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BUILDING STATES, BUILDING NATIONS: INDIA AND LEBANON IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: After independence, India and Lebanon attempted to manage their diverse societies through the framework of democratic states. Both countries deliberately eschewed the traditional nation-state model in which a mostly homogeneous and exclusively defined nation is represented by a state. Instead, Lebanon and India tried to create *state-nations* in which citizens with divergent ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities see themselves as part of the same political community through participation in a common state. Despite their attempts to democratically embrace diversity instead of imposing homogeneity, Lebanon and India followed vastly different paths in their political development. India's democracy has proved remarkably resilient over the decades, becoming a rare democratic success in the developing world despite the country's numerous ethnolinguistic and religious fault lines. Lebanon, which was for decades the Arab world's only democracy, collapsed under the weight of sectarian tensions in 1975, leading to a civil war that lasted fifteen years. While its success in building a state-nation is qualified by its recurrent problems in Kashmir and the recent rise of Hindu nationalism, India has sustained democracy and avoided fragmentation and civil war for over seven decades. Lebanon, on the other hand, represents a markedly less successful attempt at building a state-nation due to its lack of national cohesion that has continued long after the end of the civil war. The explanation for both countries' divergent trajectories lies in colonial legacies and political leadership, as well as institutional design choices that either fostered national unity or entrenched internal divisions. This thesis particularly seeks to underline the importance of creating a "we-feeling," a sense of common belonging to a shared political community that coexists with citizens' other salient identities, as a key factor in whether countries can build and maintain democracies in diverse societies.

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Introduction: Democracy and Diversity

Given the rise of nationalism and the demands of imagined national communities to self-determination in independent states over the past century, can democracy work in diverse societies? To examine this question, this paper will compare the attempts of Lebanon and India to build cohesive democracies out of their heterogeneous populations. At first glance, this comparison might seem slightly bizarre. India is the second-most populous country on earth, while Lebanon is a small country both geographically and in terms of population: its territory covers roughly the same area as Connecticut, and its population only numbers four million.[1] Yet both countries have long stood out as rare democracies in regions dominated by authoritarian regimes. Neither country has fallen under the control of an unelected dictator or experienced a military coup. Yet above all, both countries were expressly founded on the principle of pluralism, of unity in diversity. Lebanese and Indian pluralism stands in sharp contrast with the nation-state model, which is fundamentally exclusivist in its conception. To analyse the successes and failures of both countries, we could thus benefit from looking at them through a different conceptual framework: the state-nation.

Before the beginning of the late modern period, multiethnic and multireligious states were prevalent throughout the world. The borders of multiethnic empires and kingdoms cut across boundaries between religious and linguistic communities—boundaries which were themselves rather fluid. With the American and French revolutions, however, the idea that the people of a nation are the ultimate source of political legitimacy spread throughout the world, leading national communities to imagine themselves into existence and demand self-determination. The legacy of the French and American revolutions has left us with the normative vision that the international community is composed of *nation-states*, that is, states

[1] William Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

claiming to represent a particular national community with a shared, homogeneous identity defined by politically salient cultural markers, be they linguistic, ethnic, or religious.[2]

The idea of nation-states—and nationalism itself—as Benedict Anderson demonstrated in his *Imagined Communities*, is a distinctly modern phenomenon that reflects a change in the direction of political legitimacy. Rather than traditional monarchical states where legitimacy is based on divine authority from above, the nation-state derives its legitimacy from below, claiming to represent the interests of the population, who are now citizens instead of subjects.[3] This directional change in the source of state legitimacy produced two related but distinct phenomena—the spread of nationalism and the spread of democracy around the globe, as both nationalism and democracy are predicated on a common belief that the people are the ultimate source of political legitimacy. But who exactly are the people?

Unlike an authoritarian system of government, democracy—that is, the rule of the *demos*, the people—depends on the consent and participation of the governed, and in this a common sense of community among the citizens of a democracy is essential. Several major theorists of democracy were thus quite sceptical about the wisdom or viability of democracy in diverse societies. In *The Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that without a sense of common community, there could not be a "general will" of the people, only a collection of conflicting "particular wills." As he wrote in *The Social Contract*, "when there are…partial associations at the expense of the [larger political community], the will of each of these association becomes general in relation to its members and particular in relation to the state…then there is no longer a general will, and the opinion that prevails is merely a particular opinion" of one of the constituent associations, and thus has no legitimacy in the

[2] Alfred Stepan, Juan Linz, Yogendra Yadav, "The Rise of 'State-Nations,'" *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 3 (2010): 51.
[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016), 7.

eyes of the minority communities whose desires are overlooked.[4] It is for this reason that Rousseau was sceptical of the viability of a democratic system of government in anything other than an extremely homogeneous society.

Rousseau's logic was not entirely wrong: the past century has seen the fragmentation of large, multi-national states into smaller, more ethnically homogeneous states, often aided by ethnic cleansing. Starting with the First World War, multi-national empires, like the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, collapsed, producing a constellation of mostly ethnically homogeneous nation-states in their wake, many of which would undergo border changes and waves of ethnic cleansing during and after the Second World War (such as Czechoslovakia and Poland) and again after the fall of communist regimes at the end of the Cold War (like Yugoslavia). The tendency towards division is not unique to authoritarian states. The post-communist dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan, and the decades-long Sri Lankan Civil War testify to the capacity of resentments between minorities and majorities to cause fragmentation despite a system of open, competitive elections. Even in prosperous, developed democracies like Canada, Spain, and Belgium, ethnic cleavages still threaten to cause political fragmentation, with separatist parties often in power in regions of all three countries. Clearly, then, diverse democracies have had difficulties in creating a common imagined political community accepted by enough of their citizens to hold the state together in the face of separatist nationalisms.

Nation-states and state-nations

In their 2010 article "The Rise of State-Nations," Alfred Stepan, Juan Linz, and Yogendra Yadav develop the idea of the state-nation to provide an alternative to the traditional nation-state model. They note that the basic assumption of the nation-state, that state borders line up with the boundaries of a homogeneous national community, often fails to

[4] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 65.

describe the reality of political development in democratic states that lack the homogeneity of a country like Sweden or Japan, and that an alternative model is needed to look at democratic development in culturally diverse polities.[5] They lay out a series of institutional and policy choices that they see as facilitating the survival of diverse democracies. This list includes the following elements:

1. An asymmetrical federal state whose goal is "holding together" rather than "coming together"
2. Simultaneous recognition of individual *and* collective rights
3. A parliamentary rather than a presidential or semi-presidential government
4. A political landscape composed of polity-wide and "centric-regional" parties
5. Political integration without cultural assimilation
6. Cultural nationalists in power instead of—and against—secessionist movements
7. Overlapping, complementary identities instead of mutually exclusive identities[6]

To clarify the differences between nation-states and state-nations, I have reproduced Stepan, Linz, and Yadav's table comparing the two models below:[7]

[5] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, "Rise," 50.
[6] Alfred Stepan, Juan Linz, and Yogendra Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 17-18.
[7] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, "Rise," 55.

	NATION-STATE	STATE-NATION
Pre-existing Conditions		
Sense of belonging or "we-ness"	There is general attachment to one major cultural civilizational tradition. This cultural identity corresponds to existing state boundaries with minor exceptions.	There is attachment to more than one cultural civilizational tradition within the existing boundaries. However, these attachments do not preclude identification with a common state.
State Policy		
Cultural policies	There are homogenizing attempts to foster one core cultural identity, particularly one official language. Multiplicity of cultures is not recognized. The goal is unity in oneness.	There is recognition and support of more than one cultural identity (and more than one official language) within a frame of some common polity-wide symbols. The goal is unity in diversity.
Institutions		
Territorial division of power	The state is unitary or, if a federation, it is mononational and symmetrical.	There is normally a federal system, and it is often asymmetrical. The state can be unitary if aggressive nation-state policies are not pursued and de facto multilingualism is accepted. Federacies are possible.
Politics		
Ethnocultural or territorial cleavages	Such splits are not too salient.	Such splits are salient, but are recognized as such and democratically managed.
Autonomist or secessionist parties	Autonomist parties are normally not "coalitionable." Secessionist parties are outlawed or marginalized in democratic electoral politics.	Autonomist parties can govern in federal units and are "coalitionable" at the center. Nonviolent secessionist parties can sometimes participate in democratic political processes.
Citizen Orientation		
Political identity	Citizens feel that they belong to the state and to the same cultural nation at the same time.	Many citizens have multiple but complementary identities.
Obedience and loyalty	Citizens believe in obedience to the state and loyalty to the nation.	Citizens feel obedience to the state and identification with its institutions; none of this is based on a single national identity.

Reprinted from Stepan, Linz, and Yadav (2010)

Beyond the state-nation, there is what Stepan, Linz, and Yadav refer to as pure multinationalism, which is a complete rejection of a state-nation characterised by little to no "we-feeling" and secessionist movements that lead almost ineluctably to fragmentation.[8] Although the state-nation is an ideal type that does not line up perfectly with any one case, they cite India as one of the most successful attempts to build a state-nation.

While India and Lebanon are both candidates for being state-nations, this paper argues that India has been more successful than Lebanon in building a state-nation. Lebanon, by contrast, is more representative of a different, competing model of building diverse democracies: consociationalism.

Consociational democracy: An alternative model

State-nation theory differs substantially from other proposed models to manage diversity within a democratic framework, including Arend Lijphart's much-contested idea of consociational democracy. Lijphart's consociationalism relies on four basic requirements:

1. That elites can accommodate divergent interests within their communities,
2. That elites can work together with elites of other communities across and "transcend cleavages,"
3. That elites are committed to the maintenance and viability of the consociational system, and
4. That elites are cognizant of the risks of fragmentation should the system break down.[9]

There are several crucial differences between Lijphart's consociational democracy and state-nation theory. Consociational democracy is fundamentally about dynamics among elites of discrete communities. These elites are responsible for representing their communities in the state, meaning that the elites essentially mediate between citizens of their community and the

[8] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 11.
[9] Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics* 21, no. 2 (1969), 216.

state, creating a filter in the interactions of ordinary people with state institutions. The idea that communal elites are the fundamental players of the political landscape also suggests the absence of non-sectarian ideological parties that transcend communal cleavages. Lijphart is also silent on the question of a common national identity. At the level of the masses, the delegation of political authority to communal elites suggests that there is little sense of camaraderie and solidarity between members of different constituent communities, and thus little "we-feeling" acting as a glue to hold the various communities together. As for the communal elites, they in the interests of their own communities—not all citizens—and their cooperation is based on self-interest and the theoretically negative repercussions of defection rather than a sense of loyalty to the state. In other words, the "we-feeling" that is at the core of state-nation theory is entirely absent in the consociational model. For reasons that we will see later, Lijphart cites Lebanon as a prominent example of consociational democracy.

Part I: Imagining a Nation: The Road to Independence

India until 1947: Mass-based politics and the birth of a syncretic Indian nation

Dismissing the notion that a unified state could ever emerge from the diverse peoples comprising Britain's South Asian empire, Winston Churchill once claimed that India was merely "a geographical term. It is no more a united nation than the Equator."[10] This opinion was not confined to Churchill. Sir John Strachey, who served on the Governor-General's Council in India, once asserted that "there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India possessing, *according to European ideas*, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious." Claiming that "Scotland is more like Spain than Bengal is like the Punjab," he thought it impossible "that men of the Punjab, Bengal, the North-Western Provinces, and Madras should ever feel that they belong to one Indian nation."[11] These and other similar

[10] Winston Churchill, *India: Speeches and an Introduction* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1931), 136.
[11] Quoted in Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 2007), 3.

arguments were not necessarily unfounded: India has a panoply of ethnolinguistic and religious groups that rivals (and might surpass in several ways) the diversity of the entire continent of Europe. In an age where homogenised nation-states were emerging from fragmented empires, it is no wonder that the British thought that Indian unity was a mirage.

Ironically, however, Indian unity was a mirage that the British helped to turn into a concrete reality. Historians generally trace the beginnings of Indian nationalism to the 1885 foundation of the Indian National Congress (INC), the party which would lead the Indian independence movement and govern India nearly without interruption for the first fifty years after independence. At its opening session, the INC stated explicitly that its goal was to "mould Indians into a common nation" and establish "the germ of a Native Parliament [that] if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still unfit for any form of representative institution."[12] The INC was thus interested from the outset not only with creating pan-Indian political institutions—a foundation for eventual self-government and independence—but with turning Indians into a nation with a shared national identity, something which the word "mould" implicitly admits was not yet the case.

For the first several decades of existence, however, the INC was led by a small, elite group drawn from the ranks of the anglicised upper-middle class seeking greater opportunities within the framework of the British state. In that sense, it was not a mass-based movement capable of creating some sort of national feeling extending out from the cities to the remotest villages and beyond a small, literate elite to the largely illiterate masses.[13] Indeed, when mass protests erupted against the division of Bengal into two provinces by the British, the Congress leadership was caught flatfooted, its incremental, conciliatory approach called into question

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[12] *Proceedings of the Indian National Congress*, ed. A.M. Zaidi (Delhi: Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1990), 1:39.
[13] Maya Jessica Tudor, *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 55.

by the sudden radicalisation of nationalist feelings against the British.[14] Resentment against the British continued to grow through the First World War, which caused massive tax and price increases and stirred up resentment against the British. The First World War also saw the return to India of a lawyer named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who had been perfecting his strategy of non-violent civil disobedience in South Africa and brought his methods back home to galvanise opposition to the British Raj. Gandhi spent the first three years after his return using civil disobedience as a method to force the British to redress local grievances until the passage of the Rowlatt Act in 1919, which extended emergency detention provisions introduced during the war that violated the principle of due process.[15] The Rowlatt Act, along with the massacre by British soldiers of unarmed civilians at Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 marked a turning point in his career, and he began to write and promote causes at an all-India level.[16]

Six years after his arrival in India, Gandhi had risen to become the leader of the Indian National Congress. Gandhi's ascension to the leadership of Congress was fortuitous for the party's attempts to forge a nation out of the people of India. From the very outset, those who wanted to mobilise an Indian people composed of the subcontinent's myriad ethnolinguistic and religious groups faced a daunting challenge: forging a sense of unity out of masses who were not predisposed to build a shared sense of solidarity, much less see their histories and fates linked as part of an imagined Indian national community. To even stand a chance of successfully taking on the impressive state apparatus established by the British Raj, it was imperative to expand the nationalist movement beyond the small minority of educated, anglophone Indians to the peasantry.[17]

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[14] Ibid., 53.
[15] Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), 74.
[16] Tudor, 55.
[17] Partha Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 48.

This reality reflected the impasse in which the Indian nationalist movement found itself. Previous rebellions against the British—including the famous 1857 revolt—were ultimately local affairs that only rarely crossed cultural and linguistic frontiers and never spread throughout the whole of British India. Because localised revolts and resistance were no match for the immense British state apparatus, they inevitably failed. The only group with the ability to communicate and organise on at an all-India level was a small anglophone community that was spread evenly—and thinly—throughout the subcontinent. Before Gandhi, as Sudipta Kaviraj notes, resistance "had little chance of attaining really threatening social depth or spatial spread."[18]By simultaneously reaching masses across India and working with the nationalist elite of the INC, Gandhi managed to achieve social depth and spatial spread. Unlike the traditional nationalisms of Europe, the INC's nationalism deliberately and explicitly cut across ethnic and religious lines. And through Gandhi's various campaigns of civil disobedience—including the non-cooperation movement (1920), the Salt March (1930), and the Quit India movement (1942)—Gandhi mobilised average Indians throughout the subcontinent in movements which defined the interests of "Indians" against those of the British Raj based on a series of common, clearly defined principles.[19]

Gandhi also successfully pushed for the reorganisation of regional Congress units along linguistic lines, regardless of whether or not such lines lined up with British territorial divisions. This reorganisation enabled a layering of complementary identities, allowing the embracement of one's linguistic identity to exist simultaneously alongside loyalty to the nascent Indian nation and the Indian nationalist movement. As we will see, this set a powerful precedent for the post-independence Indian state.[20]

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[18] Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Imaginary Institution of India: Politics and Ideas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 111.
[19] Tudor, 82.
[20] Katherine Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 56.

Gandhi's Indian nationalism was inherently pluralistic, seeking to include Indians regardless of religion, language, or caste. Gandhi's form of Indian patriotism made him a national leader in the eyes of the nationalist elite while using a series of symbols, ideas, and reference points easily understandable to average Indians who otherwise have felt a sense of kinship or solidarity with people on the other end of the subcontinent. His emphasis on various principles, such as *swadeshi*, *ahimsa*, and *satyagraha*,[21] resonated with wide swathes of Indian society and turned Gandhi into a sort of ascetic saint that had echoes throughout Indian history.[22] Gandhi's adoption of *khadi* (traditional hand-woven cloth) and his imposition of it on Congress cadres sent a powerful visual message. Gandhian *khadi* uniforms united Indians across linguistic lines and destroyed caste distinctions that were embedded in traditional clothing. As Jessica Tudor observes, through a narrative of clothing, Gandhi managed to create a "we-feeling" that was the basis of a pluralistic, egalitarian Indian nationalism.[23] It was also a rejection of the economic powerlessness and the feeling of cultural inferiority familiar to all who lived under British rule.

This Indian unity forged in opposition to the British underscores the irony of Churchill's assertion that an Indian nation never existed: he is historically correct, but the very empire he championed was contributing to the birth of an Indian national consciousness. Those who wonder how Britain conquered a country as large and populous as India ask the wrong question because there was no sense of common Indian nationalism or identity to rally the entire subcontinent against increasing British power as region after region fell under colonial rule. The experience of colonialism—and resistance to it—was, in fact, necessary to

[21] *Swadeshi* refers to Gandhi's boycott of European and manufactured goods and simultaneous promotion of cottage industries, especially in fabric production. *Ahimsa* is a principle of non-violence found in several dharmic religions that Gandhi made a fundamental part of his political philosophy, while *satyagraha* ("holding onto truth" in Sanskrit) refers to Gandhi's version of non-violent resistance to unjust rule.
[22] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 2012), 165.
[23] Tudor, 80.

forge a national consciousness in India.[24] Resistance to British rule was the cauldron in which an Indian national identity felt by village peasant and urban intellectual alike was forged.

As Sunil Khilnani writes, Gandhi's vision abandoned the traditional nationalist "discourse of history" and was defined by an "ambition for a self-producing community [that] was strongly moralizing…and dispensed entirely with the idea of a territorial nation state," opting instead to unify Indians on the basis of religious morality.[25] Indeed, in many ways, Gandhi's anticolonial ideology amounts to a wholesale rejection of Western ideas of history, economics, rationality, and progress—a moment in colonial nationalist development that historian Partha Chatterjee calls the "moment of manoeuvre."[26] Yet many aspects of Gandhi's ideology—his loathing of strong, centralised states and rejection of industrialisation—would be impractical (or disastrous) if implemented after independence. This brings us to Chatterjee's "moment of arrival" when nationalist discourses morph into a practical governing ideology.

Jawaharlal Nehru, a close confidant of Gandhi who saw the Mahatma as a paternal figure, revered Gandhi as a moral figure but dismissed his ideas regarding the state, education, and economics. Modernisers like Nehru who wanted a progressive, industrialised India recognised that Gandhi connected with the masses with uncanny effectiveness, his problematic ideas notwithstanding. By allying with Gandhi, they gained power and influence that they would not have been able to obtain themselves, hoping to implement their agenda once independence had been achieved.[27] With Gandhi's support, Nehru rose to lead the INC and became India's first prime minister after independence in 1947. Gandhi was assassinated in early 1948, which, while personally devastating for Nehru, gave him wide latitude to shape

[24] Kaviraj, 176-7.
[25] Khilnani, 165.
[26] Chatterjee, 48-52.
[27] Chatterjee, 55.

independent India as he wanted while benefiting from the lasting aura of his closeness to the martyred Mahatma.

Gandhi rejected western notions of history, rationalism, and progress, and once claimed that "a nation is happy that has no history." Nehru, by contrast, followed a more typical nationalist approach by imagining into existence an Indian nation through a historical narrative that stretched back and disappeared into the mists of time. Yet unlike other potent nationalist narratives that were sweeping the world at that time, Nehru's narrative does not dwell on issues of purity, nor does his nationalism constitute an ideology of hatred against an out-group. On the contrary, the borders of Nehru's Indian nation are often very fluid. Throughout his career, he emphasised a version of Indian nationalism that emphasised the oneness of India while simultaneously recognising the diverse influences which had added their own contribution to the tapestry of Indian society.

Published one year before independence, Nehru's *The Discovery of India* has been described by many as a defining work in the history of Indian nationalism, one that created a powerful blueprint for India's future by reaching far into its past.[28] Nehru's challenge was immense, as the people he wished to turn into Indians lacked one common defining "essence". As Kaviraj notes, defining the borders of the British Indian state simply required looking at a map of regions under British control, regardless of the identities or loyalties of its inhabitants. By contrast, Nehru sought to build a nation with a shared "we-feeling" that would spread out and be internalised by people from the foothills of the Himalayas to the far southern tip of the subcontinent—a far more arduous task.[29] Yet, as Nehru himself admitted, it was a necessary task, for nationalism represents "one of the most powerful urges that move a

[28] Kaviraj, 151.
[29] Ibid., 183.

people, and round it cluster sentiments and traditions and a sense of common living and common purpose."[30]

The Nehruvian nationalism that appears in *The Discovery of India* stands out from other nationalist narratives in its pluralism. The heroes of Indian history for Nehru are figures like the Mauryan emperor Ashoka or the Mughal emperor Akbar, who each stand out for their encouragement of religious tolerance and cultural syncretism. The antagonists of Nehru's narrative are figures like Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor who discriminated against Hindus and divided Indians against each other.[31] In a particularly famous passage, Nehru outlines what he views as the overarching theme of Indian history, one of unity in diversity:

> Foreign influences were poured in and…were absorbed. Disruptive tendencies gave rise immediately to an attempt to find a synthesis. Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization…of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.[32]

Perhaps the most famous metaphor used by Nehru is that of the palimpsest, which, while a coherent and unified whole, bears the traces of multiple influences that made their own indelible contributions:

> She was like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously. All of these existed in our conscious or subconscious selves, though we may not have been aware of them, and they had gone to build up the complex and mysterious personality of India…Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among our people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which had held all of us together for ages past, whatever political fate or misfortune had befallen us.[33]

This, then, was not an essentialist nationalism like those that were reshaping the map of Europe. Nehru celebrated the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of India, but also made a

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[30] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2010), 44.
[31] Ibid., 286.
[32] Ibid., 55.
[33] Ibid., 51-2.

powerful argument that each of these components, while unique and special, together formed the tapestry of the Indian nation. In doing so, he articulated a powerful, coherent national identity that was nevertheless devoid of one specific, defining essence. Or, if the Indian nation did have an essence, it was its diversity and tendency towards tolerance and cultural syncretism.

This seemingly contradictory idea that India's unity was its diversity established a grammar of politics that would be transitioned from the realm of national imagining to the concrete realm of state-building after independence. His reading of Indian history celebrated periods of Hindu-Muslim tolerance and cooperation as periods of great cultural and intellectual growth,[34] and so Hindu-Muslim tolerance and cooperation became a fundamental tenet of his governing philosophy. Similarly, India's linguistic communities, while each having its unique heritage, shared commonalities and links that underscored the idea of an India united in its diversity.[35] As Khilnani notes, Nehru "relied on a compelling, if imaginary, story of the Indian past, told as a tale of cultural mixing and fusion, a civilizational tendency towards unification" that would enable him to make democracy and pluralism features of the Indian state after independence, for to not do so would be contrary to sprit of the Indian nation.[36]

If Nehru recognised the power of nationalism to unite people and give them a sense of common identity and purpose, it was also a force capable of wreaking havoc. Looking at the example of European nationalism, he realised that the forms of narrow, exclusivist nationalisms that had caused two world wars in Europe would be disastrous if applied to India. Those nationalisms did not only depend on "a love of one's own country, but a hatred of all others. From this glorification of one's own patch of land and contemptuous running

[34] Ibid., 289.
[35] Ibid., 54.
[36] Khilnani, 166.

down of others, trouble and friction between different countries were bound to result."[37] Nehruvian nationalist discourse sought to rise above scapegoating and exclusivism, articulating a national identity defined by its pluralism and openness—a vision capable of holding together a subcontinent as ethnically and religiously diverse as India.

By the time India approached independence in 1947, India had laid a solid foundation to build a state-nation. Unlike in many other countries emerging from the colonial period, nationalist sentiment had spread beyond a small intelligentsia and permeated even remote, impoverished, and largely illiterate corners of the Indian subcontinent. It is impossible to imagine that Indian national sentiment would have spread as widely and deeply into Indian society had it not been for the ultimately successful campaign led by the INC to force the British to withdraw from India. Through its outreach and mobilisation efforts, the INC had built political infrastructure that sprawled throughout the subcontinent. Not only did these efforts produce enough mobilisation that Britain, already in economic shambles after the Second World War, felt that it could no longer hold onto India, but it produced a sense of solidarity and commonality among the people who would be left behind when the British left. Even if Churchill was right that there was no Indian nation before the British came, there certainly was one when they left.

Nehruvian pluralism was not the only nationalism gaining prominence in India at that time, however. Hindu nationalism posed a threat to Nehru and Gandhi's vision both from within and outside of the INC. In the INC, certain figures, such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, had called for the creation of "a mighty Hindu nation" and pined for the pre-Islamic era during which India was a "self-contained country."[38] Beyond the INC, groups like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha promoted an explicitly anti-Muslim

[37] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004), 463.
[38] Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "Yearning for a Hindu Nation," in *Indian Nationalism: The Essential Writings*, ed. S. Irfan Habib (New Delhi: Aleph, 2017), 48.

agenda. Hindu nationalists, such as prominent Hindu nationalist ideologue Vinayak Savarkar, claimed that those who had holy lands outside of India (that is, Muslims and Christians), were potential fifth columns because their loyalties, the argument went, could not fully lie with India.[39] Other Hindu nationalists, like M.S. Golwalkar, called for Muslims to convert to Hinduism and adopt "Hindu culture and language" or accept subjugation to a Hindu majoritarian state in which they would not be equal citizens.[40] The RSS also engaged in anti-Muslim militancy in the hopes of sparking religious violence that would pit the Hindu majority against the Muslim minority.[41] Fortunately, Hindu nationalists remained side-lined and were soundly defeated in the few elections that were held before independence. However, they did contribute to rising Hindu-Muslim violence as the British prepared to leave India. The assassination of Gandhi only months after independence by a former RSS member who deemed the Mahatma too sympathetic to Muslims gave now-Prime Minister Nehru an opportunity to outlaw the RSS.[42] While Gandhi's death temporarily strengthened Nehru and his vision for India, the conflict between Hindu nationalism and Nehruvian nationalism would carry on into the post-independence period.

On the other end of the spectrum, a growing number of Muslims were embracing two-nation theory, which claims that the Hindus and Muslims of the Indian subcontinent are two distinct nations and should each have independent states. Throughout the Second World War, increasing calls were made for the separation of Muslim-majority regions to form an independent state, led by the All-India Muslim League, which had become the most powerful opponent of the INC. After a series of communal clashes spurred on by the Muslim League that threatened to render India ungovernable and provoke a civil war, the INC reluctantly

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[39] Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 2.
[40] M.S. Golwalkar, *We, or Our Nation Defined* (Nagpur: Bharat Prakashan, 1947), 55-6.
[41] Ibid., 73.
[42] Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 229.

acquiesced to partition of the subcontinent.[43] Between one and two million people died in violence resulting from riots and massacres during partition and the ensuing flood of refugees going in both directions, with many Muslims trying to reach Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs fleeing to India.[44] The successful secession of Muslim-majority regions and the birth of Pakistan puts an asterisk above the INC's success in leading India to independence.

Nevertheless, it is important to appreciate what the INC did accomplish. By 1947, the idea of an Indian nation had been etched into the consciousness of citizens of the new Indian state through collective participation in the independence movement. While the independence movement did draw strength from grievances that were often local or economic, it channeled frustration into a movement that explicitly advanced the interests of an Indian nation that was defined as pluralistic and egalitarian. In so doing, the independence movement had successfully created an Indian national consciousness that crossed ethnic/religious cleavages and, crucially, did not conflict with Indians' other various religious or ethnic identities, but complemented them.[45]

Lebanon until 1943: A contested and hollow nation

Modern Lebanon was born from sectarian conflict. In May 1860, Maronite Catholic[46] peasants revolted against Druze[47] feudal lords in the southern portion of Mount Lebanon. Although the Maronites were far more numerous than the Druze, they were routed by the stronger Druze forces and massacred in the thousands.[48] Eager to expand its influence in the Middle East and position itself as a defender of Catholics and Christians more generally in the

[43] Hajari, 106-7.
[44] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 48.
[45] Tudor, 85.
[46] The Maronites, a sect of Christians found only in Mount Lebanon and its environs, formally established ties with the Catholic Church in Rome during the Crusades, although their religious practices do reflect aspects of Eastern Christianity.
[47] The Druze are a gnostic religious community that splintered away from Shi'a Islam several centuries before and that historically wielded great economic and political power in Mount Lebanon, especially in the area located to the southeast of Beirut known as the Chouf.
[48] Harris, 158.

Ottoman Empire, France intervened militarily to put an end to the conflict and forced the Ottoman Empire, which had become increasingly feeble, to reconsider the political status of Mount Lebanon. The result was the creation of a semi-autonomous region (*mutasarrifiya*) in Mount Lebanon. Notably, the *mutasarrifiya* did not include major (and Muslim-majority) coastal port cities like Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli. Seeking to establish an equilibrium between the various sects living in Mount Lebanon, the *mutasarrifiya* introduced a system known as confessionalism—the apportionment of government positions to members of various religious communities to ensure equitable representation and give smaller groups a stake in the preservation of the system. Under the *mutasarrifiya*, the Ottoman-appointed governor was advised by a council comprised of four Maronites, three Druze, two Greek Orthodox, one Greek Catholic, one Sunni, and one Shi'a. [49] Thus, starting from the very inception of modern Lebanon as a political entity, sectarian cleavages were recognised not only as very salient but as likely to cause conflict, and a system of fixed proportional representation was put in place to regulate sectarian tensions.

Lebanists, who were (mainly Christian) thinkers arguing in favour of an independent Lebanon, began to articulate several different historical narratives to justify the existence of a Lebanese nation. In one popular version that gained traction in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the French mandate claimed that Lebanon was often a refuge for minorities (including all of the Christian factions, the Druze, and the Shi'a) seeking refuge in the overwhelmingly Sunni Levant. This vision became popular even though successive Sunni empires had no difficulties in asserting their control over Mount Lebanon and it was more supported by the geographic concentration of minority communities in the mountains of Lebanon than any historical evidence of Sunni persecution.[50] In other nationalist imaginings,

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[49] Carol Hakim, *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea: 1840-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 289.
[50] Michel Touma, "Le système confessionnel au Liban : entre réalité historique et projet chimérique," *Les Cahiers de l'Orient* 112, no. 4 (2013): 27.

the semi-autonomous 1667-1841 Mount Lebanon *iltizam* (tax concession) controlled first by the Druze Ma'an family and later the Chehabs, a Sunni family that eventually converted to Maronite Catholicism, was transformed into a quasi-independent "emirate" and proto-state for modern Lebanon, despite the complete lack of evidence for a Lebanese national consciousness at that time.[51] Many Lebanists went further back in time, claiming that Lebanon was, in fact, the successor of the Phoenician merchant city-states that lined Lebanon's coast in classical antiquity. In this fanciful history, when the coasts were Arabised after the Islamic conquests, the essence of Phoenicia withdrew into Mount Lebanon, remained dormant for centuries, and re-emerged as a modern Lebanon that would restore the Phoenicians' Mediterranean outlook and turn its back on the Syrian interior. [52] Many Lebanese Christians began claiming that modern Lebanese were ethnically Phoenician instead of Arab, despite speaking the same dialect of Arabic as their Muslim compatriots. The fact that Lebanese Christians spoke a version of Arabic descended from the Arabic of the Qur'an became a sensitive issue for them, and some Christians adopted French as their first language instead of Arabic to emphasise their desire to be a part of the Christian West instead of the Arab-Islamic Middle East.[53]

The Phoenician narrative was greeted with derision by Muslims, who (quite rightly) saw in a Phoenician identity an attempt to detach Lebanon from the Arab and Islamic worlds and to link it to the Christian West. The very idea of Lebanon, they argued, was based on distortion and fabrication of history and a deliberate denial on the part of Christians of their Arab cultural and linguistic ties. Maronite Lebanists, however, were not the only group playing fast and loose with historical reality to create a narrative beneficial to their sect. Many

[51] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 169.
[52] Ibid., 171.
[53] Sandra Mackey, *Lebanon: A House Divided* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 43.

Syrian nationalists,[54] including the founder of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Antoun Sa'adeh, were Greek Orthodox. For opponents of Syrian nationalism, Greek Orthodox advocacy for a greater Syria was not coincidental. A greater Syria would have the advantage of uniting the Greek Orthodox, who are more numerous than Maronites in the Levant as a whole but geographically dispersed. A larger Syrian state with a nominally secular identity would maximise Greek Orthodox influence while diluting the salience of the religious identity of the Sunni majority with a cultural-regional Levantine identity. It thus not surprising that many historians critical of Syrian nationalism, such as Kamal Salibi, say that Syrian nationalism's secular façade masks a form of "Greek Orthodox particularism."[55] Similarly, although some major Arab nationalist thinkers, such as Michel Aflaq, were Christians, Christian Lebanists accused Sunni Arab nationalists of hiding a sectarian plan to leave the Middle Easts' minorities at the mercy of the region's overwhelming Sunni majority in any large Arab state. Indeed, despite their claims to be secularists seeking unity for a linguistically-defined Arab nation, many Sunni Arab nationalists were hiding sectarian motives under a veneer of linguistic nationalism.[56]

The First World War brought about the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which had unwisely aligned itself with Germany and Austria-Hungary. At the same time, the Maronites' ally, France, emerged victorious and occupied what is now Syria and Lebanon. Instead of a small autonomous region within the Ottoman Empire, Maronites began looking at expanding Lebanon with French help. Led by the head of the Maronite Church, Patriarch al-Huwayyik,

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[54] Syrian nationalism favours the merger of the states of the Levant—Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine—into a single state based on shared cultural, linguistic, and historical heritage.

[55] Salibi, 55.

[56] Once Riad el-Solh—a Sunni politician and Arab nationalist from the port city of Tripoli who became Lebanon's first post-independence prime minister—had accepted the Lebanese state and the confessional apportionment of posts for strategic reasons during the French mandate, he began speaking of Muslims as another constituent group within Lebanon, and talked about demanding more posts for Sunnis to "protect *our* interests that others have not treated considerately." (« …afin de sauvegarder nos intérêts que les autres n'ont pas ménagés. ») Quoted in Kais Firro, *Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the State under the Mandate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 154.

many prominent Maronites successfully pressed France to expand the borders of the *mutasarrifiya* to include ports and interior lands left out of the original autonomous region. The result was that whereas Christians were an 80% majority in the *mutasarrifiya* (Maronites alone were 58%), in an expanded "Greater Lebanon", they were only 55% of the population (Maronites were still the largest single group, but only with a mere 33% of the population).[57] The annexed Muslim-majority areas included the port cities of Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli, as well as the fertile Beqaa Valley. The incorporation of these regions would make Lebanon a more viable state—the *mutasarrifiya* lacked a major port city and had little agricultural land—at the expense of creating new Lebanese citizens who rejected the very idea of Lebanon.

The French-created Greater Lebanon was legitimised internationally by the League of Nations' decision to award France a mandate for Lebanon and Syria in 1923. Lebanon was now on track to be permanently separated from the rest of Syria and become an independent state at the end of the mandate period—a *fait accompli* that angered Arab nationalists who wanted to integrate Arabic-speaking Lebanon into a larger Arab state. Most of the Muslims drawn unwillingly into the borders of an expanded Lebanon denounced an independent Greater Lebanon as a naked power grab on the part of Maronites with no historical legitimacy.[58]

In 1926, Lebanon adopted a constitution, which still forms the basis for Lebanon's present political system. The constitution is a contradictory document that calls for a secular state while enshrining sectarianism. Many parts of the constitution are what one would expect from a secular democracy, with guarantees of complete equality before the law, freedom of expression and belief, and equal civil and political rights. Yet the 1926 constitution also requires an equitable representation of all communities in state institutions—effectively enshrining political confessionalism—without detailing a specific apportionment of positions.

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[57] Harris, 178.
[58] Salibi, 32.

Since most Muslims still rejected the existence of Lebanon as a state and a nation, many Christians saw promising them a share of power as necessary to convince Muslims to accept an independent Lebanon instead of undermining it.[59] Confessionalism, then, was a tool used to obtain buy-in from minorities that did not necessarily have any loyalty to the state.

One of Lebanism's most eloquent proponents, the politician and journalist Michel Chiha, wrote in defence of confessionalism, asserting that

> Confessionalism is a guarantee of equitable political and social representation for associated confessional minorities… *Lebanon is made of associated confessional minorities*… it has always been a refuge for the liberty of conscience. This has been possible due to the geographical situation of Lebanon, a mountainous country where self-defence has always been possible… Why would we want to brutally modify what successive centuries have created? Despite many errors and abuses, it is confessionalism that taught Lebanon the value of tolerance.[60]

Chiha conceived of Lebanon as a mosaic of minority communities that would tolerate each other and let each other live freely and in peace because of a common experience of being minorities clinging onto their faiths in an overwhelmingly Sunni region under successive Sunni empires, an idea based in the "refuge for minorities" previously discussed.

Yet a coalition of "associated confessional minorities" does not constitute a nation. Chiha's narrative only serves to highlight the fact that Lebanon could only survive through a convergence of interests among various religious communities that, although geographically and culturally proximate, considered themselves distinct from one another. There was no imagined Lebanese nation, no deeply-felt Lebanese national sentiment waiting to be realised in the form of a state after independence. To the extent that imagined communities did exist in

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[59] Sam Dalla, "La constitutionnalisation du confessionalisme. 'De l'exemple libanais,'" *Revue française de droit constitutionnel* 103, no. 3 (2015): e9.

[60] Michel Chiha, *Politique intérieure* (Beirut: Éditions du Trident, 1964), 303-5.
"Le confessionnalisme est la garantie d'une représentation politique et sociale équitable pour des minorités confessionnelles associées (…) Le Liban est fait de minorités confessionnelles associées (...) Il a toujours été le refuge de la liberté de conscience. Cela a été possible à cause de la situation géographique du Liban, pays de montagne où il a toujours été possible de se défendre (...) Pourquoi vouloir modifier brutalement ce que les siècles ont fait? Malgré beaucoup d'erreurs et d'abus, c'est le confessionnalisme qui a enseigné au Liban la tolérance."

Lebanon, they were not coterminous with the borders of the Lebanese state. They either were restricted to one's religious community within Lebanon or extended past Lebanon's borders to all of Greater Syria or the Arabic-speaking world. Lebanon was thus from the beginning a nation of fragments with little glue holding them together instead of a cohesive nation.

As the Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi acerbically notes, religious sects in Lebanon function as tribes, "and the game that came to be played between them was a tribal game. At an overt level, the game was a contest between different concepts of nationality for the country. At the covert level, tribal rivalries and jealousies were mainly involved."[61] In this tribal game, building a winning coalition required reconciling different—and mutually contradictory—nationalisms when, in fragmented society without a clear majority group, no one sect was strong enough to impose its own national vision on other communities. At the level of the state, it also meant working out a power-sharing agreement in order to give all sides a stake in the system—an approach that echoes Lijphart's consociationalism.

The Lebanese independence movement, far from creating a national consciousness through mass mobilisation and a coherent ideological vision, was a more haphazard affair orchestrated by a small group of wealthy politicians and businessmen. In 1935, the French colonial government awarded a tobacco monopoly to a French company, which posed a mortal threat to the many Maronite tobacco farmers. Additionally, it irritated the Maronite Church, which had large landholdings used for tobacco cultivation. Seeing an opportunity to drive a wedge between the Maronite business elite and France, Riad el-Solh, a prominent Sunni politician from Tripoli allied with a leading Maronite politician, Bechara el-Khoury, to oust the French high commissioner who had approved the monopoly. In addition to bringing politicians together from across sectarian lines, the monopoly also sparked massive protests across Lebanon that momentarily united Lebanese regardless of sect against the British. It is

[61] Salibi, 55.

for this reason that the tobacco monopoly protests are considered a defining moment of Lebanese unity in Lebanese historiography.[62]

The tobacco monopoly highlighted divisions between Maronite politicians like Khoury, who prioritised a propitious environment for Maronite businesses above the protection afforded to Maronites by France, and his *bête noire*, Émile Eddé, who sought to maintain close ties with France.[63] While both Eddé and Khoury wanted to see a Maronite-dominated Lebanon, they disagreed about how this goal could best be accomplished. Khoury favoured a *Grand Liban*, that is, a Greater Lebanon with a narrow Christian majority but more ports and agricultural land, while Eddé preferred a smaller *Petit Liban* that would jettison all of the lands added to the original *mutasarrifiya* with the exception of Beirut. While Eddé slowly became reconciled to the idea of a *Grand Liban*, he was pushing for the return of the Sunni-majority northern port city of Tripoli into the early 1930s.[64] Crucially, the tobacco monopoly brought about a change in tone from some leading figures who had made common cause with Muslims during the protests. Khoury and Maronite Patriarch Antoine Arida both began to speak more favourably about the idea that Lebanon is part of a larger Arab cultural sphere.[65] Khoury went so far as to say he wanted Arabic to be Lebanon's "national language," which broke with the Gallicisation of other Maronites who were trying to cut their ties with a language inextricably linked to Islam.[66]

Solh saw in the gap between Khoury and Eddé—and between many Maronites and France—a chance to eject France from Lebanon, even at the price of acquiescing to an independent Lebanon in its 1920 borders, something that went against his Arab nationalism.[67] A pragmatist, he had not given up on the idea of Lebanon being subsumed into a larger Arab

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[62] Meir Zamir, *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood, 1926-1939* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 166.
[63] Ibid., 159.
[64] Ibid., 107.
[65] Firro, 138.
[66] Ibid., 147.
[67] Zamir, 170.

state, but simply thought that Arab nationalism would best be served by a tactical rapprochement between Muslim Arab nationalists and Christian Lebanese nationalists to expel France from Lebanon. Additionally, a *Grand Liban* with a narrow Christian majority was far preferable to an overwhelmingly Christian *Petit Liban* supported by France which would forever be lost to the cause of Arabism. As Kazim el-Solh, a cousin of Riad, once remarked, Lebanon as a "political concept" did no long-term damage to the pan-Arab "national concept." Compromise with Christians would achieve the important first step of forcing France out of Lebanon and allow Arab nationalists to wait for a more opportune time to pursue Arab unity.[68]

In 1943, against the backdrop of the Free French promising Lebanon independence in the near future, Khoury and Solh once more joined forces for strategic purposes. With a new president to be elected by parliament in September after parliamentary elections in August, Khoury was looking for allies to secure the country's highest office for himself. He could not count on the support of deputies from the Christian heartland in Mount Lebanon, where his allies had garnered less support than Eddé's allies during the parliamentary elections.[69] Khoury and Solh came to a comprehensive, although unwritten and hence uncodified, agreement that became known as the National Pact (*al-mithaq al-watani*) that became the basis for Christian-Muslim cooperation in post-independence Lebanon—a topic to which we will return in the next section. More immediately, however, the National Pact paved the way for Khoury to win the presidential election on 21 September 1943. Khoury immediately appointed Solh as prime minister.[70] Khoury and Solh demanded the French delegate-general turn over control of customs, railways, and ports to Lebanese forces and moved to delete provisions giving the French mandatory authorities from intervening in Lebanese politics

[68] Firro, 144.
[69] Raghid El-Solh, *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2004), 203.
[70] Harris, 197.

from the constitution. The delegate-general responded by arresting both men and several other leading politicians and appointing Eddé as acting president. This sparked massive protests, and the British—on whom the Free French authorities were dependent, as France was still under Nazi occupation—threatened to take control themselves unless the French relented. The French misread the situation, and instead of using Eddé to legitimate their actions, they ended up tarnishing Eddé while Maronites and Sunnis rallied together against the French. On 21 November, Khoury and Solh were released and restored to their positions. Although French troops would only fully withdraw in 1946, Lebanon effectively became independent in November 1943.

On the surface, the compromise between Khoury and Solh—Christian acceptance of an Arab-oriented Lebanon in exchange for Muslim recognition of Lebanese independence—seemed to augur well for the future stability of Lebanon. Yet the rapprochement was superficial. As previously noted, Khoury and Eddé both sought to establish a Maronite-dominated state and did not care for Arab nationalism. Their only disagreement was on how large Lebanon should be and whether French external support or bringing in Sunnis as junior partners in the state was the most effective way to achieve that aim. Similarly, the strategic acceptance of Lebanon by Solh and other Sunni Arab nationalist politicians was not a renunciation of their eventual goal to dissolve Lebanon into a larger Arab (and Sunni-majority) state. In the short run, they had achieved their goal of turning the Maronites against their erstwhile French allies. Now all they had to do was wait for an opportune moment as the tide of Arab nationalism began to rise and sweep across the region. Lebanon might have achieved independence based on Christian-Muslim cooperation, but there was fundamentally no “we-feeling” holding them together. Lebanon existed as a state, but it did not exist as a nation.

Conclusion: Vastly different foundations

By the time Lebanon and India reached independence and became states, their state identities were framed in terms of pluralism. Although we are not yet, before independence, at the point where we can analyse elements of state-nation theory such as state policy, institutions, and the landscape of political parties, there are important observations to be made in the category of pre-existing conditions and citizen orientation.

In a state-nation, "there is attachment to more than one cultural civilizational tradition within the existing boundaries. However, these attachments do not preclude identification with a common state…[and] many citizens have multiple but complementary identities."[71] In India, this was already the case. Through the Indian independence movement, the INC had brought linguistic groups as disparate as Punjabis, Tamils, and Bengalis together and made them feel that they had a stake in the Indian nation. Crucially, however, their ethnolinguistic identity served to complement loyalty to the Indian nation and thus to the Indian state that the INC was inheriting from the British. Although the creation of Pakistan represented an enormous failure for the INC's vision, figures like Nehru and Gandhi stressed that Muslims had a place in India, and a large proportion of Muslims chose to remain behind in India even after partition. Nehru stressed that Muslims were not only fully Indians but had made immense contributions to Indian culture and society. The same could be said of India's myriad ethnolinguistic groups, each of which was, in Nehru's eyes, unique while forming an inextricable part of the larger Indian nation. Congress had even recognised this in its organisational structure by organising the party internally along linguistic lines, thus allowing Indians to embrace their regional ethnolinguistic identity while simultaneously participating in the political life of the larger Indian nation. Through the common experience of struggle against the British which forged a national consciousness, along with the pluralistic

[71] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, "Rise," 50.

nationalism of Nehru and the INC, India managed to build a sense of national unity that was based on a layering of identities that complemented each other rather than contradicting each other.

In Lebanon, on the other hand, the loyalty of many Lebanese citizens to Arab nationalism or Syrian nationalism precluded them from identifying with the Lebanese state or even viewing its existence as legitimate. And while many Muslims and Arab nationalists ended up accepting the Lebanese state—which was a *fait accompli* in any case—this did not mean that they accepted and internalised the idea of a Lebanese nation. Additionally, the creation of Lebanon was blatantly a French-facilitated power grab on the part of Maronites to absorb as much economically lucrative territory as possible while ensuring Lebanon had a Christian majority, enabling them to maximise their political and economic power. The Maronites were not alone in this game, however, as members of other religious communities—such as the Sunnis and the Greek Orthodox—were also pushing national visions (Syrian/Levantine nationalism, Arab nationalism) that would maximise economic and political power of their sect. The only difference is that the Maronites got their way because of a powerful foreign sponsor. Already, a trend which would become a defining feature of post-independence Lebanese politics was becoming clear: an incapacity or unwillingness to think beyond the narrow interests of one's own religious community. Such a reality was tacitly conceded by Chiha when he spoke of Lebanon as being made up of "associated confessional minorities." The word "associated" implies that while they had agreed to cooperate, they did not fundamentally see themselves as members of the same community, with a common identity and shared destiny. In a sense, then, the only deeply ingrained imagined communities in Lebanon were religious communities, and one's religious affiliation acted as a filter that largely determined how one perceived the legitimacy of the Lebanese state and the idea of a Lebanese nation. The idea of Lebanon as a state and as a nation was

thus compromised from the moment of its inception, as large numbers of Lebanese citizens viewed Lebanon as little more than an illegitimate Maronite ploy that would never have succeeded were it not for the Maronites' collaboration with French colonialism.

Lebanon also lacked a party like the INC, a shared experience to forge a national consciousness like the various pan-India movements against the British Raj, and a truly national figure like Gandhi to lead it to independence. Instead, the alliance between Lebanon's minorities that ultimately expelled France from Lebanon was an alliance of convenience between elites: Sunni elites wanting European withdrawal from Lebanon and the Middle East and Maronite elites looking for economic freedom and opportunities in a way that was not possible under French rule. There was thus no shared ideological vision guiding Lebanon's leaders at independence, nor did they have a desire to look out for the interests of all Lebanese citizens instead of what materially benefited their sect. While India's constituent communities had a sense of national unity and common purpose, such was not at all the case in Lebanon. This difference explains why from the very moment of independence, India—despite being far larger and far more diverse than Lebanon—was better positioned to build and consolidate a democratic state-nation.

Part II: Building a State, Building a Nation: Post-Independence Trajectories

India 1947-1970: State-nation building and democratic consolidation

India's democratic success is one of the enduring mysteries of political science. In many respects, India's democratic survival was not at all likely given the experiences of other countries with similar conditions. Indeed, in the other ethnolinguistically and religiously diverse states established in the wake of British withdrawal from South Asia, fragmentation and democratic collapse was the norm, rather than the exception. Pakistan's two wings split apart after a bloody civil war in 1971 that followed Pakistan's first general elections, which

were defined by ethnolinguistic tensions between Pakistan's two wings.[72] Sri Lanka's own civil war, while not resulting in fragmentation due to the Sri Lankan military's brutal crushing of the Tamil secessionist movement in the north of the island, showed the dangers of deep ethnolinguistic and religious cleavages that can become political cleavages as well. While avoiding the military coups that plagued Pakistan, Sri Lanka demonstrated how even a nominally democratic system of government can produce an illiberal outcome, in this case with the country's Sinhalese majority marginalising the Tamil minority.[73] Not only did India avoid the civil wars that tore its neighbours apart, but it managed to do so as a liberal democracy.

India's democratic success after independence defied the common trend of democracy failing in impoverished, underdeveloped countries. Indeed, India is a glaring exception to the theories of political scientists including Adam Przeworski et al., who predict low levels of democratic survival in poor countries,[74] Barrington Moore, who claims that democracy is dependent on industrialisation and a large bourgeoisie,[75] and Seymour Lipset, who sees democracy as the result of development under authoritarianism.[76] India's democratic experiment, then, defied odds that went far beyond the heterogeneity of its population.

India's democratic consolidation is inextricable from its success as a state nation. Already, we have seen that India came into independence with unique advantages: a broad-based national party with appeal across religious and ethnolinguistic divides, as well as among the elite and the masses, a shared national experience in resisting British colonial rule,

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[72] Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 6-8.
[73] Gordon Weiss, *The Cage: The Fight for Sri Lanka and the Last Days of the Tamil Tigers* (New York: Bellevue Literary Press, 2012), xxiv-v.
[74] Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Chiebub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 79, 87.
[75] Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 314.
[76] Seymour Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 83-4.

and a charismatic leader that held together the party's broad coalition. Yet the advantages that India enjoyed at independence could easily have been squandered. As Anderson reminds us, nations are not objective entities—they are entirely subjective, imagined communities that exist so long as people believe that they exist, and nothing guaranteed that Indians would continue to *feel* Indian after independence. India had managed to unite against a colonial power that had now left, and behind a man who died months after independence. What was to prevent the coalition Gandhi had built from splintering apart, and the idea of a united India with it?

Maintaining the unity of India was perhaps the most vexing challenge facing India's first generation of post-independence leaders. Nevertheless, the Indian state managed to solidify the sense of Indian nationhood established before independence through a series of policy choices that turned India into a state-nation. We will first look at these choices in the context of religion and caste during the drafting of the Indian constitution before turning our attention to the thorny question of national language and state reorganisation, which remained contentious long after the constitution was in place.

Religion, caste, and the drafting of the Indian constitution

Perhaps nowhere were these choices more critical than in the crafting of India's constitution. Constitutions are, at their core, technical documents that serve as the legal basis of a political entity, outlining rights, duties, and the internal structures of a state. Yet constitutions also fill a second, equally vital role as a statement of the values and ideals of the people that the state claims to represent. India's constitution enshrined in the structure of the Indian state the liberal, pluralistic, and democratic values that Nehru saw as inherent to the Indian nation. It was a fulfilment in the concrete power of the state of the abstract visions of Nehruvian nationalism. Between December 1946 and December 1949, the Indian Constituent

Assembly set about drafting a constitution that recognised the diversity of India while seeking to preserve the national unity created during the independence movement.

The process of writing the Indian constitution was one that was defined more by compromise and collaboration rather than narrow majoritarianism, in keeping with the ethos of the INC, which held the vast majority of seats in the assembly. The chairman of the drafting committee, the Dalit rights advocate and politician B.R. Ambedkar, was not a member of the INC and was even an outspoken critic of Gandhi. The constitution that emerged at the end of 1949 granted protections, rights, and a degree of autonomy for India's ethnolinguistic and religious minorities while seeking to incorporate Dalits, who had long been ostracised under India's caste system, into the Indian nation.

Unlike Gandhi, who rejected the modern state entirely, Nehru and other INC leaders saw participation in the Indian state as a way of solidifying the unity of India. As Khilnani observes, the state that came into being after 1947 was designed based on a "model shaped by Nehru's understanding of the Indian past: a model committed to protecting cultural and religious difference rather than imposing a uniform 'Indianness'."[77] Varshney arrives at a similar conclusion, noting that the values of pluralism and tolerance that Nehru derived from his reading of Indian history became "the implicit idiom of Nehruvian politics," guiding India's founding generation of political leaders as they transformed the abstract Indian nation into the concrete institutions of the state.[78]

In practice, this meant that while India was to be a parliamentary democracy where the majority ruled, majoritarianism was ruled out and politicians were expected to govern in the interests of all Indians. In one of his most famous speeches before the constituent assembly, the Objectives Resolution, noting the absence of Muslim League members who were

[77] Khilnani, 167.
[78] Ashutosh Varshney, *Battles Half Won: India's Improbable Democracy* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 2013), 114.

boycotting the assembly while agitating for the creation of Pakistan during the first year of the assembly's existence, Nehru affirmed that

> there is a duty cast upon us and that is to bear the absentees in mind, to remember always that we are here not to function for one party or one group, but always to think of India as a whole and always to think of the welfare of the four hundred millions that comprise India…the time has come when we should, so far as we are capable of it, rise above our ordinary selves and party disputes and think of the great problem before us in the widest and most tolerant and most effective manner so that whatever we may produce should be worthy of India as a whole and should be such that the world should recognise that we have functioned, as we should have functioned, in this high adventure.[79]

Nehru's speech underscores his belief that while forming a government only requires a simple majority of seats in parliament, "a government so elected had to be responsible for the security and rights of all, especially those of the minorities," as Varshney notes.[80] This sentiment was echoed by his more conservative deputy prime minister, Vallabhbhai Patel, who encouraged Muslims in the constituent "it will be a misfortune, to this country if the majority does not realise its own responsibility."[81]

Nehruvian politics was thus a rejection of majoritarianism from the beginning, calling on politicians to look out for the interests of all Indians, not simply those with whom they shared the same ethnic, religious, or political affiliations. Nehru also argued that conciliation and compromise were essential to the well-being of India as a state and as a nation:

> I should like the House to consider that we are on the eve of revolutionary changes, revolutionary in every sense of the word…Therefore, let us not trouble ourselves too much about the petty details of what we do, those details will not survive for long, if they are achieved in conflict. What we achieve in unanimity, what we achieve by cooperation is likely to survive. What we gain here and there by conflict and by overbearing manners and by threats will not survive for long.[82]

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[79] *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. 2 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1950), 59-61.
[80] Varshney, *Battles Half Won*, 28.
[81] CAD, Vol. 8, 351.
[82] CAD, Vol. 2, 323.

Nehru's recognition that the viability of India's unprecedented political experiment depended on including those who were in the minority because, besides the fact that pluralism and inclusiveness are inherently good, minorities could threaten the unity of India, even if they had no chance of controlling it. As Nehru wrote in a private letter to a chief minister several years later, "a more insidious form of nationalism is the narrowness of mind that it develops within a country, when a majority thinks itself as the entire nation and in its attempt to absorb the minority actually separates them even more. We, in India, have to be particularly careful of this…We have a tendency to fall into separate groups and to forget the larger unity."[83] Ambedkar echoed these statements, noting in his last speech before the constituent assembly that "political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it…liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life…without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many…[and] without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things."[84] The ultimate success of India's democratic experiment thus depended on its ability to create legal equality as well as a sense that all citizens belonged equally to the larger Indian national community.

This realisation helps why the final constitution—written by an assembly with an overwhelming majority of Hindus who were still bitter from the loss of Pakistan—enshrined basic rights and freedoms, among them the right of all religious groups to openly practice their religions. Interestingly, the only instance in which the constitution interferes with internal religious affairs does not involve India's Muslim minority, but rather its Hindu majority. The constitution authorises the state to allow all Hindus—including previously excluded Dalits—to enter Hindu religious institutions.[85] Article 26 allows religious communities to manage their own internal religious affairs, including matters of inheritance

[83] Ramachandra Guha, *Makers of Modern India* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 307.
[84] CAD, Vol. 11, 979.
[85] Constitution of India, art. 25.

and marriage explain. Article 44, meanwhile, calls for the establishment of a secular civil code, although India has yet to make good on that commitment.[86] The constitution's preamble explicitly establishes the Indian state's secularism while deliberately invoking the French republican motto of "liberty, equality, fraternity."[87] The constitution bans all discrimination, be it based on religion, caste, or gender and establishes the equality of all Indian citizens before the law.[88]

How to achieve such equality, however, was a vexing challenge. In an echo of what had happened with the establishment of Lebanese confessionalism, members of many minority groups, including Muslims and Dalits, demanded guaranteed reservations in legislatures and state institutions, as well as separate electorates in elections. The question of reservations was ultimately one of balancing the simultaneous need to promote social and economic justice and foster national unity. While reservations and separate electorates would have guaranteed minority representations, they would also have meant that politicians would only have to appeal to members of their own communities, rather than build coalitions across religious and caste divisions. Although most of the INC rejected the idea of separate electorates as contrary to the goal of creating Indian unity, many Muslims and Dalits viewed reservations as necessary to avoid oppression by caste Hindus. The creation of Pakistan resolved this question regarding Muslims as the Muslim League, which had pushed for reservations and separate electorates, disappeared from the Indian political scene. As Varshney notes, partition, while painful for the India and the INC, effectively removed the possibility that India would become a consociational democracy, effectively guaranteeing that India would have a liberal democratic regime based on secular citizenship.[89] The Muslim representatives who remained in the constituent assembly after partition were largely opposed

[86] Ibid., art. 26, 44.
[87] Ibid., Preamble.
[88] Ibid., art. 14, 15
[89] Varshney, *Battles Half Won*, 50.

to reservations and separate electorates. The only female Muslim assembly member, Begum Aizaz Rasul, dismissed them as "absolutely meaningless" and "a self-destructive weapon which separates the minorities from the majority for all time." In a secular India which promised the equality of all citizens before the law without distinction, the interests of Hindus and Muslims would be the same and "the safety of the Muslims lies in intelligently playing their part and mixing themselves with the Hindus in public affairs."[90] The idea of reservations was also rejected for women.

Only two groups, Dalits and Adivasis,[91] received reservations proportionate to their size of the population in parliament and state legislative assemblies. Nevertheless, the reserved seats were not elected by separate electorates but rather by all residents of a reserved constituency. Hence, Dalits and Adivasis were guaranteed representation while having to compete for votes from those outside their communities.[92] It was an imperfect solution, but it balanced the need to force politicians to build broad coalitions while also starting to make amends for millennia of discrimination. Furthermore, Adivasis and Dalits received guaranteed posts in the civil service, even if this meant using lower standards to hire them.[93] While eminently justifiable given the state's commitment to promote social justice for all, the system of reservations in governmental institutions has had a deleterious effect on Indian unity. Reservations have served to promote a form of caste-based identity politics in which parties have, to a certain degree, become vehicles for various caste groups to push for reservations for their own communities. The state, then, has become a metaphorical pie, with castes fighting over the size of their slice rather than focusing on expanding the pie. Although they have significantly helped previously oppressed groups, reservations have accentuated the salience

[90] CAD, Vol. 8, 296-7.
[91] Adivasis are members of indigenous tribes who, like Dalits, had also long faced social and economic discrimination.
[92] Constitution of India, art. 330, 332.
[93] Ibid., art. 335

of caste identities, ironically reducing inequality while perpetuating the sense of difference upon which that inequality was based.[94]

The vexing question of language and linguistic states

Perhaps the most challenging question facing India's leaders was the question of national language. Most nationalisms, as Anderson points out, draw their strength from uniting members of a given linguistic community.[95] It is in part because of the presumption that language was the base of the political communities that John Stuart Mill, echoing Rousseau's concerns about the problem of creating a "general will" in a fragmented society, claimed that democracy would be unfeasible in a linguistically diverse society. Mill wrote that "free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feelings, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative institutions cannot exist."[96] As Stepan, Linz, and Yadav point out, India's success in holding together a linguistically diverse society—in defiance of Mill's prediction—is one of its most remarkable achievements and at the core of its claim to be a state-nation.[97]

Mill's theory, however, has been proven right more than it has been proven wrong historically. Europe, for instance, is largely democratic today, but its states have largely been linguistically homogenised through fragmentation and war. That India did not follow this path invites us to look at how India managed to avoid linguistic fragmentation.

There were many Indians—mostly from India's 30% Hindi-speaking plurality[98]—who believed that, like European nationalists, a nation could not exist or survive without a

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[94] Ashwini Deshpande, "Despite the Rhetoric, the 10% Reservation Bill Does Not Aim for a Caste-Free System," The Wire, 10 January 2019.
[95] Anderson, 133-4.
[96] John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, vol. 19, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 547.
[97] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 40.
[98] This figure is from Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 40.

common language. In this vein, they argued for the imposition of Hindi as India's official language. R.V. Dhulekar, a Hindi chauvinist in the constituent assembly from the United Provinces (today Uttar Pradesh), argued that

> people who do not know Hindustani[99] have no right to stay in India. People who are present in this House to fashion a constitution for India and do not know Hindustani are not worthy to be members of this Assembly. They had better leave…As an Indian I appeal that we, who are out to win freedom for our country and are fighting for it should think and speak in our own language…As an Indian I feel that the proceedings of the House should be conducted in Hindustani.[100]

It does not require much imagination to imagine how offensive these ideas were to the majority of Indians who did not speak Hindi as their mother tongue. Although figures like Dhulekar were a minority, most of the INC leadership favoured the establishment of Hindustani—a blend of Hindi and Urdu[101]—as India's national language in the interests of promoting national unity, including Nehru and Gandhi.[102] Although the INC's promotion of Hindustani demonstrated the INC's commitment to make Hindus and Muslims feel equally welcome in India, they failed to realise the backlash that would come from areas of the country where Hindi and Urdu were not the native language. In the end, however, the secession of Pakistan undermined the case for Hindustani and the centre of the debate moved to Hindi by itself.[103] T.T. Krishnamachari, a Tamil-speaking member of the constituent assembly from Madras, a region where Hindi was effectively a foreign language, expressed the views of South India on the idea of Hindi as India's sole national language, remarking that

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[99] Hindi is one of two registers of Hindustani, the other being Urdu. Whereas Hindi is written in the Devanagari script and has a lexicon based more on Sanskrit and is consequently more associated with Hindus, Urdu, the lingua franca of North Indian Muslims, is written in a modified Arabic script and has more lexical borrowings from Persian and Arabic.
[100] CAD, Vol. 1, 26-7.
[101] From a linguistic point of view, Hindi and Urdu are more accurately described as two registers of the Hindustani language. They share a common grammar and are generally mutually intelligible, especially when discussing non-academic topics. The only differences are that Urdu borrows more from Arabic and Persian in its literary and academic registers, while Hindi borrows from Sanskrit, and that Urdu uses a modified Arabic script and Hindi uses the Devanagari script of Sanskrit.
[102] Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 176.
[103] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 131.

> if we are going to be compelled to learn Hindi…I would not be willing to do it because of the amount of constraint you put on me…I would, Sir, convey a warning on behalf of people of the South for the reason that there are already elements in South India who want separation…and my honourable friends in U. P. do not help us in any way by flogging their idea [of] 'Hindi Imperialism' to the maximum extent possible. Sir, it is up to my friends in U. P. to have a whole-India; it is up to them to have a Hindi-India. The choice is theirs.[104]

Krishnamachari's remarks underscore the fact that India could only survive as a state-nation. If India had chosen to adopt the nation-state model of "one nation, one language," it would have made it impossible for those who did not speak Hindi to continue identifying themselves as Indian. Rather than layering identities as in a state-nation, Indians would have to have been forced to choose between their linguistic identity and belonging to the Indian nation—a choice that would have been disastrous for the viability of a democratic, united India. Fortunately, politicians arrived at a temporary compromise through which English—which, despite its association with colonialism, represented an ethnically neutral link language with global prominence—would join Hindi as a co-official language for a fifteen-year period until 1965, at the end of which the co-official status of English could potentially be renewed. Nehru died in 1964, one year before the expiration of English as a co-official language. His successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, then had to deal with the thorny question of the future status of English. In the southern state of Tamil Nadu (formerly known as Madras), the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, a Tamil nationalist party that had only recently renounced Tamil secessionism, orchestrated protests that swept Tamil Nadu, with the burning of Hindi-language books and the vandalism and removal of signs in Hindi. Clashes with police turned violent and a series of strikes and boycotts paralysed the state. Several suicides, in a couple of instances by self-immolation, also took place to protest the impending imposition of Hindi.[105] Faced with a crisis of governability in Tamil Nadu that was spreading to other non-Hindi speaking states, Shastri promised to respect Nehru's pledge to allow English to remain co-

[104] CAD, Vol. 7, 235.
[105] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 394.

official with Hindi as long as the people wanted to. English was thus permanently established as a co-official language at the federal level. Shasrti also guaranteed that states could continue to conduct business in any language of their choice and mandated that communications between states take place in English or have translations in English.[106] An additional problem—the language of examination for the Union Public Service Commission exams—was solved in 1967 with a decision that would allow aspiring civil servants to take exams in English or any official regional language. This arrangement effectively ensured that no one would be discriminated against in civil service hiring on account of his/her native language.[107] Twenty years after independence, the question of national language had finally been resolved, with a series of pluralistic state-nation policies prevailing over a narrow, exclusivist nation-state model that would have forever alienated India's non-Hindi speaking regions.

Equally critical to the success of India's development as a state-nation during the Nehru years was the establishment of India's system of linguistic federalism. India's constitution included provisions to promote minority languages at the state level in the India's tiered federal system. Article 29 forbids discrimination based on language while affirming the right of linguistic communities to preserve their languages and cultures.[108] The constitution provides individual states the freedom to conduct business in whatever language they chose, guarantees the availability of primary education in minority languages, and affirms the right of citizens petition the state in any language they choose.[109] The seventh schedule of the constitution, which defines the powers of the central government and the various state governments, gave states wide latitude to adopt their own policies in areas including economic and social planning, education, criminal law, and agriculture, empowering regional minority groups and preventing them from feeling that they were powerless colonies of the

[106] Ibid., 395-7.
[107] Adeney, 94.
[108] Constitution of India, art. 29.
[109] Ibid., art. 345, 350.

central government in Delhi.[110] Crucially, Articles 2 and 3 allow for the redrawing of state borders and the creation of new states.[111] These constitutional guarantees were critical in obtaining buy-in from linguistic minorities who might have otherwise feared being part of a larger Indian state (and, by extension, Indian nation) in which their community only represented a small minority.

Although language is not listed explicitly as a justification to create new states and adjust the borders of existing states, the creation of linguistic states featured prominently in the deliberations of the constituent assembly. The constituent assembly created the Dar Commission to investigate the linguistic reorganisation of Indian states. In its 1948 report, the Dar Commission decided against advising the reorganisation of Indian states along linguistic lines, believing that it would not serve "the larger interests of the Indian nation,"[112] despite previous INC support for the establishment of linguistic states and Gandhi's internal reorganisation of INC regional units along linguistic lines.[113] In 1949, the JVP report—named after the constituent assembly members who drafted it, Prime Minister Nehru, Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel, and Pattabhi Sitarmayya, all of whom belonged the INC—stated that while the INC did not oppose linguistic states in theory, the recent parititon of India and the threat of further fragmentation meant that consolidating the Indian state and Indian national unity should take precedence, which would require "stern discouragement of communalism, provincialism, and all other separatist and disruptive tendencies." The JVP report proposed postponing the reorganisation of states while affirming that "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we, as democrats, have to submit to it."[114] Nehru

[110] Ibid., Seventh Schedule, List II: State List and List III: Concurrent List.
[111] Ibid., art. 2, 3.
[112] *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission*, (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1948), 35.
[113] Tudor, 169.
[114] Ibid., 170.

personally hoped that preserving multilingual states would promote interethnic harmony and cooperation.[115]

That public sentiment that the JVP report referenced, however, did not wait long to make itself heard. During the 1950s, the Indian political scene was shaken by a series of popular movements to create linguistically homogeneous states in Marathi-, Telugu-, and Punjabi-speaking regions.[116] Aware that failing to proactively respond to the popular unrest could lead to the very fragmentation that they feared, Nehru and the INC leadership acceded to popular demands by establishing the States Reorganisation Commission in 1953 and creating a Telugu-speaking Andhra State from Tamil-majority Madras, as Telugu-speaking areas had been rocked by a series of riots after the death of a prominent Telugu member of the Indian independence movement who had been fasting to push the central government to create a separate Andhra State.[117] Unlike in 1948, by 1953 India had already finished writing its constitution, integrated the various princely states that acted as vassals for the British during the colonial period, and held its first national elections. The INC leadership, with the wounds it suffered from the Pakistani débâcle no longer as fresh and its control more firmly established, was in a better position to allow for the reorganisation of states along linguistic lines when it looked like the Indian union was finally secure.[118]

This is not to say that the process of reorganisation went smoothly. The country's largest city, Bombay, witnessed an occasionally violent conflict between the city's Marathi-speaking plurality, which wanted to integrate the coastal city into a Marathi-speaking Maharashtra, and the various minority language communities, which together comprised a majority of the population, that wanted to separate Bombay from the Marathi-speaking

[115] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 190.
[116] Ibid., 199.
[117] Adeney, 95.
[118] Tudor, 173.

interior. [119] The issue remained unresolved until 1960, at which point Bombay State was divided into a Guajarati-speaking Gujarat and Bombay became the capital of an overwhelmingly Marathi-speaking Maharashtra. Following reorganisation in both Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh (comprised of Andhra State and the Telugu-speaking areas of the former princely state of Hyderabad), the INC won landslide victories against regionalist parties despite the virulent anger which until recently had been directed towards Nehru and the INC.[120] The creation of linguistic states, which allowed ethnolinguistic communities autonomy and provided a vehicle to express their identities, thus facilitated their integration into the larger Indian state-nation. With the creation of linguistic states, the aspirations of India's various linguistic communities could be peaceably fulfilled within the framework of a layered federal state that mirrored the successful layering of Indian and regional identities.

While the INC performed rather well in regional elections in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra after the reorganisation of states in the 1950s, the INC did not fare as well in Tamil-majority Madras State after the national language crisis of 1965. The bitterness in Madras was still so strong that the INC government in the state was defeated in a landslide in the 1967 state legislative assembly elections. The Tamil nationalist DMK won an overwhelming victory, defeating the INC chief minister, K. Kamaraj, who was also the national president of the party.[121] The INC has never recovered in Tamil Nadu (Madras State's name since 1969), although the party does sometimes play the role of kingmaker between the DMK and its main rival, the AIDMK, whose ideology is also based in Tamil regionalism. The decline of the INC in Tamil Nadu and the dominance of regional Tamil cultural-nationalist parties, however, actually underlines the success of India's state-nation experiment. Regionalist parties like those in Tamil Nadu are today prevalent throughout India,

[119] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 204-5.
[120] Adeney, 132.
[121] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 220-1.

but secessionism is virtually non-existent and regional parties like those in Tamil Nadu routinely participate in forming parliamentary coalitions in the federal parliament.[122] Rather than what happened in Sri Lanka, where Tamils took up arms against the state, secessionism is almost entirely absent among Indian Tamils, underlining the success of India's state-nation policies that fostered layered, complementary identities through a system of linguistic federalism.[123]

By the time of Nehru's death in 1964, India had built up a state-nation that enshrined the pluralistic values of Nehruvian nationalism—such as religious and linguistic pluralism—into the constitution and institutions of the Indian state. Although Nehru was sceptical about the wisdom of diving India internally along linguistic lines after the division of India during partition, the creation of linguistic states facilitated the layering of regional ethnolinguistic identities with a broader Indian supra-identity. Along with Nehru's other great achievements as prime minister that contributed to the consolidation of Indian democracy—including the subordination of India's military to civilian control and the routinisation of the rule of law, civil liberties, and fair and open elections—the realisation of the Indian state-nation provided the glue to peacefully hold India's diverse ethnic and religious groups together within the framework of a liberal democratic political system. While there were unresolved problems—chief among them the disputed region of Kashmir, which we will explore in the next section—it is difficult to deny the broad success of attempts to transform India into a state-nation during Nehru's tenure.

The Indian independence movement had given Indians the beginnings of a shared political identity based on a nationalism that rejected exclusivism and embraced pluralism and tolerance. Nehru and his generation of post-independence leaders then took that nationalism and built it into the structure of the new Indian state, helping to solidify a common sense of

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[122] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 133.
[123] Ibid., 170.

Indianness while respecting the other salient ethnolinguistic and religious identities of Indian citizens.

Lebanon 1943-1975: An unstable house of cards

Lebanon's post-independence political trajectory has largely been shaped by the National Pact, the unwritten agreement established between the Maronite politician Bechara el-Khoury and the Sunni leader Riad el-Solh, Lebanon's first post-independence president and prime minister, respectively. The National Pact attempted to resolve the disagreements concerning both the identity of Lebanon and to ensure that all of Lebanon's constituent religious communities would accept and work within the Lebanese state. The National Pact solidified the system of confessionalism that had first originated under the Ottoman *mutasarrifiya*. Under the National Pact, the president and commander of the Army were to always be Maronites. The position of prime minister was reserved for Sunnis, while the speakership of parliament was reserved for Shi'a.[124] The deputy prime minister and deputy speaker were to be Greek Orthodox and the position of chief of general staff could only be held by a Druze. Beyond high offices of state, seats in parliament were also divided on a confessional basis, with Christian deputies outnumbering Muslim deputies by a 6:5 ratio. The justification for these allocations was based in data from the 1932 census, which remains the last census to be carried in Lebanon.[125] Crucially, no arrangements were made to modify seat allocations in the event of demographic shifts. The potential political repercussions of a new census for the confessional system explains why the 1932 census remains the most recent.

[124] The original agreement did not explicitly allocate the position of speaker to the Shi'a, and in 1946 a Greek Orthodox was elected to the speakership. It was only in 1947 that the speakership became permanently reserved for the Shi'a.

[125] Kais Firro, *Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the State under the Mandate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 120. The census showed Christians with a narrow majority of 52.7%, and Maronites alone accounted for 31%. Muslims comprised 45.5% of the population, with Sunnis, Shi'a, and Druze at 20.8%, 18.3%, and 6.5% of the population, respectively.

The National Pact also placed a bandage over the conflict between Lebanists and Arab nationalists, which, to echo Salibi, was ultimately a sectarian game between Lebanon's various religious communities. Under the National Pact, Christians would agree that Lebanon would identify itself as an Arab country rather than a Western one, while Muslims would respect Lebanese independence and renounce attempts to reunify with the rest of Syria.[126] As Khoury wrote in his memoirs, the National Pact represented "an agreement between two elements that compose the Lebanese nation to fuse their inclinations into one ideology: the final and complete independence of Lebanon without resorting to protection from the West or unity or federation with the East. "[127] Of course, as we have already seen, this narrative belies the reality of the situation. The National Pact was the result of a momentary convergence of interests between Christians looking for economic freedom and Muslims willing to work with Christians, even if it meant temporarily accepting Lebanon, to drive France out of the region. Having won Muslim acquiescence to a state in which Christians would control the lion's share of power (via the presidency, command of the army, and a guaranteed parliamentary majority) based on a narrow majority in increasingly outdated census data, Lebanese Christians would firmly reject changes to the National Pact over the coming decades. The same cannot be said of Lebanon's Muslims. While they had forced Christians to adopt an official Arab state identity, the dream of Arab unity remained unfulfilled. Nevertheless, with demographic changes over time, Muslim politicians were confident that they would eventually be able to renegotiate the National Pact in their favour or even seek unification with a larger pan-Arab state.[128] A precarious island of Christian political power in an overwhelmingly Muslim Middle East, the Lebanese state was to face attempts to undermine it

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[126] Élisabeth Picard, *Liban-Syrie, intimes étrangers : Un siècle d'interactions sociopolitiques* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2016), 64.

[127] Bechara el-Khoury, *Haqâ'iq Lubnâniyya*, vol. 2 (Beirut, Awrâq Lubnâniyya, 1960), 21.
"وما الميثاق الوطني سوى اتفاق العنصرين اللذين يتألف منهما الوطن اللبناني على انصهار نزعاتها في عقيدة واحدة: استقلال لبنان التام الناجز دون الالتجاء إلى حماية من الغرب، ولا إلى وحدة أو اتحاد مع الشرق."

[128] Salibi, 199.

from both outside and within its borders. The National Pact was not based on mutual agreement but rather resembled an agreement between uneasy partners in a coalition government. It was a programme that neither party fully agreed with and would not attempt to undermine at a later point, but both partners agreed to it for the sake of gaining power in the short term because each lacked the strength to impose its will on the other.

Warning signs began to appear just over a decade after independence. In 1956, Israel, France, and Britain launched an invasion of part of Egypt to reassert Franco-British control of the Suez Canal, which had recently been nationalised by Egypt's president, the Arab nationalist Gamal Abdel Nasser. During the Suez Crisis, the Maronite president, Camille Chamoun, refused to break off diplomatic ties with Britain and France. Given the blatant violation of the sovereignty of a fellow Arab nation by Western powers, Lebanese Muslims were outraged and accused Chamoun of reneging on their commitment to accept Lebanon as an Arab-affiliated country. The Sunni prime minister, the Arab nationalist Abdullah Yafi, resigned to protest Chamoun's decision.[129] The following year, Chamoun became the first (and only) Arab head of state to accept the Eisenhower Doctrine. Under the Eisenhower Doctrine, the United States would help any Middle Eastern state threatened by Communism. Muslims considered this to be an additional violation of the Christian commitment to avoid aligning Lebanon with the West.

In 1958, Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab Republic (UAR), which they hoped would attract more Arab countries, leading to the ultimate goal of uniting Arabic speakers under one state. The creation of the UAR happened just as Chamoun was trying to illegally extend his presidency (Lebanese presidents can only serve one term of six years) with assistance from a parliament that was filled with his allies after he had gerrymandered many of his opponents out of their seats in the 1957 parliamentary elections. Armed

[129] Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 131.

confrontations took place between Chamoun loyalists and Egyptian-armed opposition forces supported by most Sunni politicians and Kamal Jumblatt, an ambitious Druze politician. Almost all areas added to the *mutasarrifiya* to create Greater Lebanon fell to the opposition, reducing the areas controlled by the Lebanese state to the Maronite heartland of Mount Lebanon. Prudently, the Maronite army chief, Fuad Chehab, chose to keep the army out of the conflict in order to prevent the splintering of the army, which could have possibly been fatal for the Lebanese state. Invoking the Eisenhower Doctrine, Chamoun sought and obtained American military assistancer, resulting in the arrival of American troops to the country to restore order. The United States and the UAR reached an agreement under which the United States would force Chamoun to step down and the UAR would cease helping opposition forces. Chehab, who alone remained unsullied by the conflict, became the consensus candidate to succeed Chamoun as president.[130] [131]

Chehab's tenure as president restored peace to Lebanon and protected the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. It also represented Lebanon's best hope at escaping narrow sectarian politics, but that hope would ultimately be dashed by the end of his tenure. Chehab recognised the shortcomings of Lebanon's confessional system. He also despised the *zu'ama* (singular *za'im*), the traditional politicians with quasi-feudal patronage networks who dominated Lebanon's political scene, deeming them "corrupt, self-absorbed, and incapable of producing national integration."[132] Ironically, Chehab co-opted many of the country's leading *zu'ama* from both sides of the 1958 conflict, including Jumblatt and Pierre Gemayel, a far-right Maronite *za'im* who had once openly expressed admiration for Hitler.[133] He also appointed

[130] Harris, 210-2.
[131] The UAR only survived three years until a coup in Syria pulled the country out of the UAR in 1961. With the humiliating defeat of Syria, Jordan, and Nasser's Egypt at the hands of Israeli forces in the Six Day War in 1967, Arab nationalism became increasingly unlikely to ever threaten Lebanon's sovereignty again, although internal Christian-Muslim divisions remained.
[132] Ibid., 213.
[133] Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Nation Books, 2002), 65.

Rashid Karami, an Arab nationalist who had been a prominent anti-Chamoun figure in 1958, as his prime minister and succeeded in establishing friendly relations with Nasser.[134]

Chehab also reformed the Lebanese civil service, creating a system that would determine promotion and appointment based on merit and exams and mandating parity between Christians and Muslims. While Sunnis and Druze were fairly represented by the end of Chehab's presidency in the civil service, Shi'a only occupied 4 of 115 senior posts, an abysmal number given their size of the population.[135] Chehab also started an unprecedented series of public works projects and government programmes that aimed at helping underdeveloped regions that were often Shi'a-majority. Yet Chehab never sought to undertake structural changes like the abolition of confessionalism in parliament and high government positions. Chehab did, however, create a powerful security apparatus, the *Deuxième Bureau*, which he used to infiltrate the networks of the *zu'ama* to undermine their power.[136] After a failed 1961 coup attempt, Chehab became particularly aggressive in his use of the *Deuxième Bureau*, which rallied the normally fractious *zu'ama* behind a common effort to undermine Chehab's security apparatus. That effort succeeded with the one-vote victory of Suleiman Frangieh over the Chehabist candidate, Elias Sarkis, in the 1970 presidential election. Chehab also refused to create his own political party, thus depriving himself of a vehicle to further a form of reformist, non-sectarian politics that was absent from the Lebanese political landscape and ceding control of the political process to the *zu'ama*.

Despite their mutual loathing, Lebanese *zu'ama* were similar in many regards. Almost all of them were ardent supporters of *laissez-faire* economics and saw an interventionist government with strong welfare programmes as a threat to their patronage networks that allowed them to act as go-betweens between members of their sects and the state. In keeping

[134] Traboulsi, 138.
[135] Harris, 215.
[136] Ibid., 214-6.

the state debilitated and thus forcing ordinary Lebanese citizens to seek the help of political bosses from their own sect, the *zu'ama* created vertical social structures that polarised society along sectarian divides in order to preserve their own power and patronage networks.[137]

While the *zu'ama* continued rotating in and out of cabinet positions at the top of the state, one of Lebanon's largest and most disadvantaged communities, the Shi'a, began to make themselves heard. In the Shi'a-majority south, incomes were not even a fourth of what they were in Beirut by the middle of the twentieth century,[138] and the share of doctors and medical facilities in Shi'a-majority areas were only a fourth of what they should have been proportional to these region's share of the overall population.[139] That Lebanon's Shi'a were an afterthought economically for the central government was not entirely surprising. The National Pact fundamentally benefited the Maronites and brought the Sunnis in as junior partners. Yet unlike the Maronites and Sunnis, the Shi'a, as previously mentioned, were not even guaranteed a high office of state under the original 1943 agreement, only monopolising the speakership after 1947. They also did not see themselves represented in either of the main competing national identities in Lebanon. As Muslims, they were not inclined towards a quasi-Christian identity that looked towards Europe. Yet like the Christians, they were a minority community in an overwhelmingly Sunni region. Hence, as the Lebanese-American Shi'a scholar Fouad Ajami writes, Lebanese Shi'a did not identify with "a Maronite concept that stressed Lebanon's Christian identity [or with] a Sunni Arab conviction, upheld by the merchants of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon, that the country was a piece of a larger Arab world. Both conceptions were alien to the Shia."[140] An economically disadvantaged population that could not identify with existing political identities was bound to eventually represent a threat

[137] Mackey, 95.
[138] Ibid., 13.
[139] Traboulsi, 161.
[140] Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 61.

to the established order, especially when that group, due to favourable birth rates and higher rates of Christian emigration, was on track to possibly become the single largest group in the country around the outbreak of civil war in 1975.[141]

President Chehab, almost unique among non-Shi'a politicians in the post-independence period, sought to integrate the Shi'a and improve their economic condition. The Chehab administration invested heavily in agricultural technology and irrigation in the Shi'a-majority Beqaa Valley and the south. One of the unintended consequences of these investments was that increased efficiency reduced demand for labour, causing a mass exodus of Shi'a.[142] Most moved to impoverished communities on the outskirts of Beirut that became known as the "belt of misery."[143] Adding to the problem, many Lebanese had to vote in the villages where their parents were born, effectively disenfranchising many of the Shi'a migrants who moved to Beirut.[144] Economically and politically disadvantaged, the Shi'a began to look for an alternative to their own *zu'ama* who had failed to improve the condition of their communities.

Into the gap left by traditional Shi'a *zu'ama* stepped Musa al-Sadr, an Iranian-born cleric of Lebanese origin who moved to Lebanon and began to build a network of charities and schools for the marginalised Shi'a. Foreshadowing what would happen during the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, Sadr politicised the symbols and stories of Shi'ism to rally his community behind a programme of economic and political change, deftly blending traditional conservative piety with leftist economic ideas.[145]

Chehab in fact promoted Sadr during his presidency, appreciating his cross-sectarian social work and an anti-poverty campaign that he undertook with the Greek Orthodox

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[141] Muhammad Faour, "Religion, demography, and politics in Lebanon," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 6 (2007): 911-2
[142] Harris, 216.
[143] Ibid., 220.
[144] Ibid., 181.
[145] Ajami, 95.

archbishop Grégoire Haddad. Sadr represented the possibility of a more socially minded, cross-sectarian politics that resonated with Chehab.[146] To further his policies, Sadr established the *Harakat al-Mahrumin*, the Movement of the Disinherited, which would eventually form an armed wing, Amal, one year before the start of the civil war. Along with Hizballah, which emerged in the early 1980s with the help and assistance of the newly-established Islamic Republic of Iran, Amal became one of the two major Shi'a forces during the civil war, aligning itself with other anti-status quo forces against the Maronites.

If the Shi'a represented an internal threat to Lebanon's confessional regime, Palestinians constituted a threat simultaneously internal and external. Out of 700,000 Palestinian refugees created by the establishment of Israel and the 1948 Arab-Israel War, 130,000 fled into Lebanon, which at the time only had a population of around a million.[147] If they were naturalised, the Palestinian refugees—who were overwhelmingly Sunni—would throw off the demographics underpinning the National Pact. The demographic problems that the Palestinians could cause for Lebanon's brittle confessional democracy is the reason that they were never even given the right to apply for citizenship (unlike other countries, such as Jordan), or even work outside their refugee camps. While they were unarmed refugees isolated within camps, however, they posed little immediate threat to the system. That calculus, however, radically changed after 1967.

The Six-Day War of 1967 resulted in the decimation of Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian forces. In under a week, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula as well as the two last pieces of colonial Palestine under Arab control, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The stunning degree to which the Arab armies had been routed caused a major attitude shift among Palestinian refugees, who lost faith in other Arab countries to defeat Israel and allow them to return home. Instead, they would have to personally take the fight to Israel.

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[146] Harris, 217.
[147] Mackey, 129.

One year after the débâcle of the Six-Day War, Palestinian militants began to carry out raids into Israel from Lebanese territory. After the successful hijacking of an Israeli passenger plane, the Israelis responded by destroying Lebanese planes at the Beirut airport.[148] Realising that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) risked dragging Lebanon into a conflict with Israel. In 1969, the Lebanese Army tried to contain the PLO, resulting in clashes in Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon. In response, Rashid Karami, the Sunni *za'im* who was serving as prime minister, resigned to protest the crackdown on the Palestinians.[149] Faced with weak security forces and Sunni *zu'ama* who were lining up behind the PLO, President Helou had no choice but to sign the Cairo Agreement, under which the PLO had the freedom to control Palestinian camps and the Lebanese Army was obligated to facilitate PLO movement to the Israeli border, from where it could infiltrate Israeli territory. To save face, the Cairo Agreement also affirmed the increasingly farcical notion of Lebanese sovereignty.[150]

The Cairo Agreement served to radicalise Christians, pushing them into the arms of right-wing, anti-Palestinian figures like Gemayel. Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon caused another wave of Shi'a to leave the south for Beirut, and Sadr condemned the government for its inaction. Jumblatt, as interior minister in the cabinet, legalised several banned Arab nationalist, leftist, and Syrian nationalist groups that had previously been banned to weaken the Christians' position even more.[151]

By the end of 1970, Lebanon had become the centre of PLO operations against Israel. Earlier that year, factions of the PLO in Jordan called for the overthrow of the Jordanian monarchy and tried to assassinate King Hussein. In retaliation, the Jordanian military cracked down on the PLO, expelling all of their forces from Jordan during a mini-civil war that

[148] Traboulsi, 153.
[149] Ibid., 154.
[150] Harris, 222.
[151] Ibid., 223.

became known as Black September.[152] Syria, not wanting to be the next Jordan, also refused to let the PLO continue operations from Syria, but was happy to facilitate the entry of PLO fighters into Lebanon.

This pattern continued for several more years, with Israeli raids targeting the PLO, clashes between Lebanese army forces and factions of the PLO, and even the kidnapping of Pierre Gemayel's son, Bashir, by Palestinian fighters. As William Harris acerbically notes, "most Maronites could not fathom what any of this had to do with confronting Israel."[153] At the same time, the weakening of Chehab's security services by President Frangieh after his election in 1970 weakened the Lebanese state's ability to respond even more.[154] As Frangieh urged Christians to arm themselves, Sadr concluded an alliance with the Sunni *zu'ama* and the PLO against the Maronites.[155] After a failed assassination attempt against Gemayel on 13 April 1975 and the massacre of a bus full of Palestinian civilians by militiamen loyal to him in retaliation, the Lebanese civil war began, causing a breakdown of state authority that would last one and a half decades.

Just over three decades after independence, Lebanon's confessional democracy had gone up in flames. On the surface, the basic narrative is easy enough to follow: Christians who wanted to crack down on the Palestinians were unable to because of Sunni politicians who instrumentalised the PLO and Palestinian civilians to further their own interests, and the system broke apart as a result.[156] Yet as Michael Hudson reminds us, the truly important question is not how the Palestinian presence in Lebanon caused the Lebanese Civil War, but rather how there was such a large Palestinian presence in the country at all.[157]

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[152] Picard, *Intimes étrangers*, 185.
[153] Harris, 223.
[154] Traboulsi, 155.
[155] Harris, 225-6.
[156] Ibid., 221.
[157] Michael Hudson, "The Breakdown of Democracy in Lebanon," *Journal of International Affairs* 38, no. 2 (1985): 278.

The answer to this question lies in Lebanon's failure to build a coherent united national identity to united its constituent parts. As Raghid El-Solh notes, "the pressures exerted by Zionism and Palestinian nationalism forced Lebanon on numerous occasions to choose between being a part of the Arab world or standing outside it. To be 'less Arab' could be taken to imply being 'non-Arab', which could, in turn, create serious problems for Lebanon."[158] In other words, the Palestinian question called the bluff that both sides had made with the National Pact. While Christians theoretically accepted Lebanon as an Arab state, they were not willing to materially help or participate in the defining Arab cause of the century. And although Muslims—particularly the Sunnis—pledged to uphold the principle of a sovereign, independent Lebanon, they ultimately facilitated the undermining of Lebanese sovereignty, causing political gridlock and allowing a foreign entity to wage war with another foreign entity from Lebanese soil.

As before independence, each sect was manoeuvring to maximise its own power. Unfortunately for the Christians, their expanded Greater Lebanon ultimately had too many Muslims for them to hold on to the lion's share of political power indefinitely, and they had no option but to create militias to defend their increasingly precarious hold on power. Conveniently for the Sunni *zu'ama* who no longer wanted to be play the role of junior partners in a Maronite-led Lebanon, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon gave them the military capacity to take on the Maronites while affirming their Arab credentials. The Palestinians offered them, in a sense, a chance to finally realise what they had first attempted in 1958: the destruction of a Christian-led Lebanon. The Shi'a, economically and politically marginalised while increasingly demographically strong, represented a sleeping giant with no interest in preserving the Lebanese system. The same could be said for Druze like Kamal Jumblatt, who aspired to become president but could not under the National Pact because of

[158] El-Solh, 290.

his religion. Yet while all the calculations of each sect are logical alone, they are only logical if one is pursuing greater power and influence for one's sect, rather than looking out for the interests of all Lebanese citizens. Clearly, then, the vision of building a common Lebanese identity had failed, and the only identities that inspired any loyalty were sectarian.

As the current speaker of parliament, Nabih Berri, notes, the Lebanese "behave like tribes instead of like people of one country. The 1943 Pact that we created is a partitionist pact. It helped make us build a farm, not a country."[159] Lebanon existed as a state on paper. In the minds of its citizens, however, there was little sense of commonality, as reflected by the fact that such a precise power-sharing arrangement had to be but in place from the beginning. While the Lebanese system did require politicians to work across sectarian lines and tried to give each religious community a stake in the government, it also froze those very sectarian divisions into place. The system of sectarian apportionment of parliamentary seats and government posts encouraged Lebanese to see themselves as members of their religious communities, as Halim Barakat and others have quite rightly pointed out.[160] In pushing Lebanon over the precipice while promoting the interests of their own sects, the Lebanese *zu'ama* demonstrated that a pluralistic, inclusive Lebanese identity—which theoretically coexisted alongside citizens' sectarian affiliations—was nothing more than a chimera.

Conclusion: Different starting points, different paths

On the surface, Lebanon and India attempted to realise a similar goal: the establishment of a pluralistic, democratic state that would bind the different communities of the country together. Both states had constitutions which guaranteed freedom of expression and belief, and both held regular elections that, while not immune from chicanery, were

[159] Mackey, 114.
[160] Halim Barakat, "Social and Political Integration in Lebanon: A Case of Social Mosaic," *Middle East Journal* 27, no. 3 (1973): 314.

generally fair and resulted in the relatively peaceful transfer of power. So how did their paths diverge so sharply?

The first answer goes back to the colonial period and how the Lebanese and Indian states came into existence. The INC started out as a fundamentally elite-led organisation. Over time, however, it managed to mobilise the masses (except Muslims agitating for the creation of Pakistan) behind the cause of independence framed by a secular, pluralistic nationalism. India entered the post-independence period with an immense advantage in that the idea of an Indian nation had already been internalised by ordinary Indians across the subcontinent. The INC had carefully structured its own movement—with linguistically-based regional units, for instance—and its ideology to bring as many Indians into its movement as possible. The case of Lebanon, on the other hand, represents a revolution from above that did not produce any meaningful "we-feeling" by the time that independence was achieved in 1943. As Stepan, Linz, and Yadav remind us, securing democracy in diverse societies is never simply "a matter of designing or redesigning institutions; an expansion of democratic imagination must deal directly with ideas, ideals, and images."[161] India's success in uniting its diverse population behind a common identity built on inclusive narratives, symbols, and ideals—and Lebanon's failure to do so—goes a long way in explaining the difference in outcomes between the two countries. Indeed, one could argue that all the competing nationalisms in Lebanon were, despite their façade of non-sectarianism, ploys of sectarian one-upmanship that would never gain enough popular support across sectarian divides. And as we have seen, many of these identity-based dynamics go back to the colonial era and proved stubbornly resilient after independence, leading to vastly different outcomes.

That was not to say that India was destined to succeed once independence had been achieved. As Kaviraj reminds us, nations are imagined communities with nothing objective

[161] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 50.

about them. If they can be imagined into existence, they can just as easily fall apart and disappear under changing circumstances.[162] That India benefited from a handsome inheritance from the pre-independence period did not mean that India's leaders would not squander that inheritance with policies that would harm, rather than promote, Indian unity. By adopting a secular constitution that did not distinguish citizens based on their religion—something inherent in the Lebanese model—that created a layered federal system to reflect layered regional/religious and national identities, and by not defining the state/nation in exclusive terms (i.e., Hindu, Hindi-speaking, etc.), India's first generation of post-independence leaders preserved the solid foundation left by the independence movement. It is also crucial to note that the India's success was not the result of a precise plan formulated before independence that was implemented without modification. Some of India's most successful state-nation policies, such as the linguistic reorganisation of states and making English and Hindi permanently co-official, came from below rather than above. INC leaders like Nehru deserve credit for their pluralistic vision, but they also deserve credit for when they responded to the wishes of the people, even when doing so went against their own instincts, such as when Nehru bowed to public pressure to start the state reorganisation process in 1953.

The differing trajectories of Lebanon and India also underline the importance of institutional choices. If India, as we have seen, adopted a series of policies and institutional choices that fostered layered, complementary identities, Lebanon did the opposite. Admittedly, many Lebanese thought that there was no alternative to the system of confessionalism in order to alleviate sectarian insecurities and give all sects a stake in the state, which underlines how little trust and sense of commonality existed between Lebanon's sects. Yet as Elaine Hagopian observes, instead of alleviating those divides and creating a complementary Lebanese supra-identity over sectarian divisions, confessionalism "formalised

[162] Kaviraj, 19.

a number of sectarian nations within one state… Although the founders of the National Pact claimed that it would be a stage leading to the formation of a secular Lebanese nationalist state, the very structure it created froze Lebanon into sectarian identities and mini-nations."[163] Lebanese confessionalism bought thirty years of peace—excluding the 1958 crisis—and created a state defined by political openness, (qualified) religious pluralism, respect for civil liberties, regular elections, and economic success, a success that sets Lebanon apart from every other Middle Eastern country. Yet the hollow foundations upon which the Lebanese state was built, coupled with a political system that froze fault lines in place rather than diminishing them, eventually caused the entire edifice to crumble.

If the cases of Lebanon and India show us the importance of institutional choices in building successful state-nations, they also show the importance of political parties and coalitions. In the INC, India benefited from a party that appealed simultaneously to the masses and to the elites and to Indians regardless of ethnolinguistic or religious identity. If a big-tent party that included progressives like Nehru alongside conservative Hindus, it did have enough ideological coherence to implement a truly national political programme that brought together Indians regardless of class, caste, language, or faith. The situation in Lebanon could not have been more different. Lebanon did not have real political parties. To the extent that parties existed on paper, these parties only acted as fronts for families of *zu'ama* within each sect, producing Lebanon's stunningly ideology-free political landscape.[164] The *zu'ama* exhibited parasitic behaviour, transforming themselves into indispensable intermediaries between the state and members of their own sect. They fostered vertical structures of patronage that accentuated the salience of sectarian identity rather than

[163] Elaine Hagopian, "Maronite Hegemony to Maronite Militancy: The Creation and Disintegration of Lebanon," *Third World Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1989): 104.
[164] Barakat, 311.

horizontal social structures that would foster a sense of common community between members of different sects.

In the first decades after independence, Lebanon and India continued down the same paths as they had before independence, with massively different outcomes for each country. India built a state that fostered the layering of identities that had first begun during the Indian independence movement, with a pluralistic Indian national identity complimenting Indian citizens' other religious and ethnic affiliations. The Nehruvian vision of an Indian nation united by its diversity had now been etched into the structures of the Indian state, ensuring that Indians continued to *feel* Indian even once the common opponent that had united them in the first place, the British Raj, had disappeared. In Lebanon, elite bargaining produced a tenuous understanding based on mutual interest at a particular moment in time. In light of regional political changes and internal demographic changes, however, the interests of Lebanon's various sects changed, pushing one part of the country to cling to the status quo as the other part sought to overturn the status quo because of their increased bargaining strength. When the Lebanese confessional system finally broke apart in 1975, it underscored that while Lebanon existed as a state, it did not exist as an imagined political community deeply ingrained in the minds of its citizens. However, to fully consider the overall success of both India and Lebanon, it is also important to look at how their political systems have held up in more recent decades.

Part III: Enduring Legacies

India: New challenges

Since Nehru's death, several events have called into question India's state-nation status: ethnic insurgencies and revolts in parts of the country, as well as increasing tensions between India's Hindu majority and Muslim minority. It is also true that many states on India's periphery—including Punjab, Mizoram, and Nagaland—have been shaken by

separatist insurgencies over the past six decades. Between 1980 and 1995, around 20,000 died in a separatist insurgency in Punjab, while Nagaland and Mizoram witnessed decades-long insurgencies against the Indian state.[165] We will examine these cases before turning to the uniquely challenging case of Kashmir, as well as the rise of Hindu nationalism in India from the 1990s to the present.

Nagaland and Mizoram

The cases of Nagaland and Mizoram are worth looking at because of just how different both regions are from the rest of India. Located in the mountainous frontier region separating India and Burma, and home to many tribal ethnic groups with very little in common with the rest of India, both states were governed under special provisions during British rule. The INC had never operated in the region before independence.[166] Both regions were attached to the larger state of Assam at the time of independence. Separatist movements in Nagaland in the 1950s and in Mizoram by the early 1960s resulted in the birth of decades-long insurgencies.

Bowing to pressure, the central government broke Mizoram away from Assam in 1972, creating a new union territory.[167] With a comprehensive peace agreement with the Mizo National Front (MNF), the main separatist group, in 1986, Mizoram became a full state with certain special autonomous privileges and the insurgency ended. Since then, the MNF and the INC emerged as the two dominant political parties in the state and have routinely rotated in and out of power. Today Mizoram is arguably one of the most peaceful states in Northeast India.[168]

Nagaland, on the other hand, was also broken away from Assam to become its own state in 1962, and yet the insurgency in Nagaland has lasted far longer than that of Mizoram.

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[165] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 268.
[166] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 101.
[167] Union territories are partially or fully federally-administered regions with a status below that of full states.
[168] Ibid., 105.

Nagaland has much more internal diversity than Mizoram—the largest linguistic group in Nagaland only makes up 13 per cent of the population—and also had several separatist groups. In contrast, Mizoram, which is far more ethnically homogeneous, had only one major separatist group. Unlike in Mizoram, the Indian government could never placate all of the groups in Nagaland at once, leading to a continued low-level insurgency.[169] An additional issue is that a state uniting all Nagas in one state would have to come at the expense of territory in the neighbouring states of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. Nevertheless, while insurgent groups still do exist, violence resulting from separatist groups has almost entirely dissipated in recent years.[170] Yet the fact that India has been able to largely integrate Nagaland and Mizoram—regions with few cultural and linguistic ties with the rest of India where the Indian independence movement was not active—testifies to the overall strength of India's state-nation policies that have integrated even those not necessarily predisposed to identify as Indian into the Indian state and nation.

Punjab

For the first three decades after independence, Punjab—the country's only Sikh-majority state—was a relatively well-integrated part of the Indian state. The roots of armed conflict in Punjab began with the Emergency, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru, suspended the constitution and civil liberties and ruled by decree between 1975 and 1977. In 1977, when Indira Gandhi ended the Emergency and called elections, she lost to a motley coalition of parties untied united only by their opposition to Indira Gandhi. One of the member parties of that coalition was the Akali Dal, a Sikh Punjabi regionalist party. In 1980, when Indira Gandhi returned to power following new elections, she dismissed the Akali Dal-led government in Punjab and imposed central government rule. While the Akali Dal had been previously led by moderates pushing for more regional autonomy, the

[169] Ibid., 107.
[170] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 617.

actions of Indira Gandhi pushed many Punjabis into the arms of extremists who were calling for the creation of an independent Sikh-majority country called Khalistan in Punjab. Separatist militants eventually occupied the Golden Temple, the holiest site in Sikhism, in Amritsar. In 1984, the Indian military drove the militants out of the temple, killing the leader of the Khalistan movement, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. In retaliation, two of Indira Gandhi's Sikh bodyguards assassinated her, provoking a wave of anti-Sikh riots in Delhi.[171]

By the early 1990s, however, with a more conciliatory government in Delhi, the moderate faction of the Akali Dal witnessed a resurgence and swept the 1997 state elections. Since then, the INC and the Akali Dal have regularly rotated in and out of power in the state, and a clear majority of Punjabis once again express a "great deal" or "some" confidence in the central government according to opinion polls.[172] The past several decades of Punjabi politics have shown that when the central government respects the principles of federalism and works with moderate autonomist movements instead of suppressing them, there is no reason for regional identities to necessarily prevent identification with the Indian state and a larger Indian nation.

While the challenges to India's status as a state-nation have receded in Punjab, Mizoram, and Nagaland, there remains one region that has not ceased to call into question India's credentials both as a democracy and a state-nation: Kashmir.

India's Kashmiri quagmire

No region of India has a more conflictual relationship with the Indian government than Jammu and Kashmir. Unlike the three previously discussed states, Jammu and Kashmir has had a deeply problematic relationship with the rest of India for the entire period since independence. At the time of independence, India's princely states, which were effectively

[171] Ibid., 565.
[172] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 99.

local vassals of the British Raj, could choose to either accede to Pakistan or India. With the exception of Kashmir, all princely states eventually chose the logical state, with Muslim-majority states bordering Pakistani territory choosing Pakistan and Hindu-majority states bordering Indian territory choosing India. Kashmir had a Muslim majority and bordered Pakistan, and yet it also bordered India and its ruler, Hari Singh, was Hindu. Hari Singh attempted to prevaricate after independence, not acceding to either India or Pakistan. Nevertheless, he agreed to sign the instrument of accession to India a couple of months after Indian independence in exchange for Indian military support against Pakistani-supported militants who were advancing on the capital, Srinagar, threatening to overthrow him. At the same time, Shiekh Abdullah, the Muslim leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and the most popular political leader in Kashmir, opposed joining Pakistan and indicated his inclination towards joining a secular India.[173]

Nehru referred the issue to the UN Security Council, explicitly asking for UN assistance in holding a plebiscite that would allow the people of Kashmir to determine whether they wished to stay in India or not. This was, however, conditional upon the withdrawal of the invading militants, something which did not happen because Pakistan held onto most of the regions seized by the militants.[174] Fearing an unfavourable outcome for India, Nehru reneged on his promise to allow for Kashmiri self-determination, and a plebiscite has still yet to be held today. Sheikh Abdullah, who became prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir after independence, became increasingly disillusioned with India and Nehru in the early 1950s. This led Nehru to engineer his removal from power and his imprisonment in 1953 when fears grew that he would lead a separatist movement against India.[175] He spent

[173] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 90-1.
[174] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 110.
[175] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 261-2.

much of the next two decades in prison and only returned to power in 1975 and remained in office until his death in 1982.

Until 2019, Jammu and Kashmir theoretically enjoyed a degree of autonomy not given to any other state in India under Article 370 of the Indian constitution, with the central government only able to apply laws in Kashmir relating to foreign affairs, communications, and defence. In practice, however, Kashmir has been subject to a level of interference from the central government not seen in any other state in the country.[176] Until 2002, there were no reasonably free or fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir except for the 1977 elections that returned Sheikh Abdullah to power. Civil and political rights have been repeatedly restricted, and the central government has shown little respect for democratically elected governments in the state. Unlike in the other states examined in the previous section, a clear majority of Kashmiris today favour independence from India.[177]

Kashmir witnessed a particularly violent insurgency in the 1990s following the rigging of the 1987 state elections against the Muslim United Front, an electoral coalition of pro-autonomy parties. As in Punjab, the subversion of the democratic process by the Indian state helped push ordinary people into the arms of extremists. The 1990s Kashmiri insurgency brought a large military presence to the state, and Indian troops stationed in Kashmir were accused of torture, rape, and extrajudicial killings during the height of the fighting.[178] It is little wonder that so few Kashmiris can identify with India despite the fact that Kashmir has stronger historical ties to the rest of India than regions like Mizoram or Nagaland.

Relative stability returned to Kashmir in the 2000s, and the state has held a series of relatively free, open elections since then. That progress was jeopardised by the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 by the Hindu nationalist government of Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya

[176] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 112.
[177] Ibid., 114.
[178] "Kashmir's extra-judicial killings," BBC News, BBC, 8 March 2007.

Janata Party (BJP). The repeal of Article 370 was followed by the partition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories with far less autonomy and control over internal affairs. The *de facto* lack of autonomy from which Kashmir had suffered for decades, even under INC governments, thus became *de jure* under a government led by the INC's Hindu nationalist opponents.[179] The government also instituted a months-long internet blackout that became the longest ever seen in a democracy. The central government also arrested leading Kashmiri politicians who might have been capable of mounting a campaign of opposition to the central government's *fait accompli*.[180]

India has clearly not lived up to its democratic ideals in Kashmir. The question is then whether India's behaviour in Kashmir represents a failure of the state-nation model. Since independence, the Indian state has behaved in an entirely different way in Kashmir than it has in the rest of the country. The basic requirements of state-nation policies—such as respect for regional autonomist parties, a functioning tiered federal system, fair elections, and basic respect for civil and political liberties—have not been practised in Kashmir as they have been in the rest of India. As Stepan, Linz, and Yadav observe, "it is less analytically accurate to conclude that state-nation policies have 'failed' in Jammu and Kashmir than it is to conclude that they could never be systematically applied."[181] Although the repeal of Section 370 and Kashmir's partition and demotion to a union territory represent particularly egregious violations of state-nation policies, Kashmir's autonomy has been flouted by governments in Delhi led by both the INC and the BJP.[182]

Because of its status as the only Muslim-majority region of India, as well as a region that should have gone to Pakistan according to the logic of partition, Kashmir has enormous symbolic value for both India and Pakistan. The fact that the fate of Kashmir is about much

[179] Ramachandra Guha, "On J&K, Modi-Shah have emulated Nehru-Indira," *Hindustan Times*, 10 August 2019.
[180] Badri Raina, "A Finely-Tuned War of Attrition in Kashmir," The Wire, 10 February 2020.
[181] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 115.
[182] Guha, "Modi-Shah have emulated Nehru-Indira."

more than Kashmir itself perhaps explains why India has not felt secure enough to let the people of Kashmir freely express themselves in a plebiscite on the status of the region. It also explains why the Indian state has moved to stifle any movement that could potentially lead Kashmir to break away from India. Yet if Kashmir represents a localised manifestation of India's troubled Hindu-Muslim tensions, how well has India performed regarding Hindu-Muslim relations at the polity-wide level?

The rise of Hindu nationalism

Since the 1990s, the greatest threat to India's status as a state-nation has not come from linguistic tensions: India's federal system and linguistic states have actually continued to be a unifying force, even with the explosion of regional parties at the expense of larger national parties like the INC. Instead, the ghosts of pre-partition Hindu-Muslim tensions have reappeared, threatening to undermine the idea of equal citizenship and the pluralistic national fabric built by the Indian independence movement. While Gandhi and Nehru's secular nationalism had seemed to win the ideological battle at the time of independence, Hindu nationalism has seen a revival since the late 1980s, posing a serious challenge to the idea of a pluralistic Indian nationalism and a secular Indian state.

Hindu nationalism had long existed alongside the Nehruvian-Gandhian secular version of Indian nationalism, as discussed in previous sections. In the aftermath of partition, the ideological offspring of thinkers like Savarkar and Golwalkar were a minor presence in Indian politics. The grip of the INC seemed uncontested for nearly four decades. The only defeat the INC suffered was in 1977, when Indira Gandhi was ousted after the end of the Emergency by a motley coalition of anti-Indira forces, known as the Janata Party, that included a small number of Hindu nationalists. The anti-Indira coalition fell apart in 1980, returning Indira Gandhi to power in that year's elections. The Hindu nationalist party that emerged in 1980 from the ashes of the Janata Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, only won two seats in the 1984

elections that returned INC to power with over 80% of the seats in parliament. Just over a decade later, the BJP was asked to form a government after winning a plurality of seats in the 1996 general elections. How the BJP and its ideology became so popular remains a topic of debate.

There are a variety of explanations for the rise of the BJP, and the truth is most likely some combination of these competing theories. One view is simply that after decades of socialist, secular politics under the increasingly corrupt INC, India was bound to look for an alternative, especially after the polarising rule of Indira Gandhi and her usurpation of democracy during the Emergency. Factors such as the Mandal Commission, which recommended the expansion of caste-based reservations, did much to anger many middle-class Hindus as well. Additionally, the INC's secularism had started to appear to some Hindus as mere pandering to minority communities. In particular, however, the BJP seized on the Shah Bano case, when the INC legislatively undid a Supreme Court ruling regarding Muslim divorce laws, as an example of the INC's habit of appeasing Muslims who (according to the BJP) thought themselves worthy of special and deferential treatment.[183] More broadly, the BJP's mix of pro-liberalisation economic policies and political Hinduism spoke to the ambitions and anxieties of the growing (mostly upper-caste) Hindu middle class that exploded after India's economic opening in the early 1990s.[184] Yet although the BJP's rise resulted from the confluence of different factors, there was one particular event that catapulted the BJP to national prominence.

In 1992, after several years of agitation, Hindu nationalists affiliated with the BJP finally destroyed a historic mosque, the Babri Masjid, built during the Mughal Empire in the city of Ayodhya. Hindu nationalists claimed that the mosque was built on the birthplace of the

[183] Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 177-8.
[184] Ibid., 182.

Hindu deity Ram and that a temple dedicated to Ram should be built where the mosque stood. The destruction of the mosque triggered a wave of communal violence across India that killed thousands. For the BJP, however, the destruction of the Babri Masjid was a boon to its electoral prospects. In the 1996 general elections, it ousted the INC-led government of Narasimha Rao and emerged as the largest party in parliament with 161 seats, a major improvement on the mere two seats it had won little over a decade before. While the BJP formed a government that only lasted two weeks in 1996, it gained seats again in the 1998 elections and remained in power until 2004.[185]

In 2002, while the BJP was in power in Delhi, it was also in power in the western state of Gujarat. When a train carrying Hindu pilgrims back from Ayodhya to Gujarat was lit on fire, a wave of anti-Muslim violence broke out throughout the state. Ramachandra Guha describes riots that "were unprecedented in their savagery. Muslim shops and offices were attacked, mosques torched, and cars vandalized. Muslim women were raped. Muslim men were killed, and bonfires were made of their bodies." Over 2,000 Muslims died during the violence, and more than 100,000 were rendered homeless.[186] The chief minister of Gujarat at that time, the future prime minister Narendra Modi, has been dogged by accusations that he and his government sat back and let the killing occur or even provided some assistance to the rioters.

The cloud over the conduct of Modi's government did not prevent the voters of Gujarat from voting Modi back into office for another term that December. Writing just after the 2002 Gujarat legislative elections, Ashutosh Varshney wrote that "Gujarat's electorate has legitimized independent India's first unambiguous pogrom, a pogrom much more vicious than the killings of the Sikhs in Delhi in 1984, a pogrom that came closest to the classic, anti-Jewish pogroms of Russia and Europe in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th

[185] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 634.
[186] Ibid., 647.

century."[187] In 2014, just over a decade after the 2002 riots, Modi nevertheless became prime minister following a landslide victory for the BJP that ousted the INC after a decade in power in Delhi. Modi was re-elected by an even larger margin in 2019.

The threat that Modi and Hindu nationalism pose to India's future as a state-nation are very real. Even before Modi's election as prime minister, Stepan, Linz, and Yadav warned that "if the Gujarat model became a dominant model in India, this would bring about the sociopolitical destruction of India's state-nation."[188] Moreover, a state-nation is not something that is simply built once and is self-sustaining. Rather, it needs to be maintained through continued adherence to state-nation policies. They note that like nation-states, "a state-nation is also a politically imagined community that needs to be sustained through continuous contestation and re-creation in the realm of ideas, institutions, and political practices."[189]

A combination of events introduced in Modi's second term could pave the way for Indian Muslims who cannot provide documentation to lose their citizenship. The government announced its intention to establish a National Register of Citizens (NRC), requiring Indians to provide documents to prove that they were born in India. At the same time, parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), providing followers of all South Asian religions except Islam with a path to obtain citizenship if they cannot provide the necessary documentation to be included in the National Register of Citizens. The result of these two actions in combination could result in millions of Indian Muslims losing their citizenship and becoming stateless. Hindu nationalists feel increasingly emboldened, with one spokesman for the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, an affiliate of the BJP, echoing Golwalkar by proclaiming openly that Muslims and other non-Hindus "have to be subservient to Hindus and Hinduism" in

[187] Ashutosh Varshney, "Will the Stallion Baulk in Mid-Gallop?" Outlook, 30 December 2002.
[188] Stepan, Linz, and Yadav, *Crafting State-Nations*, 84.
[189] Ibid., 88.

India.[190] Modi's second term has also seen a surge in hate crimes against Muslims throughout the country.[191] On the other side, the BJP's laws created a furore that spurred a months-long wave of protests across the country.[192]

What happens in the coming years will be enormously consequential for the survival of India as a pluralistic state-nation. India's foundation as a state-nation is providing at least some buffer against the BJP's Hindu majoritarianism, as demonstrated by the unprecedented wave of protests against the CAA and the NRC. The protests, which caught the BJP off guard, proved that the Gandhian-Nehruvian pluralistic vision of India is still very much alive and will not disappear quietly. Yet the astonishing success of Hindu nationalism poses troubling questions about how deep the pluralistic "we-feeling" inclusive of Muslims ever was, even during the years of Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Modi's popularity also calls into question the ultimate success of the vision espoused by Nehru and Gandhi, as well as whether their model will continue to be the normative model of Indian nationalism and politics going forward. The conflict between the two competing visions of India, a conflict that has continued in one form or another for over a century, will determine to what extent India will remain a state-nation in the future.

Lebanon after the civil war: Superficial changes

The Lebanese Civil War largely ended in 1989 with the signing of the Ta'if Agreement by the surviving members of the pre-civil war parliament. The agreement is as notable for what it changed in Lebanon's political system as for what it did not change. Recognising that Lebanon's confessional system was in large part responsible for the civil war, the constitution was modified to state that the abolition of confessionalism would be a

[190] Maria Abi-Habib and Sameer Yasir, "As Modi Pushes Hindu Agenda, a Secular India Fights Back," *New York Times*, 25 February 2020.
[191] Rana Ayyub, "What a Rising Tide of Violence Against Muslims Says About Modi's Second Term," *Time*, 28 June 2019.
[192] Abi-Habib and Yasir.

"basic national goal," while conveniently not setting out a plan or a date for phasing out confessionalism. The agreement also called for a new electoral law abolishing sectarian quotas in parliament as well as the appointment of government officials based on qualification and competency rather than religious identity. Additionally, the agreement called for the creation of an upper house where religious communities would be represented proportionate to their share of the population. All of these provisions have yet to be implemented, and the confessional system and unicameral parliament remain in place. The agreement also did not change the composition of the troika of the Maronite president, Sunni prime minister, and Shi'a speaker. Instead, many of the president's powers were transferred to the prime minister, and the Shi'a were given a *de facto* increase in power when Hizballah alone was exempted from the disarmament of militias at the end of the war. The 6:5 Christian advantage in parliamentary seats was reduced to a 1:1 ratio.

While the Ta'if Agreement brought peace to Lebanon, it did little to solve the underlying causes of the civil war. Instead of bringing about a true reconciliation and honest discussion of the mistakes of the pre-war period, the Ta'if Agreement only provided a negative peace that perpetuated the very system that was at the root of the conflict.[193] Although the agreement explicitly acknowledged the need to do away with confessionalism, it ended up reinforcing it.[194]

Indeed, one could argue that the civil war had made Lebanon even more divided. Despite the return of peace, the joint collapse of the economy and the state for over a decade had only served to strengthen the importance of religious group solidarity. The post-civil war political scene was also dominated by former sectarian warlords who became politicians once again. The main actors in the Lebanese political scene were the same sectarian militias that

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[193] Faten Ghosn and Amal Khoury, "Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace?" *Middle East Journal* 65, no. 3 (2011): 396.
[194] Sami Ofeish, "Lebanon's Second Republic: Secular Talk, Sectarian Application," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1999): 104.

had plunged the country into conflict for over a decade, and there were almost no political parties or civil society groups whose memberships crossed religious divides.[195]

The Ta'if Agreement also gave Syria a justification to continue to interfere in Lebanese politics. Although no Lebanese faction definitively won the civil war, Syria was the true winner of the conflict. Intervening first in 1976, Syria had come to occupy the vast majority of Lebanese territory by the end of the war, strategically helping different sides while increasing its own power in the country. The Ta'if Agreement reflected that almost all factions had accepted the reality of Syrian occupation, and the agreement even legitimated the indefinite prolongation of a Syrian military presence in Lebanon. After the war, Damascus used its military and intelligence apparatus to muzzle journalists, fill the government with allies, and cripple all opposition to its occupation in what was known as the *Pax Syriana*. The Ta'if Agreement legitimated the continued presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon, and Syria conditioned its eventual withdrawal on the abolition of confessionalism. In reality, this meant that Syria would remain in Lebanon indefinitely, as it was obvious that confessionalism would not be phased out at any point in the near future.[196] Indeed, Syria used the continued sectarian divisions in Lebanon to justify its occupation as a peacekeeping mission to neutralise the possibility of another war.[197]

There has been small, fragile progress to a post-sectarian Lebanon. In 2005, the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, orchestrated by Syria and Hizballah, brought a million Lebanese to protest against Syrian interference in Lebanon, leading to the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon several months later. Hariri had objected to the illegal extension of the term of President Émile Lahoud, a close ally of Damascus, the previous year, resigning as prime minister in protest. The protests against the assassination of

[195] Élisabeth Picard, "Les habits neufs du communautarisme libanais," *Cultures et Conflits* 15-16 (1994): 49-70.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Traboulsi, 251.

Hariri brought Lebanese of all religious confessions together in an unprecedented show of national unity and support for Lebanese sovereignty that became known as the Cedar Revolution.[198] Even then, however, sectarian politics were never entirely absent, as both of the main Shi'a parties, Amal and Hizballah, defended the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Although Syria withdrew its forces from Lebanon after the Cedar Revolution, Hizballah has continued to hold the rest of Lebanon hostage with Syrian support in the years since the Cedar Revolution. Hizballah unilaterally drew Lebanon into a disastrous 2006 war with Israel and took over much of the country during a 2008 political crisis, surrounding the homes of anti-Hizballah politicians and neutralising their security forces. The 2008 crisis eventually ended with the election of army chief Michel Sleiman as a consensus candidate for president. Still, the episode underscored the fact that Lebanon remains as internally divided as ever, with religious factions willing to cause the state to implode to advance their own interests. Hizballah again used its weight in 2011 to bring down a government led by Rafiq Hariri's son, Saad, in an attempt to block continued funding for the UN-backed investigation into Hariri's murder.[199] Even over a decade after the events of 2008, Hizballah remains the most powerful force in Lebanon, with capabilities beyond those of the Lebanese military.[200] With external actors like Syria and Iran continuing to exert influence through local clients like Hizballah who are looking for leverage against opposing factions and religious sects, it is questionable whether Lebanon ever truly became independent again after its civil war. As local factions continue to turn to external patrons to gain an advantage over their local Lebanese rivals, Lebanon is today what Tom Najem calls a "penetrated state" with a dubious degree of sovereignty or internal cohesion.[201]

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[198] Touma, 33.
[199] "Lebanese government collapses," Al Jazeera, 13 January 2011.
[200] Robert Fisk, "Hezbollah threatens the peaceful and non-sectarian protests in Lebanon," *The Independent*, 25 October 2019.
[201] Tom Najem, "Lebanon and Europe: The Foreign Policy of a Penetrated State," *The Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2003): 212.

In more recent years, there have been increasing signs of dissatisfaction with the Lebanese confessional system. As we have seen, the confessional system allows certain groups to hold the country hostage. In 2015, one such incident led to the suspension of waste collection services, leading the streets of Beirut to become inundated with garbage. Protests against the government erupted, and the protest movement led to the formation of a non-sectarian civil society coalition focused on good governance, Beirut Madinati, to contest the 2016 municipal elections. While it did not win, Beirut Madinati's solid performance paved the way for a civil society candidate, Paula Yacoubian, to win a seat from East Beirut in the 2018 parliamentary elections, defeating candidates from lists backed by the *zu'ama*. While one seat out of 128 is not much, there are growing signs of dissatisfaction with the *zu'ama* and their disastrous type of politics Another wave of protests erupted in October 2019 in response to the inability of the government to provide basic services as well as major tax hikes during a fiscal crisis. Many protesters called for removing the *zu'ama* from office and the end of the confessional system that had allowed them to thrive for so many decades, becoming fantastically wealthy while keeping the state too weak to provide services to Lebanese citizens.[202] While the protests did not immediately lead to the ouster of the *zu'ama*, the emergence of popular movements challenging the *zu'ama* and confessionalism over the past decade is at least a small reason for optimism.

Part IV: Lessons and Implications

What lessons do India and Lebanon have to offer?

Both India and Lebanon were founded on an idea of creating unity from diversity. As we can see, however, the paths each county took were considerably different from each other, even as they wrestled with similar questions. India, while far more successful than Lebanon, finds its state-nation under threat from a powerful Hindu nationalist movement opposed to the

[202] Sune Haugbolle, "Lebanon Has Suffered From Sectarianism for Too Long," *Foreign Policy*, 1 November 2019.

pluralistic and secular ideals of India's founders. Lebanon, meanwhile, has yet to overcome the lack of national cohesion that caused the country's civil war. Looking back at both cases, what are the overall lessons and implications of Lebanon and India's attempts at building diverse democracies?

1. Pre-independence legacies matter

India benefited from its pre-independence history, while Lebanon suffered from it. India's independence movement created a sense of national unity that, while originally aimed against the British, proved powerful enough to hold the diverse peoples of India together after independence. Through mass participation in an independence movement expressly designed to respect Indians' other salient identities, people began to imagine themselves as Indians as much as they would imagine themselves as members of particular ethnolinguistic or religious communities. The Indian independence movement was also led and framed by leaders like Gandhi and Nehru who sought to construct an identity and a narrative of Indian history emphasising that India's very unity was in its diversity. While this did not in any way guarantee the success of India as a state-nation after independence, it did provide an invaluable foundation for India's political leaders to work with after independence.

Lebanon, on the other hand, achieved independence with a much hollower foundation. A small Lebanon with an overwhelming Christian majority would have been economically unviable, leading Maronite leaders to successfully push for the addition of many Muslim regions to form Greater Lebanon. Approximately half of Lebanon's population at independence thus resented having been drawn into the borders of Lebanon, a state that they believed had no historical legitimacy. Pre-independence politics in Lebanon also resembled an elite-based consociational system, with Christian elites trying to obtain buy-in from their (mostly Sunni) Muslim counterparts and elites on all sides claiming to act on behalf of other members of their religious sect. In contrast to the mass mobilisation of the Indian

independence movement, average Lebanese citizens did not have a common experience to forge a shared national consciousness before the end of the French mandate. Lebanon's political system, designed by and for elites, would thus survive only so long as elites from both sides felt that it was in their interest to cooperate with the other side. When that ceased to be the case, there was no sense of shared Lebanese identity to prevent Lebanon's various sects from turning on each other.

The decades before independence in each country set Lebanon and India down paths that were difficult to deviate from. The legacy of the late colonial period thus worked to the benefit of India and to the detriment of Lebanon.

2. Proper institutional design is necessary but not sufficient for the survival of a state-nation

While Lebanon and India started down different paths before independence, neither state deviated from its path in the years after independence. While India consolidated its status as achieved most of the characteristics of a state-nation in the first few decades after independence, Lebanon went down a different route by doubling down on its confessional model.

As we have seen, India benefited from a stronger sense of national identity and cohesion at the time of independence. Yet India's first generation of post-independence leaders also deserve credit for not squandering that sense of shared Indianness, especially since Indians could no longer unite around their opposition to British colonial rule.

First, India refused to give in to the logic of two-nation theory according to which Pakistan was to be a state for Muslims and India a state for Hindus. Instead, the framers of India's constitution emphasised that India was equally home to all of its religious communities and created a secular state that would guarantee equal freedoms and rights to followers of all faiths in India. In doing so, they reaffirmed the pluralistic national vision of

figures like Nehru and Gandhi and made it possible for Hindus and Muslims alike to see themselves as equally part of the Indian nation.

Additionally, India's leaders ensured that speakers of all of India's languages could feel equally part of India by ultimately acceding to popular demands to make English and Hindi permanently co-official. Additionally, the creation of linguistic states is another major achievement of India's state-nation experiment. Linguistic federalism allows for the expression of regional linguistic identities within the framework of the larger Indian state. As Ramachandra Guha points out, the "creation of linguistic states has acted as a largely constructive channel for provincial pride. It has proved quite feasible to be peaceably Kannadiga—or Tamil, or Oriya—as well as contentedly Indian."[203] In a sense, the tiered nature of Indian federalism reflects how India is conceived of as a nation, with an Indian national identity layered above regional ethnolinguistic identities. India's linguistic federalism has been so successful that it is now considered a model to copy in countries with similar internal diversity.[204]

India's institutional choices thus made it possible for Indians to identify with India both as a nation and a state regardless of their religion or mother tongue. Through these institutional choices, there was no conflict between identifying as Tamil or Bengali and Indian at the same time. The same was not true for Tamils of Sri Lanka or Bengalis in Pakistan, who both ended up launching violent secessionist revolts against their respective governments. India's success is a reminder that the right institutional choices, supported by an inclusive national identity, can hold vastly different groups together peacefully in the same state. Even more encouragingly, India has been able to successfully integrate areas like Mizoram that did not even participate in the independence movement.

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[203] Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 208.
[204] Varshney, *Battles Half Won*, 32.

India thus achieved all the major foundations of a state-nation: a layering of complementary identities, state support for multiple cultural identities (both linguistic and religious), a strong federal system, and the ability for regional autonomist movements to work within the framework of the larger state, often entering into coalitions with larger national parties.

If Lebanon's pre-independence politics were inauspicious, its post-independence institutional choices were equally as harmful to the country's prospects of becoming a stable state-nation. The National Pact, as we have seen, placed a bandage over the conflict around Lebanon's national identity, promoting a compromise vision that was not really acceptable to either side. While India made accommodations for its minority communities, it never compromised the idea of secular citizenship like Lebanon did. In India, except for limited caste-based reservations, all citizens are still equal in rights and duties regardless of their other identities. In Lebanon, on the other hand, citizens exist only through their religious affiliation, and their rights are shaped and limited according to the religion to which they belong.

While the confessional system might have given each religious group a stake in state power, it encouraged Lebanese to see themselves first as members of religious communities. The state did not represent the unity of the Lebanese people as much as it did a source of patronage for confessional elites to fight over, with elites pushing for a more advantageous arrangement for their community. Lebanon's politicians ultimately did not care as much about the good of Lebanon as they did about the interests of their sect and access to patronage. The country ended up paying the price for the choices they made.

The case of Lebanon reminds us that there are ways to regulate internal ethnic or religious divides that can be counterproductive, buying a period of peace at the price of reinforcing the very divisions that they are meant to alleviate. The National Pact was a temporary fix that covered up the underlying hollowness of Lebanon as both a state and a

nation. In fact, diagnosing the roots of Lebanon's civil war presents a chicken-and-egg challenge, because Lebanon's weak national identity and the institutions that kept Lebanese citizens dived were both mutually reinforcing. This is why, although the right institutional choices are necessary, they are not sufficient. To be viable, institutions must be supported by a well-established imagined political community and vice versa.

3. State-nations can be undone

In his last address before India's constituent assembly, Ambedkar noted that the legal framework established by the constitution would not be enough to preserve India's democracy. As he noted, "the constitution can provide only the organs of state such as the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the state depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics. Who can say how the people of India and their parties will behave?"[205] Ambedkar's question, as we have seen, is as relevant as ever today.

Much had to turn out exactly right for India's state-nation to even exist in the first place. And while India's state-nation seems as secure as ever on the linguistic front, the threat to religious pluralism in India is greater today than at any time since independence. Although the BJP has suffered a series of setbacks in recent state assembly elections that show that it is not invincible, Modi and his party are trying to remake the Indian state according to their own variety of Indian nationalism, a chauvinistic nationalism that places Hindus above all others. Should Hindu nationalism continue to gain traction at the expense of the pluralistic Gandhian-Nehruvian Indian nationalism and state institutions be remade to reflect Hindu nationalist ideology, that would mean the end of India's state-nation experiment. The fact that so many Indians, most of them not Muslim, have turned out in support of Indian secularism is a

[205] CAD, Vol. 11, 975.

heartening sign. Still, the situation is a reminder that like all political systems, state-nations will only survive if constantly maintained by politicians and voters.

4. We-feelings matter

Finally, the most important lesson that the cases of India and Lebanon offer is that, to borrow Stepan, Linz, and Yadav's term, "we-feelings" matter a great deal in determining whether state-nations succeed or fail.

Lebanon's attempt at holding its constituent religious groups together in the framework of a democratic state was ultimately fatally undermined by the fact that the Lebanese did not see themselves as part of the same imagined political community. When faced with external threats to national security and sovereignty, Lebanon ended up coming apart rather than coming together precisely because many Lebanese were happy to side with outsiders against their fellow citizens to advance the interests of their own sect.

The Lebanese model underlines the limits of elite-based consociational democracies. Lebanon did not adopt state-nation policies that would have led to a successful layering of identities. Instead, Lebanon's leaders, the *zu'ama*, decided that it would be better to build a system built around competition for power among religious sects. While this might have made the *zu'ama* more secure in their positions as providers of protection and patronage, it did not foster the sense of oneness that India's institutional arrangements did. The Lebanese consociational system worked well so long as the confessional elites thought it beneficial for themselves to work with each other. When they ceased to do so, as was the case in 1958 and 1975, the system's frailty showed itself and the state collapsed because its foundation—which should have been a deeply internalised sense of Lebanese patriotism—was hollow all along. Unlike India, Lebanon was never truly pluralistic. Instead, it would be more accurate to describe it as a mosaic of self-interested sects that did not care about the overall well-being of

Lebanon or other Lebanese.[206] While Nehru saw an India united behind a sense of "common living and common purpose," such a sentiment was manifestly absent in Lebanon.[207] This is not to say that India's history has been perfect. While the rise of Hindu nationalism shows that India's state-nation is fragile, the fact that it has done so well for so long testifies to the strength of the foundation on which it was built.

Lebanon never had figures like Gandhi, who rallied people across salient social divisions behind a common national project, or Nehru, who articulated an inclusive national history and vision that could then be used as the basis for building a state that promoted national cohesion. Nor did it have a truly national party like the INC that served as a vehicle for mass mobilisation and creating a sense of national unity across social divides. Instead, Lebanon was cursed with largely narrow-minded *zu'ama* who fostered vertical patronage networks at the expense of building horizontal social connections through a genuinely participatory democracy. The resulting lack of national unity that plagued Lebanon since independence goes a long way in explaining why India has been more successful as a state-nation and a democracy.

While both India and Lebanon rejected the idea of a homogeneous nation-state in favour of a more pluralistic model, only India can truly be classified as a state-nation. With its lower levels of national cohesion, a far weaker "we-feeling," and a political system based on elite bargaining instead of cross-sectarian popular political movements, Lebanon's attempt at managing its internal diversity resembles more closely the consociational democracy model proposed by Lijphart. Although recent events have called into question the future of India's state-nation, the decades of history examined here suggest that India's state-nation experiment offers a more sustainable and durable model for democratically managing diverse societies, a

[206] Mackey, 11.
[207] Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 44.

model that recognises the importance of well-designed institutions supported by a deeply-felt and pluralistic national identity.

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