstly, they can take the form of narratives, stories that keep the memory of former conflicts and past violence alive by either glorifying the own group's achievement or by remembering the suffering of one's own group caused by another group. The second form violent imaginaries can take is that of performances, for example public rituals. Violent imaginaries can also take the form of inscriptions, images subscribed in the cultural landscapes such as flags.[36]

On a state level, both Islamic Pakistan and 'secular' India included significant religious elements in their official state rituals to celebrate independence, such as rituals performed by Hindu priests in India or reading of the Quran in Pakistan that emphasised the contradictions between perceived

[29] A Fatwa is a formal ruling or interpretation on a point of Islamic law given by a qualified legal scholar. Encyclopedia Brittanic (2016) retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/fatwa
[30] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 36.
[31] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 133.
[32] Talbot, 'The 1946 Punjab Elections', 70.
[33] Digital South Asia Library. Kaart van India met de belangrijkste verkiezingen in de periode 1920-1945, Major Elections, 1920-1945. Retrieved from http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/schwartzberg/fullscreen.html?object=110
[34] Bettina Schmidt and Ingo Schröder, *Anthropology of violence and conflict* (London 2001) 9.
[35] Ibidem, 10.
[36] Ibidem, 10.

'Muslim Pakistan' and 'Hindu India.'[37] Flags were powerful images to underline the different ethnicities. The Pakistani flag, a green surface with a moon, a star and a white stripe is a clear example of this. It is based on the Muslim League flag and includes the green surface and the moon and star as commitment to Islam. The thin white stripe represents the minorities that live in Pakistan. Narratives were in a lesser way used by the political elites to legitimise violence. Jinnah, The Muslim League's leader, for example, expressed his appreciation for all Muslims who died or suffered for the liberty of Pakistan.[38] In this way, he kept the memory of past violence alive.

The reification of ethnicity through institutionalisation and symbolism led to everyday primordialism through reification. For many people this view, that differences between members of groups are unchangeable, made violence a much more acceptable solution to cope with the conflicts that arose in the Indian subcontinent in 1946 and 1947.[39]

Weak states and intra-state security concerns

British India had long been a stable part of the British Empire. Some provinces were under direct rule of the British Raj; others were under rule of Indian princes who were loyal to the British. The governmental institutions functioned well and there was a large army to rely on.[40] There had only been one major outbreak of violence against the British Raj, the mutiny of 1857, which was eventually suppressed.[41] This all changed as the date of the Partition came closer. British India transitioned from one strong state into two weak states. How this changed and how it influenced the Partition's violence is discussed by taking the reorganisation of the Indian Army and the quick transition from one state into two states into account.

The weak states of post-Partition India and Pakistan

Weak states are states that lack political legitimacy, politically sensible borders, and political institutions capable of exercising meaningful control over their territory.[42] I will discuss whether the governments of the new-born states of India and Pakistan had full political legitimacy, sensible borders or capable political institutions.

[37] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 152.
[38] British Library, M.A. Jinnah's Broadcast on the Partition of India, 3 June 1947. Retrieved from http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpregion/asia/india/indianindependence/indiapakistan/Partition8/index.html
[39] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity," *International organization* 54, no. 04 (2000) 849.
[40] Daniel P. Marston, 'The Indian Army, Partition, and the Punjab Boundary Force, 1945—1947', *War in History* 16, no. 4 (2009) 471.
[41] Gregory Fremont-Barnes, *The Indian Mutiny 1857–58* (New Delhi 2014) 3.
[42] Brown, *The causes of internal conflict*, 5.

It is disputable at which moment the British in India had lost political legitimacy, but until 1945 they were capable of exercising control over India's territory. The political legitimacy of the British Raj had been declining since the end of the 19th century. Rich Indians got the opportunity to educate themselves in English universities and saw that they were second class citizens of the British Empire. Dissatisfied with their position, they organised themselves in the Indian National Congress.[43] Decades later, under the leadership of Gandhi, Congress was transferred from a small organisation of rich, highly-educated Indians into a mass-based organisation with branches all over India.[44] When British India was finally partitioned, Congress in India and the Muslim League in Pakistan had political legitimacy to rule the new-born states.

The quick transition also influenced the process of border making. As already mentioned in the introduction, the border commissions only had six weeks to decide where the borders would be located.[45] The fact that the locations of the borders were not made public until August 17th, 1947 contributed to further increasement of the general unrest. Also, once made public, the borders were disputed. Many people had expected India or Pakistan to be larger countries than they eventually became.[46]

The British wanted to speed up the transition from a British colony into two independent states. This was done by expediting the date of independence ten months, while government officials had suggested that it would take a lot more time to divide all the administrative facilities into a Pakistani and an Indian part.[47] Especially in Pakistan, new institutions to rule the state had to be created in a very limited time. At the date of the Partition, many of these institutions were not even housed yet. Government officials often worked in tents while the offices to house the different governmental institutions were built.[48] This, in combination with inexperienced government officials and politicians, reduced the efficiency of the new governments. Neither of the governments had fully-functioning, capable institutions in the first months after Partition.

[43] Indian National Congress, In Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World. Retrieved from http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100001250
[44] Ibidem
[45] Jisha Menon, *The performance of nationalism: India, Pakistan, and the memory of Partition* (Cambridge 2013) 30.
[46] Khan, *The Great Partition,* 44.
[47] Ian A. Talbot, 'Partition of India: The human dimension' *Cultural and Social History 6, no. 4* (2009): 405.
[48] Matthew S. Hull *Government of paper: The materiality of bureaucracy in urban Pakistan* (Oakland 2012) 36.

Intra-state security concerns

The Indian Army consisted of more than 2.5 million soldiers at the end of World War II. It had fought for the British cause, both in Europe and in Asia.[49] However, an army of this size was too expensive to maintain after the war. A major reorganisation came into action. With the future independence in mind, the British had two goals: drastically reducing the number of soldiers and replacing British officers with Indian officers. The number of soldiers dropped from 2.5 million to 800,000 in October 1946. The number of soldiers further declined to 387,000 by April 1947.[50] The societal, political and economic consequences of a major reorganisation were not taken into account.[51] It was already acknowledged in early 1947 that a reorganisation on this scale would make the army more prone to ethnic division.[52]

The army had been relatively less susceptible for ethnic division based on religion than the general population. Army divisions were religiously heterogeneous and consisted of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Historically, most soldiers for the Indian Army were recruited in Punjab.[53] Many returned home because of the major reorganisation. Intelligence operations soon received information that increasingly more volunteer paramilitary movements came into existence. The 'volunteers' in these organizations were often very well drilled and trained in military skills.[54] These paramilitary movements were able to get access to weapons partly because of the fact that many U.S. arsenal and weapon depots from World War II were not destroyed when the U.S. forces left India. Many of these weapons were seized and given or sold to paramilitary organisations.[55]

Communalism, the tendency to feel strongly aligned to the own ethnic group rather than to society as a whole, was further heightened because the army was divided into an Indian army and a Pakistani army.[56] This division was made along religious lines. Muslims would join the Pakistani army and Hindus and Sikhs would join the Indian army.

The British officers of the Indian Army started leaving India two days after the date of the Partition. This was not only Britain's wish. Nehru, for example, stated that day that "foreign armies are the most obvious symbol of foreign rule. They are essentially armies of occupation and, as such, their presence

[49] Marston, 'The Indian Army', 478.
[50] Ibidem, 481.
[51] Ibidem, 480.
[52] P. Moon, ed., Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal (London 1973), 406.
[53] The National Archives (London) Indian Army recruitment 1939-1944, retrieved from http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/wo32-144061.jpg
[54] Sir Francis Tucker, *While Memory Serves* (London 1950) 147.
[55] Marston, 'The Indian Army', 486.
[56] Oxford dictionary, Communalism. Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/communalism

must inevitably be resented."[57] The Punjab Boundary Force (PBF) was created to fill in the vacuum that came into existence when the British left Punjab, the area that was most affected by the Partition violence. Its task was to prevent outbreaks of violence in Punjab. It consisted of 25,000 soldiers only, too few and too underequipped to be able to prevent all the violence from happening.

Moreover, due to the fact that many soldiers were recruited from Punjab, the possibility existed that soldiers had to defend the people that had killed their relatives. In situations like this, it was difficult for soldiers to neglect the loyalty to their families and stay loyal to the Indian and Pakistani governments. Incidents occurred in which the PBF got involved in riots, choosing one particular side. Due to its malfunctioning, the PBF was disbanded on September 1st, just two weeks after the Partition.[58] Without a proper army available, Punjab and other areas where ethnic violence was experienced were lawless. The lack of a strong state gave rebel groups and militias the opportunity to roam around freely.

Reorganisation of the Indian Army had two major complications in the period before Independence Day. The first major implication was that the Indian Army became much weaker, both because it was reduced to a significantly smaller army in a very short amount of time and because the transition from a British led army to an Indian led army meant that communalism increased. Soldiers started to feel more loyal to their coreligionists than to the army itself. The second major implication was that a great number of soldiers was sent home, which was for most of them Punjab. This led to a militarisation of Punjab. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all started to organise and arm themselves. The knowledge of the Indian Army veterans contributed to the professionalism of the paramilitary organisations in the province. This combined with the availability of large numbers of (fire)weapons made Punjab increasingly more prone to conflict. The Punjab Boundary Force did not have the means to provide security in Punjab. The result was that the government temporarily could not remain order.

Final remarks

The new-born states of India and Pakistan were prone to violent conflict. Three structural causes were presented. In both states, there had been an emphasis on differences between groups through the institutionalisation of ethnicity and symbolism. Besides this, both states had a certain degree of political legitimacy but did not have sensible borders or sufficient political institutions yet. Lastly, neither of the states had a monopoly on violence and could therefore not prevent most outbreaks of violence.

[57] Khan, *The Great Partition: The making of India and Pakistan*, 128.
[58] Marston, 'The Indian Army'. 478.

Chapter II: The Commitment Problem

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the princely states of Punjab. Punjab was the region that experienced the highest levels of violence. Most research on the Partition in Punjab focuses on the parts of the region that were under direct British rule. The violence in the princely states is less discussed, while around 40 per cent of the people in Punjab lived in the princely states, which comprised a quarter of Punjab's land. The princely states of Punjab were ruled by royal families, mostly Sikhs. The British let the princes[59] rule their states with respect to their internal affairs, as long as they were loyal to the British. In the first half of the 20th century it became clear that the British wanted India to be independent under 'responsible government.' This would mean some kind of democracy in which there was no place for autocratic rulers. In the years and months towards the Partition, it was very unclear what the future of the princely states would look like and princely rulers often tried to influence their future with whatever means they had. This struggle for power affected the violence of the Partition.

I will discuss two case studies to illustrate how the princes' struggle for power influenced the scale of the violence in their states. In the first case study, I will take into account the Sikh state of Patiala, in which there were a lot of outbreaks of communal violence in relation to the Partition. In the second case study, I will focus on the Muslim state of Malerkotla, which was located next to Patiala. In Malerkotla very few people died because of Partition violence. In many ways, these states were alike. Both had ethnic heterogeneous populations, without clear majorities of Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs.[60] In the 1920s and 1930s, both states also experienced significantly fewer outbreaks of communal violence between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims than the areas that were under direct British rule.[61] Issues such as cow slaughter and prayer times were more controlled in the princely states than in the area under British rule, to avoid public unrest. Most princes also put more effort in their relationships with the members of other religions than the British did, for example by attending their religious festivities to demonstrate their respect.[62] After discussing the case studies separately, I will use the commitment problem theory to explain how the differences between the two states led to violence in Patiala and relative tranquillity in Malerkotla.

[59] Although the royals had many different titles, I will refer to them as princes.
[60] P. C. Mahalanobis, 'Distribution of Muslims in the Population of India: 1941', *Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics (1933-1960)* 7, no. 4 (1946) 433.
[61] Ian Copland, 'The Further Shores of Partition: Ethnic Cleansing in Rajasthan 1947', *Past & Present* , no. 160 (1998) 213.
[62] Pippa Virdee, 'Partition and locality: case studies of the impact of Partition and its aftermath in the Punjab region 1947-61', *Coventry University, Phd Thesis* (2004) 94.

Patiala

In the first case study, I will focus on the violence that occurred in the state of Patiala, Punjab. Patiala was a large Sikh state covering 5,942 square miles and had a population of 1,936,000. In 1941, it consisted of 46.6 per cent Sikhs, 30.8 per cent Hindus and 22.6 per cent Muslims.[63] While the state was relatively peaceful in the decades before the Partition, violence erupted on a large scale during the Partition. In the census of 1951, Patiala consisted of 52.3 per cent Sikhs, 46.6 per cent Hindus and of less than 1 per cent Muslims.[64] Almost all Muslims had fled or were killed between April and September 1947.

To understand the violence in Punjab, it is necessary to understand the preliminary history of the Sikh princely states and the Sikh religion from the 1850s up to the Partition. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion which originated in the 16th century in Punjab and was partly a reaction on Hinduism.[65] When the Sikh princely states lost a large proportion of their power to the British in the 1850s, this was accompanied with rising prosperity. The prosperity led to a process of attrition in which Sikhs, including the royal family, were becoming less committed to their religion.[66] Fearing that Sikhism might not survive, a religious discourse was promoted by the Sikh religious leaders in which Hinduistic elements were removed from the religious rituals and festivities and a coherent view of what it meant to be a Sikh became common.[67] In this way the concept of being a Sikh was reified. In 1920, the Shiromani Akali Dal, a party, was established. The Shiromani Akali wanted the liberation of Sikh shrines and places of worship from the Udasis, who were seen as heretical. They called themselves Akalis, 'immortal ones.' After five years in which they occupied dozens of Gurudwaras, the British decided to give them the supervision of all Sikh holy places in British Indian territory.[68] In the 1940s the Muslim League made their demand for an independent Pakistan knowable. When the Partition became a serious possibility, the Shiromani Akali Dal realised that this would mean that, since the Sikh population was quite equally divided over the whole of Pakistan, a large part of their co-religionists would end up in Pakistan if Punjab was divided. Sikhs began to visualize Punjab as their homeland and started asking for independence as well.[69] Since they had served the British in both World Wars, many Sikhs hoped that the British would simply hand over Punjab as a reward for

[63] Mahalanobis, 'Distribution of Muslims', 433.
[64] G. S. Gosal, 'Religious composition of Punjab's population changes, 1951–61', *The Economic Weekly* 17 (1965) 121.
[65] William Hewat Mcleod, 'Sikhism', *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2016). Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sikhism
[66] Ian Copland, 'The master and the Maharajas: The Sikh princes and the East Punjab massacres of 1947', *Modern Asian Studies* 36, no. 03 (2002) 665.
[67] Ibidem, 666.
[68] Ibidem, 666.
[69] Harjot S. Oberoi, 'From Punjab to "Khalistan": Territoriality and Metacommentary', *Pacific Affairs* 60, no. 1 (1987) 28.

their services.[70] When it became clear that an independent Punjab was not part of the British plans, the Shiromani Akali Dal started to regard an independent Sikh homeland in Punjab as their main goal. They did not avoid the use of violence when they considered it necessary.[71,72]

In their fight for a Sikh homeland, the Punjab territory had to be cleared of Muslims. Therefore, two private armies, consisting of so-called Jathas, were established by the Akali Dal. Most of the approximately 200,000 Jathas were demobilized soldiers. The Sikh Jathas focused on two kinds of targets: Muslim refugees on their way to Pakistan, who could be travelling by car, train or foot; and Muslim villages. The specific targets were selected based on issues such as the size of the group, the chance that there would be many valuables and on how well the Muslims were protected.[73]
Due to the militarisation mentioned in the previous chapter, the attacks of the Jathas were very efficient. For example, as described by Copland, the attackers followed a specific tactic when attacking a village:

> First the targeted village would be completely encircled to prevent its occupants from escaping. Then the attack proper would commence. Typically, in this phase, one group of assailants would spray the village with rifles and light machine guns to dislodge the Muslims from the rooftops, while another lobbed grenades and petrol bombs over the walls. Finally, when the Sikhs judged that they had created enough confusion and panic inside, they would move in for the kill. In this last phase, a third group of hardened fighters armed with kirpans and spears would be delegated to finish off the surviving males while another smaller contingent, often made up of older jathedars, concentrated on rounding up the young women. Afterwards, these trophies of battle would be carried off along with any other 'valuables' that had escaped the fires.[74]

Yadavindra Singh, the prince of Patiala, and the other princes of the Sikh states were involved in the killings. By clearing their lands of Muslims, these killings served their purpose of creating a Sikh homeland. They were of the opinion that a separate, independent Sikh kingdom led by Yadavindra Singh was still a possibility.[75] Their involvement was mainly through supporting the Jathas both actively and passively. Passively, Singh tolerated the gangs and paramilitaries to roam around freely on his lands, looting and murdering Muslims. No effort was made in disarming or suppressing them.[76] Actively, the prince is said to have contributed to the killings by providing rifles, revolvers and

[70] Copland, 'The master and the Maharajas', 673.
[71] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 32.
[72] Amar Singh, 'Led Patiala lead the path to glory', The Liberator, 21 september 1947. Retrieved from http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-Partition/liberator/
[73] Copland, 'The master and the Maharajas', 687.
[74] Ibidem, 688
[75] Khan, *The Great Partition*, 99.
[76] Ibidem, 99.

ammunition to the Jathas.[77] The local authorities also contributed to the ethnic cleansing by taking away anything that could be used as a weapon from the Muslims in Patiala.[78] Measures like these resulted in the killing of over 6,000 Muslims in Patiala's capital in a short time. It took four days to clear all the corpses.[79]

From mid-September 1947 onwards the violence decreased significantly. Yadavindra Singh started to use his army to protect the Muslim refugees passing through Patiala. However, at this moment in time, most Muslims had already left, which made the measures hardly necessary and too late.[80]

Malerkotla

In the second case study I will discuss the princely state of Malerkotla, Punjab, which was one of the few places in Punjab where the Partition caused almost no victims. It was a small Muslim princely state in the north of Punjab, in which aproximately 88,000 people were living. The population was evenly distributed among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. In the town of Malerkotla, Muslims represented 76 per cent of the 30,000 inhabitants, Hindus 21 per cent and Sikhs 1.5 per cent.[81] While numbers of Muslims in Punjab declined from 53 per cent in 1941 to 2 per cent in 1951, the number of Muslims in Malerkotla town stayed very high with 66 per cent.[82] During Partition, the town of Malerkotla became known as a safe place to stop for Muslim migrants on their way to Pakistan. The number of refugees that sought asylum in Malerkotla was over 200,000, compared to a population of less than 30,000.[83]

There are several popular narratives that claim to explain how it was possible that the state of Malerkotla did not experience much violence and the town of Malerkotla almost none, while violent outbreaks were happening on a large scale in all neighbouring states. One of these explanations is the fact that the town of Malerkotla was blessed by the tenth Sikh guru Gobindh Singh in 1705. This is seen as the reason why the state of Malerkotla was not attacked by Sikhs of the Sikh states that surrounded it.[84] In a historical perspective, this argument is not enough to explain the absence of violence since there have been battles in which Sikhs did attack the city in the almost 250 years between the blessing by the Sikh guru and Partition.[85] Another commonly mentioned explanation is

[77] Copland, 'The master and the Maharajas', 681.
[78] 1947 Partition Archive. Interview with Mirza Iqbal Baig, retrieved from www.1947Partitionarchive.org
[79] Pippa Virdee, 'Tranquility and Brutality: The Paradox of Partition Violence in Punjab', 4, no. 1 (2006) 29.
[80] Copland, 'The master and the Maharajas', 695.
[81] Mahalanobis, 'Distribution of Muslims', 433.
[82] Gosal, 'Religious composition of Punjab's population changes, 1951–61', 121.
[83] Anna Bigelow, "Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 2 (2009): 444.
[84] Anna Bigelow, 'Punjab's Muslims: The History and Significance of Malerkotla', *International Journal of Punjab Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005): 73
[85] Bigelow, *Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India*, 439.

the protective power of the numerous saints of different religions that were buried in the area, especially Haider Shaikh, who is seen as the founder of the territory.[86] On top of the above mentioned critique, the presence of shared religious place is also not enough to prevent violence from happening. There are many places of shared religion in India where violence did occur during the Partition, often on a large scale. An example is the town of Pakpattan where shrines of several religions were located. Nevertheless it was attacked during the Partition.[87]

Related to these two explanations is the explanation that communities in Malerkotla experienced less communalism and protected each other because of the general culture of tolerance in the state.[88]
A fourth explanation that has been given, is the fact that the royal family of Malerkotla actively tried to prevent outbreaks of violence. As mentioned before, the Muslim princely state of Malerkotla was surrounded by Sikh princely states, such as Patiala. In these states, Partition was accompanied with a lot of violence. The violence was often promoted by the Sikh rulers, who used their armies against the Muslim minorities. This was part of a plan of the Akali Dal, supported by the princes to create a Sikh homeland, as explained in the first case study. While the Sikh prince of Patiala benefitted from the communal violence, because it seemed to bring him closer to the goal of an independent Sikh state, the prince of Malerkotla would not benefit from similar violence in his state.

The commitment problem

I stated that the role of the princes of Patiala and Malerkotla made the difference in the scale of the Partition-related violence. This can be explained through the commitment problem theory. According to this theory, an ethnic majority and an ethnic minority play a 'game.' In Punjab, the Muslims were the majority and the Sikhs were the minority.[89] The game consists of two periods. In the first period, the minority has two options. The first option is to acquiesce in plans for a new state, Pakistan in the current case. The second option is to attack the majority in hope of winning secession or incorporation in another state more to its liking. Secession would mean an independent Sikh homeland, but if that was not possible the Sikhs were hoping to be incorporated in the state of India, rather than Pakistan.[90]

If the minority decides to acquiesce, the game goes on with a second period. In this period, the majority chooses to make a set of political demands on the minority after which the minority again

[86] Ibidem, 437.
[87] Pippa Virdee, 'Partition and locality', 28.
[88] See, for example the interview with Bachan Singh www.1947Partitionarchive.org
[89] This might sound strange because Sikhs were a majority in Patiala, but in the whole Punjab they were a minority of 15 per cent, while Muslims accounted for 53 per cent. See Mahalanobis, *Distribution of Muslims in the Population of India: 1941,* 431.
[90] Fearon, 'Ethnic war as a commitment problem', *Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association* (1994) 10.

has the possibility to either accept these demands or to attack. A commitment problem arises when a minority decides to attack, rather than to accept the political consequences of the majority's demands.[91] In the case of Patiala, the Sikh minority chose to attack in the first period. Despite the inevitable losses that come with violence, this was seen as preferable to the worst political outcome of accepting the Radcliffe Boundaries. Paradoxically, outbreaks of violence reached the highest point the month after the Partition, when the locations of the borders in Punjab were already decided upon. However, in the discourse of the Partition these boundaries were not yet seen as the vast, unchanging demarcations which they would soon become.[92] Therefore it made sense for the Sikh community to choose the option of violence, hoping that this would bring them closer to a Sikh homeland.

Large-scale communal violence is not predicted if the chances of winning are perceived as very low. Therefore, the commitment problem is most likely if the minority is not too small, when it has external military support, and when both minority and majority groups are strongly nationalistic. This means that the groups perceive the costs of conflict as small relative to the value of political or cultural autonomy.[93] This explains why there was a commitment problem in Patiala, but not in Malerkotla. The Sikhs were a small minority in Malerkotla, while they were a large group in Patiala. In Patiala, the Akali Dal movement got external military support of the prince, while the prince of Malerkotla used his army to prevent violence. Lastly, in Malerkotla the Muslims and Sikhs were not very nationalistic, as a culture of tolerance was promoted. Also, conflict would not enhance the political autonomy of the prince. In Patiala, Muslims and Sikhs were strongly nationalistic and highly valuing autonomy.

[91] Ibidem, 10.
[92] Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, 43.
[93] Fearon, 'Ethnic war as a commitment problem', 10.

Chapter III: Individual motivations: the security dilemma and greed.

Introduction

As explained in the two previous chapters, political elites exerted a lot of influence on the Partition and its violence, through the decisions they made. The violence itself however was executed by ordinary people. In this chapter I will discuss how and why these individuals acted. I will present two explanations for the individual's behaviour of getting actively and voluntarily involved in the violence. In the first part, I will take into account the theory of 'narcissism of minor differences', which describes the process that communities go through as they turn from neighbours into enemies. The protagonist in this process is fear of the future. The second part attends to the matter of greed. I will discuss the possibility of economical and personal gains for individuals when getting involved in violence.

Fear

A lot of people were afraid of what the future would bring and therefore decided to migrate.[94] People left for a variety of reasons. Sometimes subtle forms of discrimination or rumours were reason enough for people to migrate. Especially in Bengal, where the violence was more contained than in other parts of India, not all people experienced the immediate threat of violence. [95] I have analysed around 25 interviews with eyewitnesses from villages and cities all over India who were affected by the Partition, collected by *The 1947 Partition Archive*.[96] Many of the interviewees fled their hometowns and did never return. Despite the geographical and religious diversity of the interviewees, they all roughly tell the same story. Many of the interviewees mention that they had always felt safe in their villages and cities and that ethnicity was not seen as something divisive. All interviewees describe their hometown before Partition as peaceful without or with only minor ethnic tensions.[97] However, from the moment it became clear that India would be partitioned, and especially from the moment of Partition onwards, the social relations between ethnic groups started to change and people started to feel less safe.[98] Reports of eyewitnesses show that a sense of insecurity in India was widespread. For example, one of the interviewees describes how Partition placed distrust among people, where none

[94] Joya Chatterji, *The spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge 2007) 108.
[95] Ibidem, 111
[96] www.1947Partitionarchive.org
[97] Described for example as: "free from any kind of communal tension,"- Kalyani Dutta "there was no communal tension in the community until the 1946 riots occurred" - Sabita Roy "individuals of all religious backgrounds lived cooperatively with one another" - Kesar Singh Chhabra. All retrieved from www.1947partitionarchive.org
[98] Described for example as: "After Partition, they observed changes in the behavioural pattern of the other community. On the way to their school, girls were teased and harassed.. there was rumor of riots in the town." - Kalyani Dutta; "it was in August of 1947 that Mr. Chhabra's family, for the first time, no longer felt safe in their village" - Kesar Singh Chhabra. All retrieved from www.1947Partitionarchive.org

may have existed previously.[99] Ethnic communities feared for their jobs and safety because of the arrival of refugees from other areas.[100] Although there were regional differences in the scale of violence, as explained in the previous chapter, most people interviewed, experienced violence at close range.[101]

Narcissism of minor differences

The question how villages and cities, in which inhabitants lived peacefully together, were affected on a large scale by violence can be explained through the theory of narcissism of minor differences. Sigmund Freud introduced the term narcissism of minor differences (NMD) in 1947. The term suggests that individuals who are part of a group embrace their group with an excessive love or loyalty, because they see it as significantly different from other groups. An outside observer would most likely regard this claim as disputable.[102] Kolstø, who analysed the concept, concluded that this theory should not be used without taking into account the different factors that also help to explain ethnic conflict, such as the political context.[103] The most important insight of the theory is the idea that the sociological function of NMD is to boost in-group cohesion. This is reached through directing aggression outward rather than inward. As described in the first chapter, the differences between the ethnic groups in India, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were small. The different groups had more in common than what was dividing them. Violence is the most common way to enhance the boundaries between ethnic groups that are quite similar. The differences between groups can be perceived as more significant if the idea of a common enemy enhances the collective identity of the group.[104]

Narcissism of minor differences generally follows a causal order. First, there is a disintegration of the state through the structural causes explained in the first chapter: a weak state, intra-state security concerns and ethnic geography. Without a state to guarantee the safety of its citizens, a security dilemma arises, which explains how peaceful communities gradually turn violent. Many interviewees mention that the announcement of Partition itself was the last straw that broke the camel's back. As mentioned in the introduction, the announcement of Partition did not come immediately with a clear explanation of the division of land between India and Pakistan. This uncertainty made people fear that their villages and cities would be part of the 'other' country, in which they would not be part of the ethnic majority. Fear of what the other group might do in this uncertain situation let to increased

[99] Interview with Anjali Som. Retrieved from www.1947Partitionarchive.org
[100] Khan, *The great Partition*, 137.
[101] Described for example as "..one of his classmates had been murdered at the bazaar" -Monmohan Singh; "… saw rioting and violence." - Mohinder Singh Luna and "…Their mother tried to take everyone to her sister's home, however, en route a neighbor offered them shelter. Had this not happened, the mob would have caught up with them" - Uma Sen. Retrieved from www.1947partitionarchive.org
[102] P. Kolstø, "The 'Narcissism of minor differences'-theory. can it explain ethnic conflict?", *Filozofija i Društvo*, 2, No 33. (2007), 167.
[103] Ibidem, 168.
[104] Ibidem, 168.

arming.[105] All over British India, people from different ethnic groups armed themselves and barricaded their houses, mainly as a defensive action.[106] This threatened the other ethnic groups, who responded in the same way, also arming themselves and taking measures to protect their properties. The dilemma is a result of the inability of the different ethnic groups to observe each other's intentions directly.[107] The problem is that it is difficult to distinguish between arming for offensive purposes and arming for defensive purposes. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were simply not able to see whether the other group armed out of protection or because they were preparing to act violent. Fear of an attack by the other can be an incentive to strike first.[108] Rumours about riots in other cities also contributed to general feelings of unsafety. Reliable news was hardly available. Less than one out of six persons could read and the newspapers were more often based on rumours than on facts.[109,110]

Greed

It is too simplified to conclude that the involvement of ordinary people in ethnic violence is only motivated by fear.[111] A second explanation which deserves attention is that whether an act of violence is ethnic violence depends on the motives of the participants. Motivations might be more complicated than simple hatred or fear for out-group members[112]. Sometimes people were merely taking advantage of the opportunities given to them by the lawlessness of the period of the Partition. They enriched themselves or misused the chaos to solve personal rivalries.[113] For example, as described by Yasmin Khan:

> The spoils of looting attracted others who mopped up after the murderers, acquiring land, jewels and houses from the detritus of massacres. Even those untouched by ideological concerns were able to seek opportunities in the aftermath.[114]

Important in the process of looting is the role of thugs; young men, often from small towns, ill-educated, and un- or underemployed who can be mobilized by nationalist ideologues.[115] The presence of thugs is seen as a necessary condition for ethnic violence. If a state is too weak, or elites simply do not take the responsibility to keep order, thugs will use the opportunity to loot. In India and Pakistan,

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[105] David Lake & Donald Rothchild, 'Containing fear: The origins and management of ethnic conflict'. *International Security,* 21 No. 2 (1994), 52.
[106] Khan, *The Great Partition,* 83.
[107] Lake & Rothchild, '*Containing fear',* 52.
[108] Ibidem, 53.
[109] Pandey, G. (2001). *Remembering Partition.* 110
[110] J.P. Nayaka & S. Nurullah, *A students' history of education in india, 1800-1973* (Bangalore 1974)
[111] Fearon and Laitin, *Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity,* 855.
[112] Ibidem, 869.
[113] See for example the interviews with Ramchand Thawani and Mohinder Singh Luna, retrieved from www.1947partitionarchive.org
[114] Khan, *The Great Partition,* 130.
[115] Fearon and Laitin, *Violence and the social construction of ethnic identity,* 869.

these thugs were not driven by ethnic hatred or fear, but mostly by the possibility of economic gains. They initiated outbreaks of violence based on the idea of 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' which further reified the ethnic identities and heightened the hostility between individuals of the ethnic groups. Seeing the members of the other group as dangerous threats became a logical thought. More moderate individuals in the group were left little choice than to follow a similar path.[116]

Final remarks

Fear is important for the explanation of the behaviour of ordinary people during the Partition. The theory of narcissism of minor differences explains the process of a weak state leading to a security dilemma. This dilemma explains how people easily interpreted behaviour of members of another group as offensive, while this might not have been the intention. This in combination with rumours and the absence of reliable information led to an arms race. Economic and personal gains also played an important role, which by itself affected people's fear. The violence can be explained by a combination of both views, rather than favouring one explanation over the other. Fear drove many people to the actions they took part in, but some were also driven by the possibilities of enriching themselves or getting rid of their personal enemies. There is also an interaction between the two motivations. Acts of looting enhanced the arms race because people became more afraid. Once people had the arms to defend themselves, they could also use their weapons to enrich themselves, without this being part of their original intentions.

[116] Ibidem, 871.

Conclusion

A peaceful state does not turn violent at once. In this thesis I tried to answer the question how the violence of the Partition can be explained. To explain this, I used a combination of sources on the Partition and theories from the field of conflict studies.

Three structural factors were presented in the first chapter to explain why India in 1946-1947 was prone to violence. The first factor concerns the ethnic geography of a state, meaning that states with ethnic minorities are more prone to ethnic violence than states with a completely ethnic homogenous population. Ethnic homogeneity does, however, not guarantee that violence will not erupt. In the case of India, there were two, in some areas three major ethnic groups, who differed mainly in religion. Political elites contributed to a reification of the different ethnicities through the institutionalisation of ethnicity and the use of symbolism. Reification increased the probability of violent conflict. The second factor, a weak state, is a necessary precondition for violence to erupt. The states of India and Pakistan did have some political legitimacy which could help to avoid conflict. The lack of capable institutions and sensible borders made them weak states nevertheless. The third factor, intra-state security concerns, was most evident in the deconstruction of a large and well-functioning army into a small army. This meant that the government of India no longer had a monopoly on violence, which is necessary for a strong state. Moreover, there was the militarisation of areas in India because of Indian Army veterans who were sent back home. Decisions of the British and Indian elites led to a situation in which the chances of outbreaks of violent conflict were strong.

In the second chapter I explained how the decision-making of the monarchs of two neighbouring Punjabi states, Patiala and Malerkotla, influenced the scale of the violence in their regions, through the problem of credible commitment theory. While many conditions in the two states were similar, the violence of the Partition developed completely different. Patiala experienced a lot of violence, while Malerkotla experienced almost no violence at all. The credible commitment theory showed that these differences were the outcomes of different tactics of the elites. The prince of Patiala hoped to be able to let Patiala become an independent nation or a part of India. The prince of Malerkotla benefitted more of a peaceful transition into one of the two new states, because its chances of becoming independent were negligible. Malerkotla was also known for its climate of tolerance.

In the third chapter I explained the role of individual behaviour in the violence of the Partition. Individual behaviour was determined by to two main protagonists: fear and greed. On the one hand individuals were affected by miscommunication. The security dilemma explains how members of one ethnic group armed themselves for defensive purposes, but were misinterpreted by members of different groups who also started to arm themselves. This led to an arms race. On the other hand,

people were often acting out of greed. The chaos of the Partition gave people the opportunity to act without having to justify their deeds to a legal system. This led to looting and killing on a large scale.

There are other possible factors which I did not included in the current study, but probably had some influence on the violence of the Partition. An example is the poor economic conditions of many people. Future research could be devoted to different factors that can partly explain the Partition violence. Another shortcoming of the current study is the limited access to primary sources. Despite these limitations, I am under the impression that a meaningful conclusion can be presented.

Altogether, the differences in religion were not by themselves enhancing the chance of violence, even though the violence occurred between members of different religious groups. The absence of a strong state, the reification of ethnic groups and the lack of a monopoly on violence made India and Pakistan prone to violent conflict during the period of Partition. Violent conflicts occurred because of the decisions elites made, trying to contain their power, and the motivations of ordinary people, driven by fear and greed. This explains why even in a largely peaceful transition from one state into two independent states, still so many had to migrate or were even killed.

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