Exploring Historical Memory and Indian Foreign Policy

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In 2015, it was claimed that the India–UK bilateral relationship is affected by 'a colonial mind set' that has led to a 'growing disconnect' between the two nations.[1] Correspondingly, the UK dropped from being India's third largest trading partner in 2000 to its twelfth largest in 2015.[2] There are many factors that one could point to for the cool bilateral relationship, including as has been suggested, India's rise, which implies that India's need for a strong bilateral relationship is less than the UK's.[3] But another, somewhat overlooked, factor is the historical relationship between the two as colonizer and colony, which continues to crop up in the relationship.

In 2013, for example, when British Prime Minister David Cameron visited India, the Indian media and public avidly discussed whether he would formally apologise for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.[4] This incident in which hundreds of innocent Indian citizens were shot dead on the orders of British Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer is seen as a symbol of the brutalities committed during the two hundred years of British colonial rule in India. When Mr Cameron visited the site, and expressed regret for the 'shameful event',[5] he was strongly condemned for his half-hearted response.[6] In July 2015, Congress Member of Parliament, Shashi Tharoor, in a speech to the Oxford Union Society that quickly went viral and earned the praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, declared that Britain should financially and symbolically compensate India for its colonial rule:

> By the end of (the) nineteenth century, the fact is that India was already Britain's biggest cash cow – the world's biggest purchaser of British goods and exports and the source for highly paid employment for British civil servants. We literally paid for our own oppression. Colonialists like Robert Clive brought their rotten boroughs in England on the proceeds of their loot in India while taking the Hindi word loot into their dictionary as well

as their habits. And the British had the gall to call him Clive of India as if he belonged to the country, when all he really did was to ensure that much of the country belonged to him.[7]

In November 2015, a lobby group of Indian businessmen and Bollywood celebrities declared they would legally challenge the British monarchy's possession of the valuable Kohinoor diamond. This group of activists hired British lawyers to initiate High Court proceedings against Queen Elizabeth II. In an interview, David de Souza, co-founder of the Indian leisure group Titos and one of the funders of the legal action, explained:

> The Koh-i-Noor is one of the many artefacts taken from India under dubious circumstances. Colonization not only robbed our people of wealth, it destroyed the country's psyche itself. It brutalised society, traces of which linger on today in the form of mass poverty, lack of education and a host of other factors.[8]

These incidents suggest that despite the demise of colonialism over five decades ago, and despite India having led an influential anti-colonial movement from which it emerged independent, historical memories of colonialism persist. Although colonialism is only one facet of the multitude of historical experiences that India has undergone, it is an important legacy.[9] Yet the identification of specific historical experiences and memories, the mechanisms of collective memory and their ongoing effects, including but not limited to colonialism, have mostly been very lightly explored in the Indian international relations (IR) and foreign policy literature. This is despite the fact that, in both the general IR and area studies literature, there is precedence for such exploration, and despite the evidence showing that historical memories have often been institutionalized in India. This chapter offers a brief overview of the ways in which writers of Indian foreign policy have dealt with historical memory before turning to its treatment in the IR and area studies literature. Finally, it shows how the historical memory of colonialism has been institutionalized in India, examines why memory and its institutionalization is an important tool for the study of Indian foreign policy and offers avenues for further research.

Historical memory and Indian foreign policy

If we examine how historical memory and legacies have been treated with respect to Indian foreign policy, generally speaking, we find three bodies of work.

In the oldest and most established body of work, academics have implicitly examined India's post-1947 identity. In essence, this literature explores whether India as a nation asserted its identity to be more than a newly independent post-colonial state. The focus here has been on broad identity-shaping ideas such as non-alignment/idealism and realism. In terms of the former, scholars have argued that Indian foreign policy was characterized by a Nehruvian idealism, stemming from the historical legacy of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehruvianism emphasized India's commitment to a number of principles including but not limited to 'liberal internationalism',[10] 'eradicating colonialism and racism',[11] 'organizing the uplift of the world's poor and dispossessed' (Ganguly, 2003, 42), a 'suspicion of superpowers',[12] and a commitment to remaining non-aligned and aloof from great power politics in the Cold War world.[13] In terms of the latter, an argument is made that in the 1990s India turned to a realist foreign policy, free from the 'manacles…of Cold War thinking…and real and imagined grievances'.[14] This thinking implied the recession of the historical legacy of Nehruvianism, both due to a realization of its failures, and/or the rise of the BJP, which in turn led India to grasp the 'significance of power as the most important dynamic in world politics'.[15]

The notion of historical memory and mechanisms is very implicit in this body of work. For those who expounded India's commitment to idealism, the 'mechanism' as it were of Nehruvianism, emanated primarily from the beliefs of a single leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was undoubtedly a powerful factor in Indian foreign policy. But there is little in-depth exploration of how and why his beliefs were propagated and institutionalized, such that even after his death, his legacy impacted India until the 1990s. The post-Cold War body of literature on the turn to realism obviously expounds a move away from the historical legacy of Nehru but again, it implies the recession of historical memories without an exploration of either the mechanisms and/or their de-emphasis or de-institutionalization. Moreover, there is little 'accompanying discussion of agency or an unpacking' of this ideational framework with reference to 'social ideas or individual beliefs'.[16]

Second, there has been work that explicitly rejects the idea of institutionalized historical memory and suggests that Indian strategic thought is notable chiefly by its absence. The work of George Tanham argues, for example, that although India has 'developed elements of a defence strategy, it has produced little formal strategic thinking and planning'.[17] While Tanham's argument is not that history or historical memory is irrelevant, he suggests that in the Indian case the lack of

an overarching Indian political entity meant that there was no institutionalized belief in a 'greater India' – 'there was little thought of India as even a collection of states that might gain from…cooperative action or agreed on interstate norms'.[18] In essence, Tanham implies that any institutionalization of historical memory was localized. His work, however, does not trace or provide evidence of either this localized institutionalization or whether local institutionalized memory produced local elites or localized strategic thought. Nor does it explain why even the largest and most powerful Indian political entities, such as the Mughal Empire, would not have impacted Indian strategic thought.

Third, there been newer work that more explicitly explores historical memory and agency by examining the legacy of political elites, parties and decision makers. Sagar's work explicitly refutes Tanham and examines pre-1947 ideas about war, peace and international relations by influential leading Indian thinkers. Looking at the beliefs of Keshub Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Dadabhai Naoroji, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, among others, Sagar traces how elites learnt, agreed and disagreed about the nature of international relations.[19] His conclusion is that although Indian elites 'collectively failed to reckon with the responsibilities of statehood' this was the result of rather than the absence of particular kinds of beliefs about international relations.[20] Along similar lines, Sullivan argues that, since the nineteenth century, Indian elites have differentiated India from other nations and civilizations and seen it as a unique state.[21] On one hand, these elites see India as internally exceptional because it is itself morally and spiritually distinctive and superior. On the other, they see it as externally exceptional because it is a shining and emulable example of a plural and peaceful society.[22] These beliefs, Sullivan argues were institutionalized through pre-independence discourses, and the post-independence creation of particular kinds of diplomatic institutions leading to the emergence of an intellectual consensus.[23]

Most recently, Ian Hall has probed how the historical traditions of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalist ideology, have informed Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approach to foreign policy. He argues that while Nehru drew upon an amalgamation of British socialist ideas, Buddhism and Gandhian thought to create a 'normative agenda' for India that endured through subsequent leadership changes, Modi is 'steeped in the Hindu nationalist intellectual tradition', particularly as propagated by Swami Vivekananda.[24] However, the limited nature of this historical intellectual repertoire means that Modi has been unsuccessful in setting a new normative agenda for Indian foreign policy.[25]

While this newest body of work is very promising with regard to understanding historical memory and Indian foreign policy, there are three modes of inquiry that are either not included in its purview or explored in passing. First, there is little work on what such historical ideas concretely mean for foreign policy decision making. How do these beliefs matter and impact foreign policy? Second, and more importantly, there is again little attention paid to the mechanisms of institutionalization. If the ideas of elites such as Indian Foreign Service officers or nineteenth-century thinkers are important how were these ideas transmitted and institutionalized, and why were some ideas privileged over others? Last, the connection between historical memory and Indian foreign policy is mostly confined to beliefs and ideas held by elites, whether they be Nehruvianism, realism, or Hindutva. There is little work done on historical experiences and events and their impact. If we turn to the general IR and area studies literature, however, we find the work on historical memory includes not just the historical ideas and legacies of elites but also an emphasis on historical events and experiences, and their institutionalization which in turn informs national identity.

Remembering and responding to the past

The work of Legro among others has shown that ideational structures or collectively held ideas, that is, 'concepts or beliefs held by groups (that is, states)' are 'social and holistic', 'have an inter-subjective existence that stands above individual minds and is typically embodied in symbols, discourse and institutions'.[26] Because these ideational structures are institutionalized, they can be 'sticky'. Institutionalization implies that these ideas are embedded in tangible organizations as well as in 'social norms, patterns of discourse, and collective identities'.[27] Empirically, there has been much work done on these 'sticky' ideational structures. Many have explored, for example, the impact of specific historical experiences, particularly traumatic history, and their memorialization.

One of the richest and most detailed empirical bodies of work that one can point to as an example of focusing on both a single country and its historical experiences is the literature that probes the traumatic history of the Holocaust, and how and why it is remembered. This literature focuses on the different processes of institutionalization of experiences and memories, the variation in and commemoration of individual and collective memory, and its impact

on the Israeli nation. There are certain significant points that emerge from this literature that we can use to understand how historical experiences in a country are remembered and institutionalized. To begin with, the mass murder, imprisonment and torture of the European Jews by the Nazi regime in Germany were individual experiences but they were also a shared experience of individuals. In other words, it was a 'multifaceted' memory. There were individual voices, which formed group voices, and eventually national voices that through shared stories, remembrances, commemorative monuments and museums led to the establishment of a 'meta memory' of the Holocaust.[28] Thus, mediated by representations and media, individual trauma informed and shaped a collective remembrance of trauma.[29]

This collective memory was 'a central factor in constructing the memory of the Holocaust' for those who had undergone it but it was equally importantly constructed and perpetuated for those who had never experienced it.[30] The process of transmission of memory, particularly inter-generationally, to those who had not first-hand experienced the horror of the Holocaust was key to the eventual construction of state/national memory and identity in Israel.

It has been pointed out that there is a distinction between social memory and historical memory. The former refers to the memories of an event of people or a group to which they belong who have experienced it personally while the latter is 'memory that has been mediated, by films, and books, and schools and holidays'.[31] These representations constructed a national experience – 'in the case of the Holocaust, only a small minority who experienced Nazism is alive. For all the rest of us it is an experience mediated by representations.' This does not mean that such representations are not authentic but rather they are the 'basis of that authenticity'.[32] For example, representations such as the military cemeteries, military memorials, Yad Vashem and memorial sites were instrumental in constructing a national identity.[33] Moreover, post-World War II events such as Israel's trial of the Nazi, Adolf Eichman, where personal survival stories were repeatedly shared, granted not just state recognition to the victims, but transformed the general identity of the Israeli public from 'victims' to 'accusers'.[34] Even more significantly, the state of Israel itself was enshrined as the answer to the trauma Jews had undergone – 'the Holocaust memory in Israel was articulated in its Declaration of Independence which determined the state to be the ultimate response to the Holocaust.'[35] The collective memory of trauma was, thus, enfolded into a national narrative.

Even though there were different national narratives that emerged at different

(and sometimes overlapping) points of time from this trauma – for example, sympathy for the suffering of the victims, lionization of the ghetto fighters and the transformation of the Israeli public from victims and refugees to accusers and heroes[36] – a significant factor that pulled together these differences was the eventual emergence of the Holocaust as a symbol of national, and even transnational, solidarity.[37] As Levy and Sznaider point out, in the aftermath of World War II, the destruction of the European Jewry was incorporated into the atrocities of war time – during the Nuremberg trials of 1945, the extermination of nearly six million Jews was merely one of a long list of horrific Nazi crimes.[38] The idea of the Holocaust and its representation as a singular event came later when it 'became a symbol for (Israel's) existential fears and (its) necessity to conduct and maintain a strong military state'.[39] As Rothberg states, 'the English word "Holocaust" only belatedly became the singular, capitalized name of an event considered unique, and this belated naming probably took place sometime in the 1960s.[40] Thus, even though it was a multifaceted traumatic historical experience that was not perceived as a stand-alone event in the immediate aftermath of its occurrence, its emergence as 'the Holocaust' demonstrates the importance of 'cosmopolitan memory', that is, the formation of both nation-specific and nation-transcending commonalities[41] that provide a universal frame of reference.

Thus, this literature on individual, collective and national memories of the Holocaust gives us insight not just into how historical experiences are remembered in a country but how and why it can be folded into a national narrative that persists. 'Memory is not a thing but a continuous process that links the past and the present in dialogically contingent ways'[42] and its very fluidity is its strength.[43]

The persistence of individual and collective memory has also been harnessed by states in an attempt to 'control' the national narrative. One of the most powerful tools for forging a national identity is the manipulation and management of the past. The construction and maintenance of the collective memory of a nation is crucial for nation building.[44] This is because shared historical myths and trauma can define in and out groups – who is a part of the group, what it means to be part of the group and, equally importantly, who is *not* a part of the group – thus building ethnic, religious and national identities.[45] Collective memories can be objective or subjective, and both the real and perceived past matter for national identity.[46] As Smith points out, '[N]o memory, no identity. No identity, no nation'.[47] The past is not just about the past – it is purposefully reconstructed to serve the needs of the present.[48]

The work of Zheng Wang and He Yinan shows, for example, how memories of Japanese colonialism have been not only institutionalized but also 'purposefully reconstructed' by the Chinese government. Under the regime of Mao Zedong, historical narratives emphasized the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in securing a victory against the Guomindang (KMT) and foreign imperialism[49] rather than individual memories. Narratives about the 'many good Japanese and the few bad Japanese'[50] blamed Japanese aggression on a small military clique and the nefarious role of the US and the KMT, and served to promote the seminal role of the CCP in the Chinese civil war rather than its suffering at the hands of Japan. This memory was revised in later decades when Japan was now reviled as an 'immoral other'[51] and China began to conduct a 'national humiliation' education campaign about China's suffering under a hundred years of colonialism.[52]

The research programme that examines the persistence of historical memory also includes work that looks at the mitigation of historical memory, most notably in the transitional justice literature, which examines the processes and practices by which nations can move forward from traumatic history. The concept of transitional justice has been both narrowly and broadly defined. One of the earliest definitions categorized it as 'a concept of justice associated with periods of political change, characterized by legal responses to confront the wrongdoings of repressive predecessor regimes'.[53] The broadest view of transitional justice, on the other hand, encompasses any measure taken by a state to come to terms with a historical legacy of atrocities and human rights violations[54] – 'the search for a just society in the wake of…oppressive and even violent systems'.[55] At its core it is

> a range of practices that address the pervasive negative psychological, social, and political effects of past injustices (usually involving human rights violations) committed by the state or in the name of the state and that aim to amend these effects in order to establish the rule of law, democracy, peace, reconciliation, and respect for individual and collective rights, either domestically and/or internationally.[56]

In the view of some the very act of remembrance can be interpreted as a step towards recovery or mitigation of the historical experience through either re-institutionalization or de-institutionalization. Martha Minow's seminal work, for example, discusses the struggle of societies to acknowledge, punish and recover from historical traumas like genocide and mass violence. She

points out the difficulties of too much and too little remembrance – 'too much enshrinement of victimhood; too little acknowledgement of the past'[57] – and explores instead the path between 'vengeance and forgiveness'.[58] Specifically, she explores legal and cultural institutions that could offer this path to healing – trials, truth commissions and reparations. She concludes that the past is still very much present for many countries and a key to recovery is 'not memory but remembering…a process for reinterpreting what cannot be made sensible, for assembling what cannot be put together, and for separating what cannot be severed from both present and future'.[59]

There are certain lessons that we can deduce from this literature. First, extrapolation from individual historical experiences to collective and national historical experiences is a common path for countries that have undergone a significant historical event.[60] After all, 'nations like individuals…develop visions, dreams and prejudices about themselves and the world that shape their intentions…the mind sets of leaders and peoples'.[61] Second, despite the variations in narratives of a history, countries often institutionalize and eventually treat the entire history as a unitary unique event. China's treatment of Japanese colonialism or Israel's treatment of the Holocaust are cases in point. Third, the 'purposeful reconstruction' and institutionalization of historical memory, particularly traumatic history, is common, and is not easily dismissed as mere propaganda by states. Moreover, it may be done through a variety of practices, some of which are related to transitional justice including memorialization through history textbooks.

Remembering and institutionalizing memories of colonialism

Turning now to India, we can show that important historical experiences, such as colonialism, have, in fact, been institutionalized. Nationalists emphasized they were not only economically and politically exploited by 200 years of British colonialism but also suffered from the sting of social and cultural humiliation and subjugation. India for its part has not used the legal and institutional practices of transitional justice to remember the colonial past. Despite its many grievances, and recorded objective as well as subjective memories of suffering, there have been no trials or truth commissions and no official calls for restitution, reparations, or apologies. However, memories of colonialism have been institutionalized through public commemorations and, particularly, history textbooks to create a national narrative of self and other.

One of the most important vehicles for the institutionalized transmission of historical memory is history teaching through textbooks. 'The powerful link between history and memory is especially salient in the educational system which is responsible for implanting knowledge and values in the younger generation.'[62] The appropriation of the past through history teaching conveys a consciousness of resilient national identity[63] and gives students an idea of who they are and what it means to be a part of a particular nation.[64] Textbooks, which are the predominant means of history teaching, are not only 'the modern version of village storytellers'[65] but function as a 'sort of historical supreme court whose task it is to decipher from all the (different) pieces of the past the "true" collective memories which are appropriate for inclusion in the national historical narrative'.[66] India too has used textbooks for history teaching including about its colonial past.

India has a federal system of government, with power shared between the centre and the states. The Indian Constitution (Entry 11, List II, 7th Schedule) lays down that 'education including universities, subject to the provisions of Entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I and Entry 25 of List III' is a state subject. Nonetheless, since independence in 1947, the centre has 'shown an unprecedented activity and interest in the field of education'.[67] Thus, education has devolved to be a shared responsibility between the centre and states.[68]

India's educational system is driven by a government body, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which promotes a national curriculum that is adopted into a syllabus, and generates a set of corresponding textbooks for every grade.[69] These textbooks are then recommended to 42 different educational/examination boards including the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Indian Certified School Examination (ICSE) and various State Boards of examinations. Public and private schools may use any of these boards but the most widely used are CBSE and ICSE.[70]

I examined the volumes of Indian history that are written and published by NCERT as part of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). The NCERT was set up in 1961 to guide the central and state governments in building a 'national system of education'.[71] It is headed by the Minister of Human Resource Development. NCERT text books are used by private and public schools in India, and in some cases NCERT textbooks are required reading. For example, schools that follow the CBSE[72] system have to use NCERT books.[73] The NCERT textbooks in use today were last revised in 2006. Examining the state

production, institutionalization and endorsement of narratives of history that are imparted to millions of young adults over long periods of time offers a method of establishing on a national basis whether there is narration and reconstruction of an historical experience, that is, institutionalization of historical memory.[74]

The NCERT history textbooks reveal a strong sense of 'self' and foreign 'other'. The recounting of colonial history is, in addition to the detailing of an exploitative system set in place by the British, also repeatedly accompanied by the narration of painful violent events and trauma. For example, the chapter on the impact of colonialism in the Indian countryside constructs ruthless British policies including the decimation of local populations:

> [T]he British embarked on a brutal policy of exploitation, hunting the Paharias down and killing them…the experience of pacification campaigns and memories of brutal repression shaped (the Paharias') perception of British infiltration into the area. Every white man appeared to represent a power that was destroying their way of life and means of survival.[75]

The chapter on the Revolt of 1857 constructs the change in British sensibilities towards the sepoys in the 1840s: 'The officers developed a sense of superiority and started treating the sepoys as their racial inferiors, riding roughshod over their sensibilities. Abuse and physical violence became common, and thus the distance between sepoys and officers grew.'[76] The response to the Revolt is also detailed with an examination of British paintings and media that depicted the alleged mass rapes of British women by the rebels which were in turn used to justify the use of brute force to repress the rebels.

> There were innumerable pictures and cartoons in the British press that sanctioned brutal repression and violent reprisal…the urge for vengeance and retribution was expressed in the brutal way in which the rebels were executed. They were blown from guns, or hanged from the gallows. Images of these executions were widely circulated through popular journals.[77] The repression of the rebels meant the silencing of their voice.[78]

The narrative of colonial trauma is quite intense and linked strongly to British injustices cementing a sense of the British 'other'. If we examine the NCERT history volume on the pre-colonial period in Indian history which was also often one of conquest by foreign dynasties, it is clear that the development of Indo-Islamic and other forms of cultural and traditional accommodation[79] preclude any, even implicit, treatment of this period as the 'other'.[80] The sharp

distinction that is made between the absolute construction and consolidation during the pre-British period, and the absolute deconstruction and trauma during the colonial period is very clear from the texts. To give an example, the treatment of a supposedly neutral topic – architecture – in the two periods is very different. The capital of Vijaynagara, for example, is seen as 'impressive'[81] and 'beautiful'.[82] The colonial capitals of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, however, are seen as grandeur for the sake of impressing the authority of colonial power.[83]

Moving forward with historical memory as a tool

The NCERT history textbooks show us that an important historical experience, the British Raj, has been institutionalized by the state in India. This begs the question of how this matters, if at all, for foreign policy. To begin with, we already know that despite different colonial experiences, ex-colonies like India have a common sense of victimhood because they treated and responded to colonialism in a similar fashion – as collective trauma. The narrative of suffering and the language of victimhood that emerged in India after the demise of colonialism is consistent with the theories of collective trauma as outlined in the psychology literature and this impacts its foreign policy decisions in bounded cases.[84] The NCERT textbooks show an acute awareness of this sense of exploitation, and a strong distinction between pre-colonial and post-colonial self, which makes a post-colonial emphasis on victimhood plausible.

Additionally, however, it suggests that there is ample opportunity to analyse what other historical events mattered and why, and trace their institutionalization. For example, it has been argued that the concept of India as a non-aligned nation is still de facto the most discernible discourse that governs India's foreign policy. This does not mean that non-alignment has not been 'de-emphasized', particularly after 1998[85] but rather that no distinct discourse has emerged to replace it or move away from it.[86] Rather than taking this as a given through India's foreign policy behaviour, it would be fruitful to examine what the institutionalization of the legacy of non-alignment entailed – the education of Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers perhaps? or doctrines studied by the military? – that could explain its pervasiveness. Looking at how the Mughal Empire's military doctrines were institutionalized or perhaps even de-institutionalized by the British would give us an idea of whether there was ever a corresponding strategic culture in India that stemmed from it. In the case of colonialism, we could reasonably point to institutionalization of memories

as a reason why in 2005, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated in a speech delivered in the UK that 'India's experience with Britain had its beneficial consequences too',[87] he was roundly criticized. While Singh was explicitly citing India's railways, bureaucracy, rule of law and freedom of press as examples, and even though his speech also repeatedly acknowledged that India's 'grievance against the British empire had a sound basis',[88] he was criticized back home for 'eulogizing colonial rule and humiliating freedom fighters'.[89]

There are also three important lessons to be noted from any study of historical memory with respect to Indian foreign policy. First, emphasizing the role of historical memory and its institutionalization should not be understood as a claim that states are trapped by the past. With reference to colonialism, Indian textbooks correctly emphasizing India's victimization and exploitation in the past neither precludes the simultaneous embracing of new identities nor the acknowledgement that an absolute 'othering' of the colonizer can lead to the loss of India's own historical complexity. For example, the NCERT textbooks accurately detail how the rape of British women by Indian sepoys during the Revolt of 1857 was not just exaggerated but used by the British government to justify brutal and violent retribution against the rebels.[90] However, in using only one narrative the voices of the women, both Indian and British, who faced traumatic violence from both sides in the inevitable chaos of rebellion, are lost.[91]

Second, institutionalized frameworks – whether through history textbooks, popular narratives, or domestic political bases matter – can make it difficult for any individual leader to affect drastic shifts. Manmohan Singh's nuanced speech at Oxford is an example of the constraints faced by a leader. His speech clearly referenced the exploitative nature of British colonialism yet he was strongly condemned for referring to any perceived benefits. Third, by examining historical memory and its institutionalization can we examine how and why there are shifts in national identity. In India's case, the label of 'rising power' is now increasingly applied. The identity of rising power suggests victor rather than victim as Miller[92] has previously argued. And India has indeed taken some steps that have been suggestive of newfound confidence. For example, in December 2013 the Khobragade case became a very public example of the distrust in the Indo-US relationship. Devyani Khobragade, an Indian diplomat stationed in New York, was arrested and strip-searched by American authorities on the charge of illegally hiring and underpaying her children's nanny. Rage against the United States at the violation of an Indian official's diplomatic immunity and, particularly, the coarse treatment of an educated middle class

Indian woman united political parties across the spectrum. It led the Indian government to take a series of retaliatory steps that severely dented the India–US relationship. The most serious action was pulling away the security barriers from around the US embassy in New Delhi. The crisis and India's response, which baffled and frustrated the US,[93] was lauded not just in India but by commentators who believed that very few countries had the 'geopolitical heft or the moral legitimacy to look the American government in the eye and demand such absolute reciprocity'.[94] Much to the delight of the Indian public, the Indian government succeeded in persuading the US government to allow Khobragade to return home and not face charges in an American court. One could argue that India took an assertive step that was severely damaging to its bilateral relationship with the world's only superpower because of an increasing confidence that comes from a new externally imposed identity of rising power.

As the historical experiences recede further into the past it would be interesting to observe how newer identities emerge and whether they exist in parallel with these memories or whether they succeed in replacing them. This offers a rich avenue for further exploration.

Notes

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