# National Humiliation Narratives: Origins and Political Success

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In the early 1990s, the Chinese government launched the Patriotic Education Campaign to spread the narrative that China had a history of greatness but was humiliated by foreigners (Wang 2012, p. 96). Similar narratives have influenced Indian politics. After India won independence from Britain, the Indian National Congress promoted the idea of a secular India, but other groups like the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have "framed both the British and Muslim encounters in India's history as past instances of Hindu India's humiliation and subjugation" (Singh 2013, p. 117).[1] Further, commentators have argued that "Putin has long expressed his personal sense of humiliation when Russia lost its geopolitical position in Europe with the fall of the Berlin Wall" and that this humiliation has motivated Russia's annexation of Crimea (Hill 2015).

All of these narratives have in common the trope of a once great nation humiliated and taken advantage of by outsiders as well as the idea that the nation should be restored to its former glory. However, the prevalence of this nationalist message varies, even within a particular country, both across time and across political groups. If national humiliation narratives are a way to gain legitimacy, as some scholars have argued (Wang 2012, p. 9), then why do political actors only sometimes use this strategy? What explains the variation in the use of national humiliation narratives and when can they help political groups gain

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[1] During times when Congress split into factions supporting and opposing Indira Gandhi, all references to the Congress refer to the faction supporting Indira Gandhi.

and maintain power?

Many scholars argue that humiliation narratives make international conflict more likely through mechanisms, such as status competition, revenge, or an increased tendency towards escalation (Wang 2012; He 2007; Barnhart 2017; Barnhart 2016; Löwenheim and Heimann 2008; Fattah and Fierke 2009). However, simply examining national humiliation narratives during periods temporally proximate to conflict cannot distinguish whether national humiliation is actually driving conflict or if it is just a verbal strategy to justify previously made decisions to initiate conflict or to tie hands in bargaining (Weiss 2014). Further, factors that create national humiliation narratives, such previous war defeats, may also—independently of humiliation—promote conflict. Understanding when politicians use national humiliation narratives and when these narratives gain influences is necessary to understand whether they promote conflict.

I argue that narratives of national humiliation are used by political groups when these groups can avoid responsibility for the event they are framing as humiliating and tie their political opponent to this event. The political success of national humiliation narratives requires two conditions. First, national humiliation narratives will not lead groups to political success if these narratives are repressed by the government. Second, the success of these narratives requires sufficient economic development to enable citizens access to media through which the narratives can spread as well as some relief from the immediate concerns of economic survival, allowing them room for concern about more abstract issues like national humiliation. Because the factors determining the use and success of national humiliation narratives are not directly associated with conflict, they are unlikely to complicate inference about national humiliation and conflict. However, this also implies that objective events, such as defeats in past conflict, are a poor proxy for national humiliation.[2]

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[2]See Barnhart (2017) for example.

# 1 Theory

## 1.1 Defining National Humiliation

It is important to distinguish between humiliation as an emotion experienced by individuals and humiliation narratives that are shared socially. I will first focus on defining national humiliation and then return to consider national humiliation narratives. The emotional experience of humiliation itself should be relatively constant across individuals because it is limited by the primary emotions humans possess to connect to events, but the circumstances that trigger humiliation are subject to conscious considerations as well as an individual's previous experiences and acquired dispositions (McDermott 2004, p. 693).[3]

I take Hartling and Luchetta (1999)'s definition of humiliation as "the deep dysphoric feeling associated with being, or perceiving oneself as being, unjustly degraded, ridiculed, or put down—in particular, one's identity has been demeaned or devalued" because it fits with other psychological research on humiliation and because it includes the role of identity in humiliation (264). While humiliation is an emotion experienced individually, triggers for humiliation target one's identity, and identities may be shared socially. Not all decreases in self-esteem or losses of face, where face is the expectation among the members of your social group about the deference you will receive (O'Neill 1999, p. 139), constitute humiliation. Humiliation needs to be perceived as a threat to the core of your identity. This separates humiliation from mere embarrassment.

The humiliated perceive that the humiliator has committed a grave injustice. This distinguishes humiliation from shame because when ashamed one feels that it is oneself who did something unjust (Leidner, Sheikh, and Ginges 2012). "People believe they deserve their shame; they do not believe they deserve their humiliation" (Klein 1991, p. 117). The humiliator must be an outside group and not a member of the nation. Otherwise, the emotion involved is national shame.

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[3]See also Damasio (2005, pp. 131–136).

In national humiliation, the relevant identity group of the humiliated is their nation. Personal humiliation is much less likely to have political significance. To resonate politically, humiliation must be framed as a matter of public concern and the public, or at least an important segment of it, must accept this framing. While individuals may be humiliated through identities other than national identities, other kinds of humiliation are likely to lead to different outcomes. For example, minority groups humiliated by social discrimination are unlikely to be able to use this as a political strategy to take control of the state and are unlikely to conceive of foreign policy solutions to their humiliation. In order to focus more deeply on the sources of national humiliation that may have foreign policy effects, I only examine instances of the use of national humiliation narratives where the relevant nation makes up the majority of a country.

Because national humiliation humiliates individuals through their national identity:

**Assumption 1 (A1)** *The prior concept of a nation that a political group meets the membership requirements of and the humiliator does not is necessary for a particular political group to use national humiliation narratives as a political strategy.*

This assumption is valuable for a couple of reasons. First, it incorporates non-strategic reasons people react to the idea of national humiliation into the theory. If national humiliation narratives have any significance beyond mere cheap talk, then people must react in non-strategic ways to national humiliation. Emotion and rationality cannot be cleanly separated, and emotional processes play a vital role in rational decision-making (McDermott 2004; Mercer 2005; Damasio 2005). Second this assumption helps narrow down the groups that might use national humiliation narratives as well as what events they are likely to frame as humiliating, but it does not explain what groups use national humiliation narratives when.

## 1.2 When is it Used

Existing theories rarely distinguish between what causes political groups to use national humiliation narratives and what makes this strategy succeed. One might suppose that groups

determine whether or not to use national humiliation narratives by anticipating whether or not this strategy will succeed, but empirically groups using national humiliation narratives do not always take or maintain government control (see Table 1). This should be expected if the use of these narratives is not entirely determined by strategic factors. Below I extract the separate implications existing theories have for the use and success of humiliation narratives.

One explanation is that humiliating events cause both the use of humiliation narratives and their success when used. "Collective trauma" might create "an emphasis on victimhood and entitlement" (Miller 2013, p. 2). Arguments that rely on traumatic or humiliating events to explain national humiliation narratives have two problems. The first is that there are always events that could be construed as humiliating, but not all of them get deployed in national humiliation narratives, let alone successful ones. The second problem is that not all political groups within a country respond to events that might be considered humiliating the same way (Veer 1987, p. 299).

Another theory posits the presence of a "threatening other" leads to narratives of national humiliation (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 11, 21).[4] However, this suffers from the same flaws. Otherness is ubiquitous and can always be framed as threatening. Further, not all political groups within a country respond to otherness the same way. As Jaffrelot acknowledges, "The reality of a threat was nevertheless of less significance than the Hindus' subjective perception of one" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 342). Substituting the desire to maintain face or self-esteem in the face of a threatening West or modernity for a threatening other has the same limitations.[5] No event is inherently humiliating or threatening to self-esteem. Events must be socially constructed as humiliating.[6]

Neither are national humiliation narratives simply nationalists using nationalism to get support.[7] Essentially every domestic actor competing for political power in China and India during the 20th century, aside from the Qing Empire, was nationalist, yet they did not always

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[4]See also Kaldor (2004, pp. 168-69).
[5]On face, see Gries (2005, p. 27). On self-esteem and modernity see Jaffrelot (1999, p. 13).
[6]On the broader point that foreign policy events do not speak for themselves, see Krebs 2015, p. 35.
[7]See for example Mansfield and Snyder (1995).

use national humiliation narratives. A more limited version of this argument proposes elites promote narratives of national humiliation when they face a crisis of legitimacy (Wang 2012, p. 9). This explanation likely contains part of the truth but is incomplete. For example, if the Chinese leadership had framed the sanctions following the Tiananmen Massacre as China's national humiliation rather than events preceding the takeover of the Communist Party in 1949, their efforts likely would have backfired because they would be blamed either for causing the humiliating event or for allowing it to occur. Groups promoting the narrative of national humiliation need separation from responsibility for the event itself. One way political groups can be separated from potentially humiliating events is if their party was not in power when the event occurred (Croco 2015). Further, if legitimacy crises lead to the use of national humiliation narratives, then the Qing Empire on the brink of its collapse and Indira Gandhi during the period of emergency rule in India should have used such narratives but did not.

Another explanation posits national humiliation "is largely deployed in specific circumstances as part of a nation-building project (anti-imperialist revolution) or a nation repairing (civil war) project" (Callahan 2004, p. 207). While I agree that nation-building and fostering in-group solidarity may be one strategic motivation for politicians to promote a narrative of national humiliation, this explanation cannot tell us what kinds of groups are prone to deploy this strategy. Neither can it account for political groups, which are usually motivated to contain resistance and often to increase national in-group solidarity, that do not turn to national humiliation narratives.

I theorize that, in addition to national identity (A1), strategic incentives play a role in determining when particular political groups use national humiliation narratives. The first, and most important, is the ability of the group to distance themselves from responsibility for the humiliating event and blame political opponents. The second is to increase national in-group solidarity, which can provide legitimacy for authoritarian governance and mute domestic criticism. The third is to motivate support for reforms, which may pose short-term

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costs to the public. Because the second and third of these incentives tend to exist to some extent for all political groups, only the first permits distinguishing between situations where national humiliation narratives will and will not be used. Thus:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1)** *Political groups are more likely to promote narratives of national humiliation when they can associate their political opponents with the event they construct as humiliating while themselves escaping responsibility for its occurrence.*

This association can be indirect. For example, even if the opposing group did not exist at the time of the humiliating event, groups that promote better relations with the humiliator can be labeled traitors.

## 1.3   When is it Successful?

One might expect the success of national humiliation narratives depends on whether they culturally resonate. Callahan argues that the Chinese Communist Party's patriotic education campaign that emphasizes national humiliation "is so successful because it builds on a structure of feelings that actually precedes this particular propaganda policy, and predates the PRC" (2010, p. 19). However, this explanation cannot account well for the case of India where Hindu nationalists drew on themes that existed in India prior to independence but did not experience political success until the late 1980s. Further, because past events can always be re-imagined as humiliating, this theme is always available. Callahan notes he is not making a "culturalist" argument that claims China is "unique" and quotes Benjamin that "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism", which seems to suggest that the civilization/barbarism distinction, which for Callahan is the cultural resource for national humiliation narratives, is always present (Callahan 2010, p. 24).

I offer a different account of when national humiliation narratives lead to political success. Here political success means gaining or maintaining control of the national government. In

India this means controlling the most seats the Lok Sabha and the prime ministership. In China, this means political control of the mainland. Two conditions are necessary for national humiliation narratives to bring success. First, if the government is determined to repress narratives of national humiliation, then the ability of these narratives to resonate outside of the group promoting them is limited. There may come a time when repressing these narratives is too costly. However, prior to these narratives becoming politically influential, the political environment must be sufficiently open for their spread. Even if a political group is willing to brave the risk of a government crackdown, its ability to spread its message of national humiliation will be limited by the need for secrecy to avoid repression. Further, the government will be able to deny its ability to use mass media to spread its message. For these reasons:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2)** *When the government adopts a policy of repression towards narratives of national humiliation, these narratives will fail to spread beyond the groups promoting them and these groups will not gain control of the government.*

The second condition is economic development. This condition has two components. The first is that citizens must have access to the media, which is important for spreading nationalists messages (Jaffrelot 2010, p. 209). The second is economic welfare. People within the country need enough wealth that they are not forced to spend all of their time engaged in subsistence farming for survival. Gellner notes, "Small peasant communities generally live inward-turned lives, tied to the locality by economic need if not by political prescription" (Gellner 2008, p. 10). Farmers living in these kinds of communities are less likely to become mobilized over concerns that seem distant from their everyday lives, such as national humiliation. As a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) National Executive put it, "Emotional issues can only attract people when the stomach is full" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 547). It is difficult to specify the exact income threshold that allows this concern to develop, but it likely falls within the Pew Research Center's category of low income, which indicates people above the World Bank's threshold for extreme poverty yet below middle income, making

between 1.25 and 6.25 dollars a day (Kochhar 2015).[8] The empirical implications of this theory about economic development can be broken up into 3 hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 3a (H3a)** *As more citizens gain access to media, national humiliation narratives are more likely to resonate.*

**Hypothesis 3b (H3b)** *When economic development is unevenly spread, narratives of national humiliation are more likely to resonate with literate members of urban professional classes than those living in poverty in the countryside.*

**Hypothesis 3c (H3c)** *As a country's economy develops and citizens are lifted out of poverty, national humiliation narratives are more likely to resonate.*

# 2    Cases

My unit of analysis is major domestic political groups that either currently control a country or have the prospect of taking control of a national government. It is political groups that decide whether or not to promote narratives of national humiliation and that either succeed or fail in taking control of a country. I examine political groups in China and India from the turn of the $20^{th}$ century to 1999. I divide my discussion of each country into three time periods based on changes in the independent variables (Lind 2010, p. 21). The first period for each country begins when national identity in that country starts forming and ends at independence. I start a new period after independence because the strategic incentives to deploy national humiliation narratives to gain control of a state change once a state is formed and colonial powers are kicked out. Starting this period earlier should not change the findings because, under A1, the use of national humiliation narratives cannot arise prior to national identity formation. For India, I end the second period in 1977 when I. Gandhi's emergency rule ends. This marks a major shift in the repression independent variable.

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[8]In 2005 dollars with the conversion rate determined by purchasing power parity.

The findings are robust to moving this cut-point ahead more than a decade with the only major difference being that the success of the BJP appears more abrupt. I end the second period in China with the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, which is commonly described as a turning point (Fewsmith 2001). This time period marked also marked a major shift in the repression variable. A reasonable alternative cut-point is 1976 (Mao's death and the beginning of Reform and Opening Up). However, I argue that 1989 is a better choice for this study because the economic growth unleashed by reform took a while to accumulate as China started from a very low economic base (see Figure 2). More importantly, 1989 marked a shift in the political strategic situation in China. The Communists' most important opponent changed from the reactionary elements to liberals. I end both cases in 1999 for tractability, but because the same parties are in power today and continue to deploy national humiliation narratives, the findings are robust to extending this final time period to the present.

Table 1 shows the political groups in each country in each time period, whether they promoted narratives of national humiliation, who the humiliator was according to this narrative, what political opponent they sought to blame with it (Target), and whether or not this political group succeeded in controlling the national government. A group's political success may be unrelated to national humiliation narratives. The case studies discuss whether the relationship between national humiliation narratives, strategic incentives of political groups, and political outcomes in each case are as hypothesized.

Table 1: Case Summary

| Political Group | Country | Period | Use Narrative? | Humiliator | Target | Success? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hindu Nationalists | India | 1900–1947 | Yes | Muslims and Britain | Muslims and Britain | No |
| Congress | India | 1900–1947 | Yes | Britain | Britain | Yes* |
| Hindu Nationalists | India | 1948–1977 | Yes | Muslims and Britain | Congress | No |
| Congress | India | 1948–1977 | No | NA | NA | Yes |
| Hindu Nationalists | India | 1978–1999 | Yes | Muslims and Britain | Congress | Yes |
| Congress | India | 1978–1999 | No | NA | NA | No |
| Guomindang | China | 1885–1949 | Yes | Imperialists | Warlords | Mixed |
| Communists | China | 1885–1949 | Yes | Imperialists | Warlords | Yes* |
| Qing Empire | China | 1885–1949 | No | NA | NA | No |
| Communists | China | 1950–1988 | No | NA | NA | Yes |
| Communists | China | 1989–1999 | Yes | Imperialists | Democrats | Yes |

* indicates cases where a group using national humiliation narratives succeeded, but these narratives were not a determining factor in their success due to their political competitors also using such narratives.

Of course, there were significant divides within each of these groups, and the time period analyzed is vast. I cannot give a complete account of Chinese and Indian politics in the $20^{th}$ century. Nevertheless, I capture the key points of continuity and change in groups' use of national humiliation narratives as well as in the independent variable.

## 2.1 Case Selection

China and India are particularly suited to test my theory. They both have variation over time in the promotion and success of national humiliation narratives, which is important because my theory predicts within country variation, specifically whether political groups within a country will use national humiliation narratives and whether these groups will succeed. Second, the length of time over which these narratives are deployed helps deal with selection issues. Because the politicians initially deploying these narratives could not have anticipated the foreign policy effects this strategy would have many years down the line, it is unlikely the narratives in these cases are solely a product of bargaining over an international dispute or justifying a particular foreign policy (Weiss 2014).

## 2.2 Forging National Identity (India 1900–1947)

Hindu nationalists are the primary promoters of national humiliation narratives in India. The construction of Hindu nationalists ideology took place from the 1870s to the 1920s (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 5-6). One of the most important figures in its formulation was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and his book *Hindutva* is a "basic text" for Hindu nationalists (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 25). That Savarkar was not a believer in the Hindu religion supports the interpretation that *Hindutva* was more about uniting what Savarkar saw as the Hindu nation than religious belief (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 27). Muslims and Christians are not part of the Hindu nation in this view (Savarkar 1923, p. 80). Savarkar represents Hindus as victimized by foreign invaders and having fallen from the past greatness of the Vedic eras. He writes "It was nearly all Asia, quickly to be followed by nearly all Europe[...] Heaven and Hell making a common

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cause—such were the forces, overwhelmingly furious, that took India by surpirse [sic] the day that Mohmad crossed the Indus and invaded her " (Savarkar 1923, p. 38). However, India can reclaim its past greatness. "If we would we can build on this foundation of Hindutva a future greater than what any other people on earth can yet dream of:—greater even than our own Past" (Savarkar 1923, p. 124). K. B. Hedgewar, who was heavily influenced by Savarkar, founded the RSS in 1925 (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 33).

The RSS and associated Hindu nationalists groups, as a whole called the *Sangh Parivar*, are the key Hindu nationalist political actors in India. The Sangh Parivar also includes the BJS, BJP, and the World Hindu Congress (VHP). Goyal writes that the RSS' core beliefs are that "Hindus are the nation" and that "the history of India is the history of the struggle of the Hindus for protection and preservation of their religion and culture against the onslaught of these [Muslim and Christian] aliens; the threat continues because the power is in the hands of those who do not believe this nation as a Hindu Nation; those who talk of national unity as the unity of all those who live in this country are motivated by the selfish desire of cornering minority votes and are therefore traitors" (Goyal 2000, pp. 17-18). The bond at the root of both the BJS' and later the BJP's ideology is common ancestry for Hindus and "common suffering at the hands of (mostly Muslim) invaders" (Guha 2008, p. 743).

In contrast with the Hindu nationalists, Congress' vision of the nation of India included Muslims (Corbridge and Harriss 2000; Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, pp. 136-37). Because Muslims living in India were considered part of the nation, they could not be branded humiliators of the nation. India's other major parties including the Socialist and Communist parties also had secular and inclusive conceptions of the Indian nation (Veer 1994, p. 22).

### 2.2.1 Strategic Blame

Those using narratives of national humiliation in India targeted potential political opponents. Hindu nationalists blamed the Muslim Mughal Empire for weakening India allowing British conquest and India's current British rulers for misrule (Chatterjee 1993, p. 93). This claim

is akin to the "stab-in-the-back legend" propagated by German nationalists in the inter-war period that groups outside their definition of the nation, such as "Jewish left-Liberals" were responsible for Germany's defeat in WWI (Childers 1983, p. 41).

Even though Hindu nationalists had a very different view of what the Indian nation was from those that ultimately came to dominate Congress, prior to independence, Hindu nationalists largely functioned like a pressure group on Congress, which was an umbrella group for those who wanted Indian self-governance (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 19). The protection of cows was a strategic issue for Hindu nationalists because it targeted both Muslims and the British who "came to be seen as allied beef-eating barbarians determined to insult the deepest religious sentiments of the Hindus" (Veer 1994, p. 92).

Congress too used national humiliation during this period. M. Gandhi "declared a 'National Humiliation Day' of mass demonstrations in April 1919 to inspire the Indian nation to fight against British imperialism" (Callahan 2004, p. 203). Unlike the Hindu Nationalists, Congress only labeled Britain and not Muslims as the humiliator. The use of national humiliation narratives by the Congress party and Hindu nationalists during this period fit the predictions of H1 because each party can avoid responsibility for the initial colonization of India by Britain, since they were not in power at the time while casting blame on Britain, which controlled the government of India during this period. While India obtained independence in 1947 and Congress went on to lead the government, this was not due to the Congress' use of national humiliation narratives but the British realization that it could not maintain the cost of keeping India as its colony after the devastation of WWII (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, pp. 206, 212).

### 2.2.2 Repression

British authorities did not want to make martyrs of Indian resistance leaders but at the same time could not accept any political movement that threatened their control. The British adopted a cycle of waiting for popular passions to die down, then swooping in to

arrest resistance leaders (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, pp. 182-83). However, national humiliation narratives, as opposed to other nationalist or anti-colonial narratives, were particularly targeted, so repression cannot explain the performance of national humiliation narratives relative to other domestic political ideas in India at the time.

### 2.2.3 Economic Development

In India, members of Congress tended to come from the elite (Kaviraj 2010, p. 324). Supporters of Hindu nationalism tended to be high caste and from the upper middle classes in Northern India until the 1980s and 1990s when Hindu nationalists were able to expand beyond this base (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 7). This provides support for H3b. Evaluation of H3a and H3c depend on how the reach of national humiliation narratives changes in subsequent periods as the economy grows and media access expands.

## 2.3 Statehood to the End Emergency Rule (India 1948–1977)

### 2.3.1 Strategic Blame

After independence the alliance between Hindu nationalists and Congress broke down as various groups within India began to compete for political power. It was not strategic for Congress to deploy narratives of national humiliation against the British because the British, including the last viceroy, Louis Mountbatten, cooperated with Congress in getting the Princes, who controlled various princely states, to join India (Guha 2008, p. 56). Congress wanted to present itself as the successor to the British Raj, and Nehru encouraged Mountbatten to remain a year in the position of governor general after the partition of India and Pakistan (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, p. 225). This cooperation meant that Congress could not escape blame if it deployed a narrative of national humiliation against the British. Congress' inclusion of Muslims as part of the nation meant that it could not target Muslims as humiliators.

Unlike Congress, it was easy for Hindu nationalists to frame Muslims and Pakistan as

humiliators of the nation. Hindu nationalists did not consider Muslims as members of the nation. Hindu nationalists accused their main rivals for power, Congress, of adopting 'pseudo-secularist' policies that favored Muslims (Singh 2013, p. 98). For them, "Even Independence has not brought them total victory, since 'secularists' and their 'Westernized minds' continued to colonized the nation" (Veer 1994, p. 144). This divergence in use of national humiliation narratives between Congress and Hindu nationalists on the basis of who could be blamed supports H1.

Hindu nationalists founded the BJS in 1951 with the goal of uniting all Hindus into a voting block (Guha 2008, p. 145). The RSS was heavily involved in the founding of the BJS, and the BJS "adopted an instrumentalist strategy, manipulating identity symbols for political mobilization" (Jaffrelot 2010, pp. 208-209). However, Nehru successfully campaigned against communalism in the 1952 elections (Guha 2008, p. 147). After a lackluster performance in 1952, the President of the BJS, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in a letter to Nehru on Kashmir, published by the BJS a year later in 1953, wrote that "It will be nothing short of national disgrace and humiliation if we fail to regain this lost portion of our own territory" (Guha 2008, pp. 258, 796). In 1953, Mukherjee was jailed by the India government for entering Kashmir to protest and died in prison shortly afterwards (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 129). Although his death did provoke outrage, this was mostly limited to the middle class in major cities like Delhi (Guha 2008, pp. 260-61). This did not translate to political success for the BJP in the 1957 elections. The party gained only a single seat in the Lok Sabha bringing its total to 4 (Andersen and Damle 1987, p. 165). After a white-paper made the Sino-Indian border dispute public in 1959, the president of the BJS said that it was a matter of the "nation's self-interests and honour" and criticized the government's "helplessness" (Guha 2008, p. 319). Another BJS leader warned Nehru not to harm the "sentiments" of the Indian nation in his handling of the issue (Guha 2008, p. 320). The accusation of hurting Hindu sentiment is similar to the way the Chinese Communist Party often criticizes foreign powers for "hurting the feelings of the Chinese people" (Callahan 2010, p. x).

Cow protection was a strategic symbol for Hindu nationalists because it united all Hindus in a way that excluded Muslims, which meant it was not an issue that could be well addressed by parties that sought Muslim support such as Congress (Veer 1994, p. 66). In 1952 Golwalkar, who succeeded Hedgewar as head of the RSS, wrote that cow protection is "necessary to revive the fundamental values and ideas, and to wipe out all signs that reminded us of our past slavery and humiliation. [...] Our present and future has to be well united with our glorious past. [...] There cannot be a higher call of national unity than to be readily prepared to sacrifice our all for the honour and glory of the motherland that is the highest form of patriotism" (Guha 2008, p. 634). However, the RSS was not able to translate this campaign into political success, and the campaign's influence declined after 1966 (Guha 2008, p. 625). While the BJS gained 21 seats in 1967 bringing their total to 35 or about 9.5% of total seats, in 1971, the BJS lost 13 seats (Andersen and Damle 1987, p. 165). In 1977, in a move that resonates with later moves in China to condemn textbooks seen as making light of Japan's invasion, the BJS campaigned against textbooks that did not sufficiently condemn what they saw as Muslim invaders during the Medieval period (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 287-88).

### 2.3.2   Repression

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi heralded significant changes in the tolerance of narratives of Hindu national humiliation and the groups promoting them in India. The RSS was banned, and Golwalkar was arrested along with over 20,000 RSS volunteers (*swayamsevaks*) (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 88; Singh 2013, p. 88). While the government lifted the ban a year later, the RSS was required to restrict its activity to the "cultural sphere" and not engage in politics (Guha 2008, p. 111). Both Nehru and Indira Gandhi conducted anti-RSS campaigns that included banning some of its local branches or *shakhas* (Jaffrelot 2010, p. 209). The Representation of the People Act banned campaigns from using religious symbols (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 104). In 1956, Nehru announced a law banning the promotion of communalism

through the printed word (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 156). The Representation of the People Act was extended in 1962 to outlaw dividing the public over religion during elections (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 168). These kinds of actions forced Hindu nationalists to limit their activities for fear of being banned again (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 168). Repression also limited success of Hindu nationalists campaigns, such as the cow protection campaign in the 1960s (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 212). In 1975, I. Gandhi declared emergency rule and cracked down on all opposition groups including the RSS. The RSS was banned and over 105,000 members were imprisoned (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 272-275). The failure of Hindu nationalists to take control of the government during this period of repression supports H2. The experience of emergency rule from 1975–77 limited the popular support for and the willingness of future governments to crackdown on opposition groups, setting the stage for later Hindu nationalist successes.

### 2.3.3 Economic Development

After independence, Hindu nationalism received most of its support from students, people living in urban areas, and refugees from Pakistan (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, p. 229). Refugees as a base of support for Hindu nationalists suggests that economic factors may not provide the entire picture and individuals who have been personally aggrieved by the humiliater may be more susceptible to humiliation narratives. However, the concentration of Hindu national support among relatively well off urban dwellers supports H3b (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 111, 147).

Famine was a serious problem in India in the 1950s and 1960s. Even after the Green Revolution alleviated the food crisis, India still had a high rate of poverty with about 223 million out of 530 million Indians in poverty, spending about 80% of their income on food and 10% on fuel (Guha 2008, pp. 442-43, 467). In these conditions, Congress' promises of economic improvements had more appeal to voters than the BJS' Hindu nationalists ideology (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 156). This supports H3c.

The Hindu nationalists' ability to use media to get their message out during this pe-

riod was limited. While the RSS had a press agency, it lacked means, and the RSS only had limited radio access (Jaffrelot 2010, p. 209). Television was not available for use by Hindu nationalists during this period (Rajagopal 2001, p. 77). Hindu nationalists even had difficultly reaching people through print. During India's first election in 1952, most of the electorate was illiterate, and at the time of independence, three-fourths of the workforce was in agriculture (Guha 2008, pp. 158, 209). In 1972 *more* Indians were illiterate than in 1947 (Guha 2008, p. 467). India's newspaper revolution, enabled by new printing technology and increased freedom of the press after the end of emergency rule, did not begin until 1977 (Jeffrey 2000). The combination of Hindu nationalists' limited access to media to spread its message and its struggle to reach groups that lacked this access corroborates H3a.

## 2.4   After Emergency Rule (India 1978–1999

### 2.4.1   Strategic Blame

In 1980, the Janata coalition, formed by opposition parties during Indira Gandhi's emergency rule, collapsed over the issue of communalism and the remains of the BJS became the BJP (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 313). Despite sitting Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 by a Sikh, neither her Congress nor the BJP portrayed this as national humiliation. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's son and successor, called for peace in Punjab and settled with separatists after winning a large sympathy vote in the 1984 elections (Guha 2008, pp. 571-72). The reason neither party labeled this national humiliation is likely because both considered Sikhs part of the Indian nation. The failure of the BJP and the RSS to frame the Sikhs as humiliators despite Sikh attacks on local RSS branches killing dozens of RSS volunteers illustrates the importance of national identity in the perception and framing of events that might otherwise be considered humiliations (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 345). This starkly contrasts with the Hindu nationalist portrayal of the Muslims (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 346).

The key symbol of national humiliation during this period stemmed from the Birthplace of Ram (*Ram Janmabhoomi*) movement that had never previously had national significance

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but was revived by the VHP in 1984 (Veer 1994, pp. 7, 161). The VHP claimed that a Hindu temple marking the birthplace of Ram previously stood on the sight of a Mosque of Babur (*Babri Masjid*) in Ayodhya (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, pp. 275-76). In 1949 Hindu militants broke into the mosque and placed an idol of Ram there (Rajagopal 2001, p. 160). The Hindu Mahasabhsa had attempted to use this incident to mobilize people by reciting the Ramayana in front of the Mosque the next day, but the issue did not catch on. Activism on the Ram Janmabhoomi largely died down until the VHP revived the issue in 1984 (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 93, 362-63).

The BJP, having won only 2 seats in the 1984 elections, joined the Ram Janmabhoomi (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 374). Hindu nationalists were able to successfully frame the issue as the oppression of majority Hindus and a "continuation of a colonial legacy of suppressing indigenous culture, Hindu nationalists identified Hindu rule with the achievement of genuine independence" (Rajagopal 2001, p. 147). This frame allowed the BJP to attack Congress for leading India down the "wrong path" that was tied to both the British and Muslims who had humiliated India as well as promise a return of "cultural pride" and the "redemption of an unrealized dream, of a strong and prosperous India" (Rajagopal 2001, pp. 233-34). Further, the BJP claimed that building the temple would unite India and "reestablish the greatness of a now-humiliated people" (Rajagopal 2001, p. 273). Hindu nationalists used the mosque as a symbol of the "humiliating domination" of Hindus to create an "emotional wave" among the public (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 457).

In October 1990 LK Advani, the President of the BJP, road in a chariot tour to the Ayodhya (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, p. 275). This chariot tour reach hundreds of thousands of people and is a clear example of BJP attempts to use Ram Janmabhoomi to promote Hindu solitary and mobilization (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 416-17). Advani was arrested before arriving, but his supporters made it and faced gunfire from police in clashes that killed at least 20 volunteers (Guha 2008, p. 627). The Sangh Parivar coordinated on the use of symbols including bricks to be used in the construction of the temple and the ashes of martyrs

that were circulated around the country (Rajagopal 2001, pp. 215-16). Ram Janmabhoomi was "invested with the theme of martyrdom as indicated by its constant reference to the 77 battles fought in Ayodhya throughout history" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 423). In a marked similarity with the Chinese Communist Party's slogan 'never forget national humiliation', the VHP adopted the slogan "Do not forget the martyrs of Ayodhya!" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 423).

Its most intense phase began in 1986 when the Rajiv Gandhi led government gave into demands to open the Mosque of Babur (Rajagopal 2001, p. 160). On December 5, 1992, about 150,000 Hindu nationalist volunteers gathered outside the mosque and on the $6^{th}$ stormed and destroyed it (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 545-55). Despite BJP and RSS leaders' claims that this was an unplanned event, the Citizens Tribunal on Ayodhya found that the destruction of the Mosque was preplanned in a Dec. $5^{th}$ meeting attended by LK Advani, M. Joshi (who succeeded Advani as president of the BJP in 1991), and others (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 456-57). The destruction of the Mosque of Babur set off riots across Northern India that killed about 2,000 people (Guha 2008, p. 632).

Ram Janmabhoomi succeeded where the cow protection movement in the 1950s and 1960s had failed. Many Hindus began to see the contention over the Mosque of Babur as involving "national honour" and as a reminder of "humiliation" (Guha 2008, p. 625). Hindu nationalists continued deploying national humiliation tactics in the 1990s. "In every case, a religious minority—Muslim or Christian—was targeted, and accused of having hurt Hindu sentiment or of being in the pay of a foreign power" (Guha 2008, p. 640). In the 1989 elections, the BJP gained a resounding 83 seats, bringing its total to 85 (Election Commission of India 1990). Ram Janmabhoomi was a major factor in this success (Jaffrelot 2010, p. 211). Congress was saved from the total rout predicted by polls in the 1991 election by a sympathy vote stemming from Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, but with the prominence of Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the BJP still managed to gain 35 seats, bringing its total to 120 (Guha 2008, p. 628). By 1996, the BJP was the largest party in parliament, and,

while it failed to put together a majority government, it performed well in the 1998 elections, maintaining its status as the party with the most seats (Guha 2008, p. 634). This allowed the BJP to put together a coalition government in 1999 that lasted five years (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, p. 279). This marked a huge change for the Hindu nationalist movement that had failed so many times since independence that its end as a significant political force in India had been declared many times (Guha 2008, pp. 634-35).

Some argue that the BJP's political success was not due to Hindu nationalism (Gould 1993, p. 298).[9] I do not mean to suggest that national humiliation narratives were the sole reason for the BJP's success and that other factors, such as their economic policies, played no role. However, it would be wrong to discount the importance of Hindu nationalism in the BJP's success (Corbridge and Harriss 2000, Chapter 6), which owed much to its alliance with the VHP and the RSS (Veer 1994, p. 1). The fact that both Congress and the BJP tended to support market economic reforms while in power and oppose them while out of power in the 1990s and early 2000s suggests that economic policies do not tell the entire story (Guha 2008, p. 701).

### 2.4.2  Repression

The Indian central government did little to limit Ram Janmabhoomi until after the mosque's destruction. When the VHP launched a bricklaying movement in 1989, Congress advised against it, but took no action (Guha 2008, p. 589). Part of the reason Congress decided to give into Hindu nationalist demands to open up the Mosque of Babur was to regain Hindu support after alienating many Hindus with the Muslim Women's bill (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 371). However, in practice, the opening up of the mosque simply legitimated the claims of Hindu nationalists (Jaffrelot 2010, p. 212). The only major repressive action taken before the destruction of the mosque was Advani's 1990 arrest (Guha 2008, pp. 626-27). This was too late to prevent the consolidation of Hindu nationalists networks and contrasts with

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[9]See also Brass (1993, p. 266).

the preventative arrests in 1949, when Hindu nationalists tried to use Ram Janmabhoomi for political gain (Jaffrelot 1999, pp. 94-95, 212). These arrests helped prevent successful exploitation of the issue in 1949 (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 96). This difference in repression and success over two attempts by Hindu nationalists groups to deploy Ram Janmabhoomi gives support to H2.

The repressive measures taken against Hindu nationalists after the destruction of the mosque were laxly enforced and quickly lifted. In contrast with past crackdowns, the government arrested a "relatively small number of people" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 465). While leaders were arrested and the RSS, VHP, and Bajrang Dal were banned, the leaders were released a month later and the ban was lifted in June (Rajagopal 2001, p. 206).[10] "Narasimha Rao's response to the demolition of the disputed structure therefore, cannot be compared to that of Nehru's after Gandhi's assassination. Nor does it compare with the steps which Mrs. Gandhi took to ban communal organizations at the onset of the Emergency" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 468).

### 2.4.3 Economic Development

The economic growth of the 1980s and 1990s increased the size of the middle class in India, distinguishing this period from previous periods where India was characterized by a small elite with the remainder of the country in poverty (Guha 2008, p. 689). Unlike the previous period in India, where literacy rates had stagnated and even declined, by 1991 64% of men were literate (Guha 2008, p. 693). While female literacy rates lagged behind male literacy rates, by the end of the 1990s the majority of women were literate and the male literacy rate rose to 76% (Guha 2008, p. 695). The co-occurrence of increasing individuals lifted out of poverty with the increasing appeal of narratives of national humiliation supports H3c.

Development in India remained uneven and the more well off groups continued to be disproportionately receptive to national humiliation narratives. Those that responded the

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[10]The exception was the VHP, which remained banned until 1995 (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 466).

most to Hindu nationalists campaigns were the middle class, professionals, industrialists, and rich peasants (Corbridge and Harriss 2000, Chapter 6). This support was key to the political success of Hindu nationalists in the 1990s (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, p. 278). Narratives of national humiliation still struggled to resonate with peasants. This can be seen in that Hindu nationalists promoted Ram Janmabhoomi in "suitable areas" while among peasants they focused on "a national movement to improve the lot of the peasants" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 378). The RSS' system of local branches struggled in villages because of its "relative lack of adaptability in the village world where work completely dominates men's lives" and because "peasants are too divided and do not have time for an RSS training" (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 386). This class breakdown in national humiliation narrative resonance supports H3b.

Groups promoting narratives of national humiliation took advantage of new forms of media to further spread their message. Beginning in this period, Hindu Nationalists could reach the public through television (Rajagopal 2001, pp. 8, 16, 273). This set Hindu nationalists campaigns in the 80s and 90s apart from the previous cow protection campaigns (Corbridge and Harriss 2000, Chapter 8). The number of TVs rapidly increased in the 1980s from 2 million to 30 million (Corbridge and Harriss 2000, Chapter 6). The airing of the Hindu epic Ramayana on India state television from 1987-89, which became the most popular television program ever in India, increased the salience of Ram Janmabhoomi (Rajagopal 2001, p. 30). The Ramayana broadcast "has done more than anything else to make a standard version of the epic known and popular among Indian middle class" and helped make the issues raised by Ram Janmabhoomi "loaded with affect" (Veer 1994, p. 9). Viewers increased from 40 to 80 million in the first few months and people planned their schedule so they could crowd around a nearby television for the show's Sunday episodes (Rajagopal 2001, p. 84). On average, 91% of TV owners watched the weekly broadcast (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 389). The Hindu nationalists took advantage of access to new media technologies beyond just television and distributed audio cassettes with their message in addition to using traditional means like pamphlets and newspapers (Rajagopal 2001, p. 235). These cassettes, which were broadcasts publicly with

loud-speakers, gave VHP propaganda a reach it would not otherwise have had (Jaffrelot 1999, p. 396). The role of expanded media access in spreading national humiliation during this period buttresses H3a.

## 2.5 Forging National Idenity (China 1885-1949)

Japan's defeat of the Qing Empire in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War marks the beginning of modern Chinese nationalism (Wang 2012, pp. 73-74). Two important figures in the formation of Chinese national identity are Kang Youwei and his student Liang Qichao (Chu and Zarrow 2002, pp. 4-5). They both belonged to a reform movement attempting to strengthen the Chinese state. The reformists introduced the term meaning 'national' (国民) into Chinese discourse, and Liang lamented that Han people did not see themselves part of a Chinese nation.

Sun Yat-sen and later Chiang Kai-shek were both influenced by the reformists. In the 1920s and 1930 *Guomindang* approved textbooks were titled "History of National Humiliation" (Callahan 2010, p. 34). Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, two key figures in the founding of the Communist Party, originally followed the reformists but ultimately turned to communism. However, the desire to save the Chinese nation was largely the motivation of Communist leaders to turn to communism. Meisner (1999) argues that "Although the early Chinese converts to Marxism were inspired by the vision of international revolution that the Bolshevik Revolution seemed to herald, they had come to that new socialist vision through a profoundly nationalist route" (18).

### 2.5.1 Strategic Blame

The Qing dynasty, China's last dynasty, ended in 1912. The ruling Qing were not Han but Manchu. For Sun's revolutionary Chinese nationalists, the Manchus were foreigners who were the source of China's weakness (Wright 1959, p. 3). This parallels to the way Hindu nationalists blamed 'foreign' Muslim rule for British colonization. The Qing themselves could

not use narratives of national humiliation both because they were in power during the events being framed as humiliating, preventing them from escaping blame, and because their rule was imperial and not national.

The phrase "never forget national humiliation" (勿忘国耻) was first popularized in China and used by nationalists groups to criticize the government, led by the warlord Yuan Shikai, for accepting of Japan's 21 Demands (Wang 2012, p. 64). That national humiliation was not used politically until 1915 despite the fact that the beginning of the "Century of Humiliation" subsequently was dated at the first Opium War in 1839 supports the idea that events by themselves are not humiliating but must be socially constructed as such. Likewise the Chinese phrase 'unequal treaties' (不平等条约), referring to the treaties China was forced to sign during the Century of Humiliation was not used until the 1920s (Wang 2008, p. 1). Both the Communists and Guomindang used the concept of unequal treaties and "China's humiliating recent past" as "strategies for bringing down their common enemies— imperialism and warlordism" (Wang 2008, p. 7). This strategic use of national humiliation narratives as well as the failure of the Qing Dynasty and later ruling warlords to deploy them (who were in power during the events being framed as humiliating) is consistent with H1.

During the civil war between the Guomindang and the Communists, the Guomindang's command of the cities allowed them to gain control of China for a time, but they ultimately lost a civil war to the Communists in 1949. This was not because of national humiliation narratives, which they both deployed. The Communists' success had more to do with the its ability to mobilize the power of the poor farmers through the promise of land reform and other measures to improve their lives (Fairbank 2006, pp. 317, 329).

### 2.5.2   Repression

The repression of criticism during the Qing empire helps explain why national humiliation narratives did not emerge until after the Qing empire collapsed, supporting H2 (Fairbank 2006, pp. 156-159, 261-62). However, after the end of the Qing empire in 1912, repression

did less to limit the success of national humiliation narratives because it was not the idea of national humiliation that was suppressed. Instead, Communist propaganda was suppressed in areas controlled by the Guomindang and Guomindang propaganda was suppressed in areas controlled by the Communists (Fairbank 2006, pp. 291, 312).

### 2.5.3   Economic Development

In China, national humiliation was primarily discussed by intellectuals and business leaders (Wang 2012, p. 75). National humiliation narratives were first popularized by teachers' organizations and the press (Callahan 2010, p. 25). Both the Guomindang as well as the Communists attempted to use the concept of national humiliation to mobilize support, but the Communists focused more on targeting rural villagers with the appeal of class issues while the Guomindang focused on the urban elite (Wang 2012, p. 82). This supports and H3b. Since villagers who were generally less receptive to national humiliation narratives were the key to the Communists ability to take over the country, this case is consistent with H3c that national humiliation narratives are unlikely to determine to political success during periods of low economic development. The role of media is difficult to evaluate during this period because repression tended to ensure that the messages reported by the media reflected the narrative of the political group in control of the region and because both programmatic parties used narratives of national humiliation.

## 2.6   Statehood to the Tiananmen Massacre (China 1950-1988)

### 2.6.1   Strategic Blame

The Guomindang's relatively greater contribution to the war against Japan, limited the ability of the Communists to use national humiliation narratives during this period (Wang 2012, p. 88). The Communists would potentially face blame for holding their strength in reserve to fight the Guomindang, fellow Chinese, rather than Japan. Further, the Communists still viewed reactionaries, including the Guomindang, as a threat to their rule. Chiang

Kai-shek maintained his hope to retake the mainland until his death (Sui 2009). References to national humiliation in China from 1940-1990 are very rare (see Figure 1) (Callahan 2010, p. 26). This reticence in deploying national humiliation narratives for fear of facing blame coincides with H1.

### 2.6.2 Repression

In China repression was the determining condition during this period. National humiliation narratives were completely muzzled. No books on national humiliation were published from 1947–1990 and the history of the Nanjing Massacre was suppressed (Wang 2012, p. 82). The utter lack of national humiliation narratives during this period provides strong evidence that determined government repression can prevent national humiliation narratives from spreading (H2).

### 2.6.3 Economic Development

The extent of repression largely alleviates the need to discuss China's economic development during this period because humiliation entrepreneurs could not use any media that did exist to reach any class that might have been receptive to their message. However, Figure 2 shows that the average person living in China during this period was even worse off economically than the average person living in India until around 1985.

## 2.7 After the Tiananmen Massacre (China 1989-1999)

### 2.7.1 Strategic Blame

Now that the Communists had ruled the mainland for several decades, its rule was recognized by almost every country in the world, and its military power was vastly greater than Taiwan's, the Communists no longer viewed the Guomindang as a major threat to its rule. However, with the global decline of communism and the events of the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989, the Chinese government now imagined a new threat to its rule, democracy. China faced

sanctions and human rights pressure from Western countries in response to the massacre (Deng 2008, pp. 76-77). Communist leaders saw national humiliation as a way to shift the public's attention from corruption and the lack of political reform, for which the Communists could be blamed, to external issues (Callahan 2010, p. 35). Further, the Patriotic Education Campaign, launched in 1991, linked democratic values, which threatened Communist rule, to foreign humiliators and internal critics of the regime to historical "traitors" who sold out China to foreigners (Callahan 2006, pp. 35, 43). This lends support to H1.

After the Tiananmen Massacre, the Chinese government launched the Patriotic Education Campaign that emphasized China's humiliation at the hands of Japan and Western powers along with the Communists' role in winning national independence (Wang 2012, pp. 96-97). The Communists could escape responsibility for China's humiliation prior to 1949 because they were not in political power. Further, the information that the Communists held back in the war against Japan to preserve its strength for fighting the Guomindang was now suppressed. History textbooks typically begin with summaries of China's "glorious past" followed by its humiliation by foreign powers; of course, they omit tragedies that occurred after the Communists took control in 1949 and instead focus on events that can be "blamed on outsiders" (Callahan 2010, p. 14). Figure 1 shows articles from the CCP main mouthpiece newspaper, the *People's Daily* with 'national humiliation' (国耻) in the title from 1946 to 2017. State media followed a similar pattern as state approved textbooks, publishing only 2 articles with national humiliation in the title from 1949 to 1989 with surges of articles before and after this period. While it is impossible to know if the Communists would have lost control of the government had it not adopted national humiliation narratives, the fact that other communist regimes around the world collapsed during this period suggests these narratives may have played a role in its survival (Dimitrov 2013).

### 2.7.2  Repression

Unlike before the Tiananmen Massacre, the state was promoting the narrative of national humiliation, so repression was not a restriction on its spread. Censorship of alternative views has arguably aided the narrative's spread, allowing it to become more pervasive and unchallenged than it would be in a democratic society (Shen 2010). The Communist Party uses a combination of propaganda and censorship to ensure that there is only one national narrative, the narrative of national humiliation and rejuvenation by the Communists (Callahan 2010, p. 33). The correspondence of this change in censorship tactics and the reach of national humiliation narratives supports H2.

### 2.7.3  Economic Development

China's economic development since the 1980s is astounding. From 1978 to 2009, China's per capita GDP grew an average 8.7% per year (Hu 2011). The conformity between China's new, relative prosperity and the increased prevalence of national humiliation narratives corroborates H3c. Development remained uneven and the more well off groups continued to be disproportionately receptive to national humiliation narratives. Young, educated, urban, and internet using members of the public are the most likely to be mobilized by national humiliation narratives (Wang 2012, p. 232). This class difference in receptiveness supports H3b.

The Communists took advantage of new forms of media to spread national humiliation. In addition to the classroom, the Communist Party uses the media to spread its message of national humiliation, including films, museums, novels, songs, poems, and online videos in "a multimedia campaign that ties patriotism very firmly to the party-state" (Callahan 2010, p. 16). While it is difficult to assess the counter-factual of what would have happened absent these new forms of media, the Communists choice to invest in them to deploy narratives of national humiliation suggests that Chinese leaders believe that they aid the spread of such narratives (H3a).

Figure 2: Economic Development in China and India

GDP expressed in constant 2005 dollars with exchange rates calculated based on purchasing power parity. The years 1950 and 1951 are missing for China. Data taken from Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer (2015).

## 2.8 Discussion

No one piece of evidence from any given group-period can definitively prove the hypotheses, but, taken as a whole, the cases show that the hypotheses can account for variation across a wide variety of circumstances, including different political competitors, regime types, levels of development, degrees of repression, and international environments. In particular, H1 is supported in all 11 group cases. The hypotheses about national humiliation narrative success are more difficult to demonstrate because only one group at a time can control the chief executive position in a country (limiting variation in the dependent variable) and because there are more potential confounding factors that might lead to group political success. However, H3a-H3c do a good job of accounting for the timing of Hindu nationalists political success in India and why Hindu nationalists groups had not gained control of the government

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before this period, despite using similar strategies. Further, the 11 group periods provide plenty of opportunity for falsification. Yet in no case do national humiliation narratives lead to political success while repressed or amid extreme poverty. Where possible, I examine empirical implications beyond the outcome of political success. If economic development reached a critical level that enabled the success of narratives of national humiliation in both China and India during the final period, then the GDP per capita of both countries should have increased prior to this period and reached similar levels in both countries. This is precisely what Figure 2 shows. The GDP per capita in both countries reach approximately the same level in 1985 and continued to rise afterward. In each country-period the people most receptive to narratives of national humiliation tend to be wealthier and, aside from the middle period in China when they were completely repressed, narratives increase in reach with expanding access to media.

Further, the cases provide compelling evidence against alternate explanations. Major traumatic or threatening events such as war defeats do a poor job in predicting either the use or the success of national humiliation narratives. Indeed there is debate over whether the destruction of the temple of Ram in India happened at all, yet narratives of national humiliation about it were highly successfully at mobilizing Hindus (Metcalf and Metcalf 2012, pp. 275-76). Events that one might except to be humiliating, such as Indira Gandhi's assassination did not get framed as humiliating. Although the Chinese government could have framed its 1979 war with Vietnam as a humiliation based on Chinese casualties and poor battle performance, it choose to suppress information about causalities and frame the conflict as a victory instead (Zhang 2005, p. 866). Even when national humiliation narratives frame past conflicts as the humiliating event, the narrative sometimes emerges over 50 years after the conflict's end, suggesting political conditions at the time rather than the event itself provide a better explanation of the use of these narratives. The variation among nationalist groups in the use of humiliation narratives shows the insufficiency of theories of nationalism that do not account for the content of nationalist narratives to explain their use.

The times when governments facing legitimacy crises did not resort to national humiliation (Indira Gandhi during emergency rule, the Qing Dynasty, and Yuan Shikai after the 21 demands) suggests that a legitimacy crisis is not sufficient to precipitate narratives of national humiliation. Legitimacy crises are not a necessary condition either because parties out of power use of narratives of national humiliation. Lastly, the differing success of campaigns that attempted to mobilize support over the same issue at different times, for example Ram Janmabhoomi, suggests that the preexisting culture or feelings about an issue cannot explain the success of national humiliation narratives.

# 3 Conclusion

Political groups use narratives of national humiliation when they can associate their rivals with while disassociating themselves from the event they are framing as humiliating. These narratives can help political groups gain or maintain political power provided that they are not repressed and the country has reached a level of economic development that allows concerns beyond basic economic survival as well as access to media through which narratives of national humiliation can spread.

Because narratives of national humiliation are strategies adopted by political parties due to domestic political incentives, they are unlikely to have relationships with international events, such as war defeats, in a way that would confound analysis of their effects on foreign policy. While the need for the narratives not to be repressed might raise concerns that national humiliation narratives correlate with democracy, this is not necessarily the case because what matters is that the narratives themselves are not repressed, not that general levels of repression are low. Even in democratic India, national humiliation narratives sometimes faced repression while in authoritarian China after 1989 it was not national humiliation narratives but their competitors that faced repression.

Because the use and success of these narratives does not vary along with objective events

measures of events that *might* get framed as humiliating, such as war defeats, are not good proxies for national humiliation. Researchers interested in national humiliation's effect on foreign policy must instead use measures that account for the social construction of events as humiliating (or not).

National humiliation narratives still impact politics in China and India. In China, the Communists under President Xi have continued to use narratives of national humiliation to affirm their rule. Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India, has placed Muslims in the role of the humiliater to gain support (Guha 2008, p. 647). Future research should examine when national humiliation narratives that have led to political success for the groups promoting them end.

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