

# An Overview on the decolonization and the Indian National Movement



Juli Kumari

M.Phil, Roll No: 150345

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University Department of History

B.R.A Bihar University, Muzzaffarpur

## Abstract

There is currently no shortage of data showing how previous colonial institutions affect current economic results, and some have hypothesized that these connections may be mediated through colonial institutions' effect on political procedures and outcomes. The type of rule, or whether a territory was directly under British rule or whether it was under native rule, and the type of land tenure imposed by the British, are two colonial institutions that have the potential to significantly influence electoral outcomes. This paper examines this understudied link in the context of India. Voter turnout (VT), margin of victory (MV), and electoral competition (EC) are the three variables I use to quantify election results. I then ask: Do previous colonial institutions still have an influence on current electoral outcomes, and if so, how? Do these effects last over a longer period of time? In order to evaluate short- and long-term effects, I pay particular attention to the elections held in the 1970s and at the beginning of decolonization (1951). According to the findings, VT will be 4% higher in natively controlled regions over the long term and 5% higher in non-landlord areas over the near term. Because of tenancy reforms, the latter disappears over time. Although there is no discernible influence on MV, I constantly find that EC is greater in landlord and British locations. These findings are in line with the function that landlords and former princes of native kingdoms performed following decolonization. Since electoral processes are route dependent, previous colonial institutions have an impact on them by modifying how voters react to efforts to make them obsolete.

**Keywords:** Colonial institution, political institution, democracy, decolonization.

## Introduction

After the Battle of Plassey, British colonial power over India was established, ushering in a new era in the history of the continent. The former administrative traditions that gave the peasant and non-peasant communities some concessions in times of distress were intentionally ignored or were ignorantly ignored under the colonial authority. In the beginning, the colonial tyrants were motivated by a desire to get money from the populace in any way they could. This caused the rural population's capacity to resist challenging situations to drastically deteriorate. Thus, the devastating Bengal famine of 1769 resulted in a very significant number of deaths. The exploitation of the peasants persisted despite colonial authorities' efforts to simplify land-revenue management in the last decades of the eighteenth century and to limit blatant looting. Since the beginning of colonial control, this has led to ongoing opposition from the populace. Since then, there have been documented hundreds of peasant uprisings, with the largest one being in 1857. Even after that, peasant and tribal uprisings persisted, but in the latter part of the nineteenth century, we witness the emergence of a new kind of politics. The English-educated Indian intellectuals had a significant influence in contemporary politics. On the basis of nationalist philosophy, which the new intellectuals passionately proclaimed, an all-Indian political sphere was attempted to be established. Such political efforts resulted in the development of several local and provincial organizations, which in turn led to the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 as an all-Indian organization. This course goes into great length on the new nationalism-based politics and philosophy that sought to establish an independent country by putting an end to colonial authority.

## Theories of Nationalism

All nationalism theorists agree that a phenomena this extensive and ubiquitous cannot be explained just by particular or endogenous elements or forces at work in the society. Only exogenous or external variables, or those originating from outside the specific community, may provide a satisfactory explanation. However, it is untrue that nationalism of any sort is really the result of these internal dynamics as such, as Tom Nairn, a renowned expert on nationalism, has stated: ... Welsh nationalism [emphasis on the country] is obviously heavily influenced by the characteristics of the Welsh people, their history, their unique kinds of oppression, and everything else. Wales, however, has nothing to do with Welsh national-ism [emphasis on the Ism], that universal requirement documented in the very phrase we are particularly interested in. The fact that the Welsh land and people are inadvertently thrust into history in this way at a particular period is not a Welsh

fact, but rather a feature of universal historical evolution. The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and NeoNationalism by Tom Nairn The identification of these outside causes is where the nationalism theorists diverge most. Some would see nationalism as a phase of human evolution that all society must experience sooner or later. Others may see it in broader terms as the development of the "human spirit," or as a pressing desire for identity on the social and psychological fronts, or as identification with a greater whole. But everyone would agree that there is a broad, universal, explanation for the phenomena of nationalism. If nationalism can be recognised based on certain characteristics that were generally shared by many cultures during the 18th and 20th centuries, then there must be some universal reasons for it.

## **Violence and Non-Violence**

The predominantly non-violent campaign conducted by the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi was in fact an aberration in the history of anti-colonial battles, despite the fact that there were a few clear military struggles against colonial power. The battles in Vietnam against the French and then the Americans evolved into a bloody liberation effort. After World War II, anti-colonial movements saw a degree of struggle that was lacking in the cases of those nations who had achieved independence in the late 1940s due to the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States of America for the role of protector of the free world. Before the cold war officially started, India and China were able to pick their own growth trajectories following protracted battles against Western dominance. Even smaller nations, like Sri Lanka and Burma in the late 1940s, were able to escape the negative effects of cold war competition.

However, as a consequence of superpower competition and the USA's decision to prevent peasant armies from installing communists in power, Vietnam and Korea were split. Two important variables had a deciding role in shaping the history of liberation battles. One was how much freedom the colonial state gave the colonised to express their nationalist ambitions via accepted and legal avenues. The establishment of representative or consultative groups by the British allowed for the development and competition of more moderate anti-colonial politics with the more militant forms of nationalism. Many of the French colonies did not develop such a system, and the lack of a forum for constitutional politics resulted in the rise of Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese liberation movement.

Mao established his foundation in the countryside during the 1930s as a result of the communist party's failure in metropolitan regions of China. Under Mao Tse Tung, a powerful and mostly peasant armed resistance to Japanese invasion (1937–1945) developed, based on a class alliance headed by the communists. Because there were fewer options for liberal and moderate politics in China than there were in India, the

movement became increasingly extreme. The influence of outside interventions during the cold war was the second component in the anti-colonial battles. There were certain nations that obviously belonged to one sphere of influence, but there were also several that served as battlegrounds. The British remained in Malaya to put a stop to the communist movement and with help from China and the USSR, the communists took full control of North Korea and North Vietnam under separate leaders. Following the Sino-Soviet split in the middle of the 1960s, pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese elements participated in the liberation movements of several African nations, including Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Instead of the strength of their anti-colonial movements, super power competition and negotiations often decided the destiny of numerous minor states. It cannot be overstated how important foreign considerations were in achieving national freedom. The fate of conflicts in Portuguese Angola and Mozambique as well as French Algeria was dictated by events in Paris and Lisbon. Although their efforts had been protracted and violent enough, the emancipation of colonies in Africa might have taken longer if there had not been changes in the political equations in France in 1958 and Portugal in 1974. Just like after the Berlin Conference in 1885, when Africa was divided, the decolonization of Africa was impacted by urban growth. The successful sweep of the Japanese army across these areas gave the independence movements in Dutch Indonesia, British Malaya, and French Indo-China impetus. By recognizing the significant economic and political effects of the Second World War on the colonial powers in East and South Asia, the strength of national liberation campaigns is not diminished.

## **Economic Context of National Movements**

The ownership of colonies has long been understood to be a significant economic issue. The pursuit of raw resources, markets for manufactured goods, and chances for lucrative investment possibilities were the driving forces for colonial development. There is much evidence to support the claim that natural resources are being exploited in both Asia and Africa. Political homage to Britain and the well-known "drain of riches" from India were not unique to that country. The 'Cultivation System,' according to some, was created by the Netherlands East Indies to export agricultural products from the resource-rich Indonesian archipelago to the markets in the west. It may be argued that for more than 50 years, Indonesia transferred more resources to the metropolis than India did. Between 1921 and 1938, the Dutch appropriated 17% of Indonesia's GDP, equal to 8% of the Dutch GDP. The natural riches of the Asian economy were exploited by more than only the European superpowers. The resources of Korea, Manchuria, and subsequently China were exploited by the Japanese. The colonial world's economic growth and export opportunities had an impact on the export of

industrial products. Peasant producers were subjected to severe exploitation, which decreased their buying power and made it difficult to increase the market for manufactured products from industrialized nations. Many colonists tried to stop the growth of indigenous businesses in the colonized nations in an attempt to maintain a monopolistic market share. During the 19th century, when Britain was the world's largest exporter of textiles, railroad equipment, steel, and machinery, this was accomplished chiefly via the implementation of a free trade policy. Despite becoming less reliant on colonial markets in Asia and Africa, the emerging industries of chemicals, electricity, and motor transportation progressively increased in importance. The indigenous industrial elite in nations like India, South Africa, and even smaller nations were angry of colonial monopolies and dominance and encouraged economic nationalism and the fight for national independence.

Many African nations did not have a "national bourgeoisie" attempting to utilise nationalist political forces to gain more favorable trade, currency, and monetary policies, and the growth of the local capitalist class did not become particularly prominent until after World War II. In areas where colonization had a less disruptive impact, political and economic progress may be made. Botswana was able to experience impressive development rates after independence because to its pre-colonial culture, which institutionalized property rights in cattle but also gradually in land, a favorable orientation towards the market economy, and increased interethnic collaboration. Traditional Tswana culture and its "integrative political institutions" persisted, whereas Bophuthatswana culture in South Africa and the Barotse in Zambia both saw the breakdown of these institutions due to a more disruptive colonial effect.

## Conclusion

Even if pre-Independence administrative institutions were eliminated after Independence, these institutions nevertheless tend to influence how society reacts to government action, which in turn affects election results. This study unearths factual support for this claim; I discover that in the 1951 elections, princely states had four percent greater voter participation than the former colonial areas, notwithstanding decolonization. Three more candidates are running for each seat in the colonial territories than in the princely states in the same elections, on average. Long-term, these impacts do not disappear. In a similar vein, even though the British-instituted system of tenancy was abolished by land reforms, tenancy was probably still affecting voter participation in the 1951 elections, with the non-landlord districts having, on average, a 5% greater voter turnout than the landlord areas. One may anticipate that colonial legacies would fade over time, but I find that even when the institutions stop officially existing, they continue to have an impact. The princely realms

generally had a four percent greater voter participation in the elections of 1971 and 1977 than the formerly colonial-ruled regions. The electoral competitiveness in the elections of 1971 and 1977 also shows that there were, on average, five and six more candidates in colonial territories than in princely states. Election results from 1977, which were conducted after the National Emergency of 1975, a momentous event that altered the sociopolitical landscape of the nation, continue to show the influence of these institutions, which are not recognized by law. These findings provide light on two problems. Understanding the mediating function played by the political and electoral processes is essential if historical institutions affect resource allocation, policy, and economic consequences. Currently, those who research elections seem to minimize the importance of history, if not ignore it entirely, while those who study the history of institutions almost ever examine the significance of electoral results. This essay makes a case for each in turn. The idea that "institutional overhang" need not be static and need not always remain in its initial shape is emphasized as a second contribution. In the case of India, the state not only made a significant effort to eliminate differences between native and British provinces through the inclusive creation of a voter list, but it also made a concerted effort to change the tenancy laws to give tenants more power in areas where the land tenure resulted in class distinctions. Despite being long since abolished, colonial institutions continue to have an impact on election results. This study highlights the path-dependent character of political institutions and the modulation of reactions to government initiatives meant to lessen existing disparities. Therefore, official efforts to abolish historical organizations have not made them obsolete.

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