

THE RISE OF KASHMIRIYAT: PEOPLE-BUILDING IN 20TH CENTURY KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT:

The rise of Kashmiri nationalism in the early 20th century is best explained by an elite-driven, people-building model advocated by Rogers Smith, a political scientist. Sheikh Abdullah, considered by many as the father of Kashmiri nationalism, constructed a new constitutive story known as Kashmiriyat which redefined existing national identities that were previously delineated along religious and ethnic boundaries. The success of Kashmiriyat explains Kashmir's refusal to support Pakistani insurgents in the Second Indo-Pakistan War and the differential success of Muslim nationalism in Kashmir compared to Pakistan.

Introduction

In this paper, I argue that the rise of Kashmiri nationalism is best explained by Rogers Smith's elite-driven, people-building model.¹ I will be working with Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy requiring that ethnic boundaries should not cut across national lines.² In addition, I will draw heavily on Robert Bates's material resources logic for people-building and Mark Beissinger's discussion of demonstration effects and cycles of mobilization. My analysis will use these models to focus on the temporal variation of nationalism in the Kashmir Valley from the turn of the 20th century until the Second Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.

Before describing the development of Kashmiri nationalism, I will briefly summarize Smith's people-building model.³ Smith's theoretical framework of people-building on three key assumptions: political communities are neither natural nor primordial, political communities are constructed by elites who articulate and institutionalize conceptions of political peoplehood, and both leaders and citizens have considerable flexibility in the type of people-building they advance and support.⁴ In political science, people-building refers to the construction of a community with a common identity.

From these assumptions, Smith argues that competing narratives and constitutive stories will be a prominent component of any people-building process. A constitutive story is defined as an intergenerational national myth that proclaims certain attributes or characteristics as intrinsic to a person's identity, leading to membership in a greater political community. Second, Smith claims that leaders of the community will always pursue two goals: persuading people to subscribe to the political identity they are advancing and to accept the leaders as legitimate authorities. In addition, he argues that people-building is inherently a competitive process that requires leaders to be wary of competing narratives and to continually advance their particular constitutive story. Furthermore, Smith believes that any people-building approach must redefine existing political loyalties or identities. Finally, he declares that people-building must be exclusive: leaders cannot incorporate people that challenge the constitutive story or people who the core constituents would not accept. Many of the attributes of Smith's model follow logically from the definition of people-building. In order to construct a community with a common identity, existing identities must be renegotiated.

Smith then describes the process of people building. He argues that demonstrating trust and worth is necessary and sufficient for people-building. In other words, Smith believes that trust and worth is required for people-building to be successful, and that demonstrating trust and worth by itself will lead to people-building. He defines trust as the belief that the leader is striving to advance the community's interests and worth as the belief that the leader has the capacity to do so. Finally, Smith claims that people-building succeeds once economic power, political power, and the constitutive story are able to attract a critical mass of adherents.

Although Smith describes a general model of successful people-building, he is vague in regards to specific strategies for people-building. As a result, I will draw on a

1 Rogers Smith, "Citizenship and the politics of people-building," *Citizenship Studies* 5 (2001), 73-96

2 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (New York: Cornell UP, 1983).

3 Rogers Smith is a political scientist famous for his work on political development and citizenship. He is currently a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

4 Smith, "Citizenship and the politics of people-building," 73-96

modified version of Bates's material resource logic which argues that, "ethnic groups persist largely because of their capacity to extract goods and services from the modern sector...insofar as they provide these benefits to their members, they are able to gain their support and achieve their loyalty."⁵ In this case, I will use Barth's definition of ethnicity as a delineated boundary between groups.⁶

Brief Overview of Kashmiri Nationalism as People-Building

The concept of Kashmiri nationalism initially began in the early 20th century as a response to excessive abuse from the Dogra rulers, who were viewed as foreign and illegitimate. The Dogra rulers were descendents of Hindu Rajputs and spoke a separate language known as Dogri. In its nascent stages from 1931 through 1939, Kashmiri nationalism was not originally a nationalist movement but rather a Muslim political movement designed to correct perceived inequities in the Dogra government. Although initially formulated along religious lines, this political movement expanded to include all religions, resulting in the conceptualization of a unique Kashmiri nationalist identity in 1939, signified by the transformation of the Muslim Conference into the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

The expansion from a Muslim Conference to a National Conference necessitated the creation of a constitutive story known as Kashmiriyat, which posited that Muslims and Hindus in the Kashmir region shared a distinct Kashmiri identity. Sheikh Abdullah⁷ and the Kashmiri nationalists spread the idea of Kashmiriyat through a combination of newspaper articles, political rallies, populist appeals for land reform and political equality, and religious sermons. In accordance with Smith's model, Kashmiri nationalists emphasized both the validity of Kashmiriyat as a political identity and the legitimacy of the National Conference as a representative of Kashmiriyat. In addition, competing people-building narratives emphasizing religion as the primary basis of loyalty forced Kashmiri nationalists to redefine previous conceptualizations of Kashmiri identity to embrace all religions. Finally, the inherent exclusionary nature of people-building and the constitutive story prevented Abdullah and the Kashmiri nationalists from fully incorporating all religions and ethnicities, specifically the Jammu and Poonch Muslims and the Dogra Rajputs, into the new Kashmiri political identity.

Trust, the first of Smith's conditions for people-building, was evidenced by the National Conference's populist platform and propaganda and cemented by the *Naya Kashmir* document which called for the abolishment of the oppressive feudal system and the creation of a democratic constitutional monarchy. Worth, the second condition, was demonstrated by the success of the Quit Kashmir movement and the passage of the Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act and the Distressed Debtors Relief Act.

In regards to the process of people-building, the National Conference secured trust and worth by employing a people-building logic focused on material resources. They attracted followers and demonstrated their legitimacy by advancing populist demands such as land reform and debt relief and by guaranteeing greater opportunities

5 Robert Bates, "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 6, no. 4 (1974), 471.

6 Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (New York: Little Brown & Co, 1969), 15.

7 Abdullah's ancestors were Hindu Pandits who had converted to Islam. Abdullah was a chemist by training, but became politically active after the Dogra government rejected his application for a state government job.

within the civil and military branches. For many impoverished Kashmiris, the National Conference offered greater wealth and opportunity.

Kashmir before 1900

The Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir came into existence after the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845, when Gulab Singh, a Sikh who had fought on the British side in the First Anglo-Sikh War, bought what is now the Kashmir Valley for 7.5 million rupees.⁸ His son, Ranbir Singh, expanded the territory to include most of modern-day Jammu and Kashmir. The state was ruled autonomously until the province came under British rule following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The relevant aspect of Kashmir's early history is the artificial nature of its creation. Kashmir's territorial boundaries were arbitrarily created by a simple purchase of land and did not reflect the ethnic, religious, or linguistic differences of the region.

Demographics and Geography in the Early 20th Century

The map below (Figure 1) originally appeared in a British gazetteer published in 1909. The boundaries of the different provinces were consistent from the turn of the century until the publication of the map. The Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir consists primarily of the three main provinces circled in the map: Jammu, the Vale of Kashmir, and Ladakh. Poonch, located to the west of Kashmir, was administered as a separate state until its incorporation in 1936. According to the 1901 census, the total population of the Kashmir province was approximately 2.9 million people, with 2.15 million Muslims, 689,073 Hindus, 25,828 Sikhs, and 35,047 Buddhists⁹. Despite the religious diversity, 89% of the population spoke Kashur (used interchangeably with Kashmiri), the Kashmiri language.



Figure 1¹⁰

⁸ Jyothi Das Gupta, *Jammu and Kashmir* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1968).

⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 15.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 99-102.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The Kashmir Valley, also known as the Vale, was over 93% Muslim but had an influential Hindu minority known as the Pandits. The Pandits were Kashmiri Brahmins and were generally more educated than the rest of the population. The Vale had specific customs and styles of dress not seen in other parts of the state, including the pheran, a long Kashmiri gown, and the kangri, a earthen fire pot used to keep warm.¹¹ The majority of the Muslims were Sunni but there was a small Sufi population that had created a number of popular shrines visited by both Muslims and Hindus. Almost all of the residents spoke Kashmiri.

Jammu, the southern province, was the center of power of the Dogra dynasty. While the Hindu population comprised 50% of the province's population, they were concentrated near the center. In contrast, Muslims held a 61.3% majority in the periphery. Unlike the Pandits, Hindus in Jammu hailed from a variety of castes. The main languages spoken were Dogri and Punjabi.¹²

In comparison, Ladakh was sparsely populated and had little influence in the state. The population was primarily Buddhist and most of the residents had Tibetan ties. Ladakhi and Kashur were the most common languages.¹³

The great diversity of ethnicities, languages, and religions meant that any people-building approach had to reconcile a number of different potential boundaries and create a coherent sense of national identity. The diversity also indicates the incredible difficulty of incorporating all the different boundaries under one constitutive story.

Subjugation under Dogra Rule

One of the key aspects of the development of a constitutive story is defining the historical enemies of the community. The subjugation of the Kashmiri population under the Dogra throne for nearly eighty years (1857-1931) allowed Abdullah and the Kashmiri nationalists the opportunity to cast the Dogras as foreign oppressors and illegitimate rulers.

Since their accession to power, the Dogra rulers had instituted a number of policies that restricted the economic and political freedom of the other groups in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁴ As noted Kashmiri historian Prem Nath Bazaz argues, "the Dogras have always regarded Jammu as their home and Kashmir [Valley] as the conquered country...they established a Dogra oligarchy...in which all non-Dogra communities were...inferiors."¹⁵ Despite a six percent literacy rate,¹⁶ the Dogras held nearly every civil service and military service position. In comparison, the highly educated Kashmiri Hindus were restricted to minor clerical posts. Unsurprisingly, the Pandits resented the Dogra government's favoritism towards the people of the Jammu province at the expense of the Pandits.¹⁷

In addition to excluding other Hindus from civil and military positions, the

11 Iffat Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict and International Dispute* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22.

12 *The Times of India*, June 5, 1934.

13 Paul Bowers, *Kashmir* (House of Commons Library, 2004), 11

14 Henceforth, I will refer to the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir as Kashmir and the Kashmir Valley as either the Vale or the Valley.

15 Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir* (New Delhi: National Book Foundation, 1954), 91.

16 Malik, *Kashmir*, 71.

17 *Ibid.*, 25.

Dogra dynasty also instituted a feudal system that oppressed the Muslim majority, most of whom were farmers. The Dogras granted large fiefs called *jagirs* to landlords in return for taxes that went straight to the Maharaja's personal expenditures. In fact, nearly 1/3 of state revenue was used explicitly for the king's personal expenses, despite a complete lack of rural infrastructure, such as roads and irrigation systems, (what does "rural infrastructure" mean in this context?) and an impoverished population averaging with an average annual household income of \$25.¹⁸ In addition, the Dogras prevented Kashmiri Muslims from owning land and actively pursued an unofficial discrimination policy, even going as far as banning portions of the traditional Friday prayer.

The Dogra oppression of both Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus provided an opportunity for competing narratives to emphasize the illegitimacy of the current dynasty. The lack of existing political loyalties meant that any redefinition would be fairly simple. In addition, efforts to build trust and demonstrate worth could focus on a few key areas: land reform, religious tolerance, and equality in appointment to government positions.

In addition, the Dogra subjugation also had important consequences for the future of the Kashmiri nationalist movement and its constitutive story. When formulating his conceptualization of the Kashmiri national identity, Abdullah could not incorporate the Jammu Hindus into the constitutive story without alienating the Pandits and the Muslims Kashmiris due to their close relationship¹⁹ with the ruling Dogra dynasty. As a result, Jammu was not included in the constitutive story of Kashmiriyat, which emphasized only the shared bonds between Kashmiri Muslims and the Pandits.²⁰ Although Abdullah tried to court the Jammu Hindus for electoral purposes in later decades, the effort was completely unsuccessful. Fittingly, Jammu later developed its own competing Hindu nationalist movement known as Praja Parishad in 1952 that fiercely opposed Abdullah and the National Conference.²¹

Muslim Political Mobilization

Continued subjugation under the Dogra dynasty led to a nascent Muslim political movement known as the Mirwaiz-i-Kashmir in 1905. Rasul Shah, the leader of the movement, traveled to mosques around the Vale and preached against deification of saints while also emphasizing a more conservative interpretation of Islam. The Mirwaiz was incredibly successful – in fact, over 100,000 people attended a funeral procession for one of its leaders in 1931.²² As a result, the Muslim population was united under a single ruler for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir history. Although Mirwaiz started as a religious movement, it began to petition the state with hopes of correcting political and economic grievance, such as greater Muslim representation. The group issued three memorandums which demanded the appointment of a Muslim to the head of the Education Department, greater Muslim employment in civil services, and land reform,

18 Alice Thorner, "The Issues in Kashmir," *Far Eastern Survey* 17, no. 15 (August 1948), 174.

19 Jammu Hindus were often given coveted government jobs and positions.

20 Balraj Puri, "Kashmiriyat: The Vitality of Kashmiri Identity," *Contemporary South Asia* 4, no. 1 (March 1995), 3.

21 Norman Palmer, "The Changing Scene in Kashmir," *Far Eastern Survey* 22, no. 12 (November 1953), 159.

22 Malik, *Kashmir*, 29.

respectively.²³ For the first time in state history, a religious community was advancing political causes – a key first step in the development of Kashmiri nationalism.

In accordance with Smith's people-building model, the Mirwaiz cultivated trust by trying to advance the Muslim community's values and interests. In addition, the group had successfully defined its community on the basis of religion and the group's leaders had established themselves as the legitimate head of the community. However, the movement had not attacked the legitimacy of the Dogra dynasty, still lacked a constitutive story, and had yet to prove its worth by demonstrating the capacity to advance the community's interests.

In the 1920s, a group of Kashmiri university graduates began meeting at a Reading Room in Srinagar, the largest city in the Vale. These graduates published articles in widely read Muslim newspapers such as the *Siyasat*, the *Muslim Outlook*, and the *Inqilab* and began distributing pamphlets in mosques. It was the Reading Room that catapulted Sheikh Abdullah onto the political scene. Abdullah's initial popularity stemmed from his rhetorical ability as a religious leader²⁴ but the charismatic schoolteacher soon found himself at the head of an increasingly powerful political movement.

The Muslim Conference

A series of events in Jammu on July 13, 1931, including the destruction of a mosque, interruption of a sermon, and the desecration of a Quran, led religious leaders in Jammu and Kashmir to declare that their religion was under attack. The Dogra regime responded by jailing the dissenters, prompting further public outcry. Over 7000 Muslims stormed the jail and demanded the release of the prisoners. In response, the police opened fire and over twenty-one people were killed. By the end of the day over 163 people were either killed or injured.²⁵

Although most of the victims were Hindu Dogras, the violence was aimed at the state rather than the Hindu population as a whole. As Bazaz notes, "the attack on the jail was in no way directed against the Hindus...it was a fight of the tyrannized against their tyrants."²⁶

The events of July 13 prompted the formation of the All-India Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. Like the Mirwaiz, the Conference's primary intent was to encourage both Jammu and Kashmir Muslims to organize politically. Sheikh Abdullah, the organization's first president, drew support from a diverse Muslim body of leaders united by the belief "that the Muslims were being exploited by the Hindu community."²⁷

The growing popularity of the Muslim political movement led Hindu leaders, both Dogras and Pandits, to fear potential Muslim domination. As a result, "the Hindus became definitely hostile to the Muslim movement and openly and solidly joined the Government forces to get it suppressed."²⁸ This growing distrust prompted Kashmiri Pandits, who had previously supported the Kashmiri Muslim struggle against Dogra

23 Ibid., 31.

24 Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (New York: Tauris, 1996), 103.

25 Prem Nath Bazaz, *Kashmir in Crucible* (New Delhi: National Book Foundation, 1954), 150.

26 Ibid., 131.

27 Malik, *Kashmir*, 45.

28 Quoted in Prem Nath Bazaz, *Kashmir in Crucible* (New Delhi: National Book Foundation, 1954), 41.

oppression, to denounce the recommendations of the Glancy Commission Report which called for greater civil liberties for Muslims and more Muslim government appointments. The Rajput and Hindu Associations even put up posters directly attacking the Muslim Conference.

The increasing politicization of religious boundaries threatened to derail the greater struggle against the oppressive Dogra regime. Instead of working together to secure greater political and economic benefits, the Kashmiri Pandits and the Kashmiri Muslims were being turned against each other by competing narratives that emphasized religion as the basis of political loyalty.

National Conference and the Beginning of Kashmiri Nationalism

The growing political unrest in Kashmir attracted the attention of Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the Indian National Congress. Nehru contacted Abdullah and arranged a meeting with the National Conference leader in which Nehru urged Abdullah to turn the Muslim National Conference into a secular, nationalist movement. Abdullah himself stated that, “[Nehru] explained that by opening the membership to all, any campaign against the ruler would gain more strength.”²⁹ Sheikh Abdullah had been closely following the Indian campaign for independence against the British, which provided a ready template for widespread mobilization. According to political scientist Mark Beissinger, “cycles of mobilization...feed off connections that agents make.”³⁰ In this case, the Indian national movement and Nehru gave Abdullah the script for Kashmiri political mobilization.

On March 26, 1938, Abdullah redefined the goals of the Muslim National Conference and opened up membership to all people, “irrespective of caste, creed, or religion.”³¹ In his annual party address, Abdullah stated:

Like us the majority of Hindus and Sikhs have immensely suffered at the hands of the irresponsible government. They are also steeped in deep ignorance, have to pay large taxes and are in debt and are starving... We must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs who like ourselves believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of a irresponsible rule.

Abdullah’s statement lends credence to Smith’s argument that political communities are asymmetrically created by leaders articulating conceptions of political peoplehood, and that these leaders have considerable freedom in the type of peoplehood they choose to adopt.

Originally, the Kashmiri political movement was a response to religious, political, and economic oppression of the Muslim community. However, after Abdullah’s meeting with Nehru – a clear example of a demonstration effect – the political movement was re-conceptualized to include Hindus and Sikhs. This demonstrates both that Abdullah was capable of asymmetrically institutionalizing a different concept of peoplehood and that he had considerable freedom to define the boundaries of this community.

²⁹ According to Smith’s model, this articulation of peoplehood required a new Quoted in Aditya Bhattacharjea, *Kashmir: The Wounded Valley* (New Delhi, South Asia Books, 1994), 74.

³⁰ Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 174.

³¹ Thorner, “The Issues in Kashmir,” 174.

constitutive story justifying the inclusion of these groups, an effort by leaders to have these groups embrace membership and acknowledge the National Conference's legitimacy, a constant rejection of competing narratives, a redefinition of existing political loyalties, and an exclusion of other groups.

In the next sections, I show that that the creation and dissemination of Kashmiriyat, the expulsion of conservative Muslim ideologues, the incorporation of other national groups, and the exclusion of non-Kashmiris all match the five points of Smith's model of people-building. In the following section, I describe the National Conference's strategy for securing trust and worth, which was characterized primarily by an emphasis on greater material gain.

Kashmiriyat

In order to expand the membership of the Muslim Conference and turn it into a secular, nationalist ideology, Abdullah and other Kashmiri nationalist leaders had to redefine the basis of political loyalty. Instead of focusing on religious unity, Abdullah pushed forward the idea of Kashmiriyat which emphasized the unique history of the Kashmiri people, the syncretism of various religious beliefs in the Vale, and the historical peace between different religions and ethnicities in the Vale. This represented a marked change from prior conceptualizations of identity which focused primarily on differences of religion and ethnicity between the different groups in Kashmir.

To lend credence to Kashmiriyat, the nationalist movement emphasized the recent discovery of lost historical texts, the most important of which was the *Rajatarangini*, written in 1149 by Kalhana. Using the *Rajatarangini*, Kashmiri nationalists traced the story of the Kashmiri people over the past 2000 years despite the fact that most historians, such as Prem Nath Bazaz, acknowledged the artificial nature of the current Kashmiri state.

The development of the constitutive story and Kashmiriyat lends credence to Smith's first assumption that no political community is natural or primordial. In fact, the copy of the *Rajatarangini* obtained by the National Conference originally belonged to a Kashmiri Pandit who had a vested interest in the new national myth. A review of the accepted translation of *Rajatarangini* in the *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* in 1901 revealed that there were gross chronological inaccuracies in the text, providing further evidence that the idea of Kashmiriyat was an artificial, asymmetrical construction advanced by nationalist elites.³²

Kashmiriyat was disseminated through religious sermons in mosques, political rallies by the National Conference, and Muslim newspapers and magazines. Prominent writers and historians such as Mohammad Din Fauq were also important in advancing the idea of Kashmiriyat. Fauq reconciled ethnic differences by arguing that "even the people who came from Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkastan as late as 600 or 700 years ago were so mixed with Kashmiri Muslims in culture, civilization and matrimonial relations that 'all non-Kashmiri traces are completely absent from their life.'"³³ In addition, even Nehru lent credence to the new constitutive story with his declaration that, "Kashmir dominated the intellectual scene of the country [India] for

32 E. J. Rapson, "Kalhana's Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir by M. A. Stein," review of Kalhana's Rajatarangini by M.A. Stein, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (April 1901), 357.

33 G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashmir* (New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1974), 696.

almost 2000 years.”³⁴ Although Nehru supported the secular Nationalist Conference primarily to undercut the Muslim League and the Muslim Conference which threatened the ideology of the Indian National Congress, his support was essential for winning Hindu support for the National Conference.

By continually emphasizing the shared history and culture of all Kashmiris, Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference “raised the pitch of the Kashmiri ethnic identity, Kashmiriyat, to such heights that the religious edge of that identity had been subdued.”³⁵ A Muslim political movement was transformed into a secular, nationalist movement.

However, Kashmiriyat never explicitly mentioned Jammu Muslims and instead focused on religious syncretism in the Vale. This had important consequences for future political movements in Kashmir and for the different regional responses to Pakistani invasion in the Second Indo-Pakistani War.

Kashmiriyat and the People-Building Model

The creation and dissemination of Kashmiriyat perfectly reflect Smith’s theoretical framework for people-building. Smith’s first component of people-building is the creation of a new constitutive story. Kashmiriyat clearly fits this description. It was an intergenerational national myth that traced the history of the Kashmiri people over 2000 years and proclaimed the shared culture and history of the Kashmiri people as an intrinsic part of their identity, fulfilling the first condition of people-building in Smith’s model.

The second aspect of people-building involves leaders persuading people to subscribe to the political identity they are advancing and to accept the leaders as the legitimate authorities of that identity. Abdullah and other Kashmiri elites advanced the idea of Kashmiriyat through newspapers, radio, political rallies, and religious sermons. Through the propaganda and his own charisma, Abdullah was able to secure the support of prominent Hindu voices, including the Hindu newspaper *Hamdard*,³⁶ and of Muslim religious leaders. Both groups acknowledged the National Conference as the voice of the Kashmiri identity.³⁷

In addition, people-building requires the rejection of competing narratives and a constant effort to push forth one’s own particular conceptualization of peoplehood. By emphasizing Kashmiriyat instead of Islam as the basis of political loyalty, the National Conference alienated some of its members, particularly those involved with the early Mirwaiz movement. Some religious leaders such as Yusuf Shah believed that “any political organization that represented the Muslims had to reflect their religious identity.”³⁸ Shah and his followers subscribed to the ideology of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan and the head of the Muslim League, while Abdullah and the National Conference allied themselves with the Indian National Congress, a secular, nationalist movement. To combat the influence of Shah and the Muslim Conference, Kashmiri nationalists continually emphasized that religious syncretism and tolerance

34 Puri, “Kashmiriyat,” 4.

35 Riyaz Punjabi, “Kashmir imbroglio: The socio-political roots,” *Contemporary South Asia* 4, no. 1 (March 1995), 39.

36 Malik, *Kashmir*, 51.

37 Sumit Ganguly, “Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay,” *International Security* 21, no.2 (Fall 1996), 94.

38 Malik, *Kashmir*, 52.

was an essential component of the unique shared culture and history of the Kashmiri people.

The fourth component of people-building is the redefinition of existing political loyalties. The National Conference used Kashmiriyat to change the nature of political loyalty in Kashmir. Before, political loyalty was based primarily on religious boundaries, demonstrated by the previously mentioned animosity between Kashmiri Pandit and Kashmiri Muslim political groups despite their common goals.

Finally, people-building is inherently exclusionary as it requires the delineation of group boundaries. In this case, Kashmiriyat was primarily directed at people living in the Vale of Kashmir. Although the Muslim Conference initially appealed to all Muslims, including those in Jammu, the National Conference's reach was limited by its constitutive story which emphasized the shared history of the residents of the Kashmir Valley with limited reference to Jammu. In addition, the oppression of the Kashmiri people by the Dogra Hindus also necessitated their exclusion from the constitutive story.

Trust, Worth, and the Material Resources Strategy

After describing the characteristics of elite-driven people-building, Smith expands on his theoretical framework by positing trust and worth as the two necessary and sufficient conditions for people-building. The trust condition is met when the community believes that the leaders are striving to advance the community's values and worth is demonstrated when the community believes that the leaders are capable of doing so.

The National Conference defined its community as all Kashmiris, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. However, the constitutive story was largely limited to Kashmiris living in the Vale. As a result, I will limit the trust and worth conditions to the people of the Kashmir Valley.

The National Conference articulated its commitment to advancing Kashmiri interests with the groundbreaking Naya Kashmir document in 1944. The proclamation, translated as New Kashmir, called for the abolition of the *jagir* system, the creation of a constitutional monarchy, the protection of basic civil liberties such as the freedom of religion, and greater opportunities for non-Dogras in the civil and military service.³⁹ The goals of New Kashmir resonated with both the Muslims and Hindus of the Vale. The Muslims, who generally worked on the *jagirs*, hated the oppressive Dogra feudal system. In comparison, the Pandits were tired of being relegated to minor clerical posts and desired the greater government opportunities that New Kashmir demanded. By appealing to the material interests of both groups, the National Conference was able to secure their trust.

Worth, the demonstrated capacity to advance the community's interests, was accomplished through a two-step process. The first was the Quit Kashmir movement started by Sheikh Abdullah. The second, and the most important, was the passage of the Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act and the Distressed Debtors Relief Act.

The Quit Kashmir was another example of Beissinger's demonstration effects. Modeled after Gandhi's Quit India movement,⁴⁰ Quit Kashmir denounced the legitimacy of the foreign occupier – in this case, the Dogra dynasty – and demanded

39 Punjabi, "Kashmir imbroglio," 39.

40 Gandhi's call for civil disobedience against the British government.

immediate independence. In Abdullah's autobiography, he declares that, "the people were galvanized. 'Quit Kashmir' was on the lips of every Kashmiri."⁴¹ Thousands of Kashmiris in the Vale protested against the Dogra throne, prompting the Maharaja to arrest Abdullah and 300 of his supporters.⁴² As a response, Nehru and the Indian National Congress issued a statement reprimanding the Maharaja and urging Abdullah's release. This was a clear demonstration of worth: Abdullah and the National Conference had the backing of the entire Indian independence movement and were powerful and influential enough to mobilize large numbers of Kashmiris in support of their causes.

The most profound demonstration of worth, however, occurred three years after the partition of India and Pakistan on August 15, 1947. In 1950, the National Conference, which had been granted provisional authority over the Kashmiri state after its accession to India, passed the Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act and the Distressed Debtors Relief Act of 1950. The first act reallocated any land larger than twenty-three acres to landless peasants while the second act provided debt-relief to indebted farmers. As Ganguly notes, "although these initiatives alienated a significant segment of the Jammu-based Hindu landed gentry, they won Abdullah the powerful loyalty of lower- and middle-class Muslims and Hindus."⁴³ The National Conference clearly demonstrated its capacity to advance the material interests of its targeted community and thereby secured its worth.

Accession, Autonomy, and Jailing

The primary indicator of the rise of Kashmiri nationalism in the Vale was the Second Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. After Partition on August 15, 1947, the princely states of India, which included Jammu and Kashmir, were given the option of joining either India or Pakistan. Pakistan believed that Kashmir, with its large Muslim population, rightfully belonged to Pakistan. However, Islamabad, recognizing the popularity of Abdullah, grew suspicious of the Sheikh's close ties to Nehru. As a result, Pakistan sent troops to the Poonch district, which was largely sympathetic to Pakistan and the Muslim league, to incite a revolt against the state. Pakistani troops nearly reached Srinagar, the largest city in the Vale, forcing Hari Singh, the current Dogra king, to flee to Jammu.⁴⁴ The Maharaja requested Indian assistance to expel the Pakistani invaders but was forced to sign the Instrument of Accession in return for military aid, resulting in the formal annexation of Jammu and Kashmir to India.

After annexation, Nehru gave Abdullah and the National Conference authority over the provisional government. Abdullah responded by immediately pushing for greater Kashmiri autonomy. Nationalism, as defined by British sociologist Ernest Gellner, grants political legitimacy when ethnic boundaries do not cut across national lines. As the leading proponent of Kashmiri nationalism, Abdullah fought for greater autonomy for the Kashmiri people in order to secure his own party's political legitimacy. He consistently argued that the Kashmiri people would be the sole decision-makers when it came to the question of independence or accession and demanded a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people.

However, Abdullah's requests were largely ignored by Nehru and the new

41 Sheikh Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar: An Autobiography* (New Delhi: Viking, 1993), 82.

42 Thorner, "The Issues in Kashmir," 175.

43 Ganguly, "Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency," 96.

44 Thorner, "The Issues in Kashmir," 177.

Indian government which feared that a plebiscite would result in Kashmiri defection to Pakistan.⁴⁵ As a result, Abdullah pushed even harder for greater autonomy and even approached foreign governments for assistance.⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, Abdullah was jailed for treason in 1953, prompting widespread nationalist protests that resulted in the death of sixty Kashmiris.⁴⁷ Kashmiri discontent with the state's new puppet government led to sporadic violence over the next ten years, including riots in 1955 and 1957. Kashmiri anger at the illegitimate government reached a tipping point and eventually exploded during the Hazratbal incident in 1963, leading to the Second Indo-Pakistani War.

Kashmiri Nationalism and Operation Gibraltar

The Hazratbal incident referred to alleged state government involvement in the theft of a relic from a Muslim shrine in Srinagar, prompting dissenters to set fire to properties owned by the Prime Minister.⁴⁸ The incident, which occurred months after the Indian defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, was viewed by Pakistani officials as Muslim rejection of a Hindu state government and as another sign of Indian weakness in the region. Nehru, recognizing the incident as further proof of growing Kashmiri nationalist sentiment, ordered the release of Abdullah on April 8, 1964 to appease the agitators. However, Abdullah was re-arrested after Nehru's death, leading to "renewed public protests and anti-Government agitation."⁴⁹

Pakistan, misinterpreting the anger of Kashmiri Muslims as support for accession to Pakistan, drew up plans for an invasion into Kashmir that would "liberate" the state from Indian control. The plan, Operation Gibraltar, was to have Pakistani soldiers disguise themselves as insurgents and attempt to instigate a widespread rebellion against the state. On August 5, 1965, 7,000 Pakistani troops invaded the Vale of Kashmir and tried to incite a popular rebellion against the state.⁵⁰

The people of the Vale, who were 93% Muslim and had a decade-long history of grievances against the Indian state, refused to support the Pakistani invaders, much to Islamabad's surprise. The Kashmiri Muslims, identifying with Kashmiriyat and not Islam as the primary basis of political loyalty, turned over the "insurgents" to Indian authorities, sparking the Second Indo-Pakistani War.

The refusal of Kashmiri Muslims to support the invaders was a direct result of the development of Kashmiri nationalism and the success of the people-building approach employed by Abdullah and the National Conference. Before Kashmiriyat, the primary basis of political identity in the Kashmir Valley had been religion – political movements such as the Muslim Conference and the Hindu and Rajput Associations were organized along religious lines. However, the acceptance of Kashmiriyat and its emphasis on the unique shared culture and history of the Kashmir Valley separated religion from political identity.

As a result, Kashmiri Muslims did not identify with the Pakistani insurgents and readily turned them over to Indian authorities. By mistaking Kashmiri nationalism

45 Malik, *Kashmir*, 68.

46 Ibid., 99.

47 Ibid., 106.

48 Ibid., 113.

49 Ibid., 117.

50 Julian Schofield and R.C. Tremblay, "Why Pakistan failed: tribal fociism in Kashmir," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. 19, no. 1 (March 2008), 32.

and discontent with Indian state authorities as support for Pakistan, Islamabad fundamentally erred in their assessment of Kashmiri political identity. Unlike Pakistani Muslims, Kashmiri Muslims did not define their national identity on the basis of their religion. Instead, their acceptance of Kashmiriyat resulted in a national identity tied to specific local history and traditions. As a result, the Pakistani insurgents were not viewed as fellow countrymen because of their shared religion. Instead, they were viewed as outsiders, explaining why Kashmiris resisted accession to the Pakistani state.

Alternative Explanations

Benthamite

A possible alternative explanation for the rise of Kashmiri nationalism could use a Benthamite framework that moves away from the elite-based approach and instead views national identification as the result of a rational, utility-maximizing process by each individual. Jeremy Bentham, an 18th century English philosopher, articulated the principles of utilitarianism, which advocated policies and actions that resulted in the greatest good for the greatest number of people. A Benthamite framework provides a compelling alternative because of its simplicity and intuitiveness: people will generally act according to their own self-interest.

This explanation would focus on the National Conference's populist platforms and would argue that Hindus and Muslims in the Kashmir Valley supported Abdullah and the National Conference simply because of a desire for greater material gain. The Benthamite tradition would attribute the Kashmiri refusal to support Operation Gibraltar to a rational thought process which foresaw greater material benefits from supporting India than Pakistan. It would point to the poor economic and political situation in Azad Kashmir, the Pakistani-occupied portion of the state, as a reason why the insurgents were not supported.

However, the Benthamite tradition would be unable to explain a number of important events in the rise of Kashmiri nationalism. First, it would have no answer for the shift away from religion as the basis of political identity and the reluctance of certain Muslim conservatives to support the shift. If greater material gain for all Kashmiri Muslims was possible by supporting a National Conference, why was there still a competing narrative emphasizing Islam as the basis of political identity?

Second, it would be unable to explain Kashmiri discontent with the puppet state government. Abdullah himself acknowledged the positive strides made by the Bakshi government, including the construction of two new universities, the establishment of free primary and secondary education, the construction of numerous public works projects, and the development of needed infrastructure. However, as Malik notes, "to some extent this strategy worked, in that there was little trouble in the Vale for several years...however, it failed in that it did not change the people's thinking, something that was to become apparent briefly in 1964."⁵¹

Events, contingency, and diffusion

Although the impact of various demonstration effects on the development of Kashmiri nationalism has been discussed, an explanation of Kashmiri nationalism based purely on events literature would also ignore a number of key factors.

51 Malik, *Kashmir*, 108.

An events-based approach to Kashmiri nationalism would emphasize the secular, nationalist nature of both the Indian National Congress and the National Conference. It would pay particular attention to the relationship between Nehru and Abdullah and the similarities between Abdullah's Quit Kashmir movement and Gandhi's Quit India movement. It would point specifically to the struggle for Indian independence as a formative event for Kashmiris and it would argue that this triggered a cycle of mobilization leading to numerous nationalist movements, such as Sikh nationalism and Muslim nationalism.

However, events literature would be unable to provide a satisfactory answer to why the National Conference succeeded while Muslim nationalism failed. In the Indian independence movement, both the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress succeeded since both a secular state and a Muslim state were created. Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League enjoyed immense support among Muslims in India and this could easily have diffused into Kashmir as well, triggering a cycle of Muslim political mobilization. However, the Muslim political movement in Kashmir failed despite having a readily available template to follow. Muslims in the Vale did not follow the script for mobilization established by the majority of Muslims on the subcontinent. Instead, they mostly supported a secular, nationalist ideology advanced by Abdullah's National Conference. Although events literature provides a number of key insights into the spread of nationalist ideology, its lack of theoretical purchase results in a failure to adequately explain the differential success of two competing narratives of Kashmiri nationalism.

Conclusion

A close analysis of Kashmir from the beginning of the 20th century through 1965 reveals that an elite-driven, people-building approach emphasizing material resources is the best explanation for the rise of Kashmiri nationalism. The development and dissemination of Kashmiriyat, the political, social, and economic platforms adopted by the National Conference, and the failure of Operation Gibraltar all support the use of Smith's people-building model as a theoretical framework to understand the nature of Kashmiri nationalism and its implications for contemporary issues, such as linguistic and religious nationalist movements, in South Asia.