

Conflicting Indian and Pakistani Narratives Concerning Kashmir

Abstract

India and Pakistan have been in conflict over the province of Kashmir since the partition of British India in 1947. Since partition each country has developed divergent, diametrically opposed master and identity narratives. These narratives in conjunction with system narratives shape how India and Pakistan act and shape their own strategic narratives to attempt to convince both the international community and the other that their stance is the correct one and that Kashmir belongs to them.

Introduction

Narratives are used to make sense of the world around us in a myriad of ways. They provide structure and a sense of belonging and each country has its own master and identity narratives. This paper will focus here on Pakistan and India. Pakistan boasts narratives of a Muslim nation state and geographical insecurity. These narratives are projected within Pakistan and onto the international stage. Conflicting narratives, when presented, are often suppressed. This is seen in the disputed area of Kashmir as well. India carries an opposing narrative, that of a Hindu nation state. However, unlike Pakistan, India embraces ethnic diversity as part of its identity. Another master narrative that shapes India's identity is that of its aspiration to regional hegemony. This works together with its narrative that India is a beacon of democracy in South Asia; this democratic narrative has furthered India's position on the international stage.

Recent developments in the conflict over the province of Kashmir have caused India's democratic narrative to lose validity. India will have to regain its image as a flourishing democracy to properly engage the international community. Pakistan will have to address the international community as well; however, its message will be better delivered by non-state actors. For both countries, addressing one another without inciting violence is an enormous task. Each is deeply entrenched in its own narratives and the idea that the other is the primary threat to its security.

Narratives

According to Miskimmon et al. narratives are a framework used to connect events and create an understanding of the world around us.¹ There are different kinds of narratives, master narratives, system narratives, and identity narratives. Narratives can be used strategically to achieve goals as well. Master narratives are broad overarching narratives within societies; each country has its own master narratives, and they are deeply rooted in history and culture.² These overarching narratives can include or feed into both system and identity narratives, especially national identity, and are reinforced through repetition throughout society and over a sustained period of time.

System narratives are narratives without geographical borders. They create structure and meaning in the international order and thus shape international actor's behavior.³ Just as they shape international actor's behavior this behavior, convergent or divergent, also shapes

¹ Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin, and Laura Roselle, *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 5.

² Jeffrey R. Halverson, H. L. Goodall Jr., and Steven R. Corman, "What is a Master Narrative," *Master Narratives of Islamic Extremism*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 14.

³ Miskimmon, *Strategic Narratives*, 7.

the system narratives. "In international relations, narratives are dynamic and ever-negotiated social product based on states' interactions both with their societies and with external significant others."⁴ The idea of the modern state and its sovereignty, participation in liberal international institutions, and respect for human rights can all be understood as system narratives.

Identity narratives stem from constructivist theory; constructivist literature often discusses how ideas and identity factor into international relations and decision making.⁵ These narratives are created by and affect both state and non-state actors. Additionally, identity is flexible. As Mattern states "Identities are not natural facts, but social constructs that are always in process."⁶ This paper will focus on the national identity narratives of India and Pakistan. "National identity has been addressed in the literature as 'a constructed and public national self-image based on membership in a political community as well as history, myths, symbols, language, and cultural norms commonly held by members.'"⁷

All states have undergone nation building in terms of narratives, some more organically than others. Countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan conducted significant nation building activities post-independence. Pakistan focused on its identity as an Islamic state and Afghanistan focused on this and the idea of Pashtunistan. These efforts are ongoing, especially for younger nations "because identity is nothing but narrative, it lasts only as long as authors keep authoring it, sharing it with others, and collectively believing in it."⁸ However this can be

⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁵ Ibid, 31.

⁶ Janice Bially Mattern, *Ordering International Politics Identity, Crisis, and Representational Force*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

⁷ Miskimmon, *Strategic Narratives*, 32.

⁸ Mattern, *Ordering International Politics*, 9.

seen even in longer standing countries such as the United States, as it currently reckons with its place in the international order and what it means to be American.⁹

The U.S., Pakistan, and every other country must constantly reinforce the master narratives that make up their national identity. As Mattern states, “because narrative is what makes an identity real, it follows that an identity is only as enduring as its constitutive narrative is stable, intersubjectively held, and legitimate among those who have been written explicitly in or out as members.”¹⁰ When narratives breakdown or are contested so too does the identity built upon them. With the contestation of the American exceptionalism and the American dream narratives, America has seen a breakdown in identity and a significantly more tumultuous political atmosphere.

Strategic narratives use and work within other types of narratives to achieve a goal. In international affairs “political actors use strategic narratives in an attempt to marshal the center ground of national and international political communication to play influential role in the construction of the emerging world order.”¹¹ These narratives can be used for various purposes: to set agendas, to convince other actors that your stance is the correct one, and increase mobilization or popularity.¹² They are often present issues in binary terms like good vs evil to their audiences.¹³

⁹ David Brooks, “The Racial Reckoning Comes: Trump has Changed our National Narrative.” *The New York Times*, 2019; timothy Egan, “America the Hot Mess.” *The New York Times*, 2019; M. Scott Mahaskey and David Canellos, “Are Americans Falling out of Love with their Landmarks?” *Politico*, 2019.

¹⁰ Mattern, *Ordering International Politics*, 9.

¹¹ Miskimmon, *Strategic Narratives*, 61.

¹² *Ibid*, 8.

¹³ *Ibid*, 60.

While strategic narratives have many uses, they cannot be created out of thin air. “The parameters of a state’s strategic narratives are bound by prevailing domestic and international understandings and expectations of that state, readings of its own history, and evaluations of its reputation.”¹⁴ In other words, strategic narratives are constrained, or are only successful, by the combination of master narratives, system narratives, and identity narratives. This can be seen in instances of international intervention such as in Libya. Then President Obama’s choice regarding the UN no-fly zone and intervention was constrained by domestic narratives, such as the sentiment that the U.S. had no place in Iraq or Afghanistan, and international narratives, such as the humanitarian narrative of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).¹⁵ Master narratives shape states’ decisions every day, both consciously and subconsciously; however one must be aware of their own narratives to shape a strategic narrative. Newer countries do not always have coherent master or identity narratives to draw upon and thus must endeavor to develop their own narratives through nation building.

Development of Indian and Pakistani Narratives

1947 marked the partition and independence of both India and Pakistan from the British Empire. The division of the subcontinent by colonial officials into two states caused the displacement of millions of people as groups fled to the state with the majority of their religion. Violence and rape were widespread and many went missing. This traumatic event which created two new states was the catalyst for master narratives and identity narratives in both India and Pakistan and cross border tensions that still exist today. The post-independence

¹⁴ Ibid, 8.

¹⁵ Ibid, 79-81.

reality required the formulation of national identities and the creation of master narratives in order to give people a sense of belonging and a way forward in their new countries.

Pakistan

Pakistan conducted significant nation building post-independence. The 1950s and 60s were a significant period for this. The two-nation theory at the basis of partition created Pakistan's identity as a Muslim state. The All-India Muslim League headed by the first Governor-General of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah advocated for a Pakistani Muslim nation-state starting in the 1930s.¹⁶ Jinnah emphasized the idea that Hindus and Muslims have different master and identity narratives and would thus be incompatible as one nation and state. In a speech to the All-India Muslim League in 1940 he states,

It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders; and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality; and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of more of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literature[s]. They neither intermarry nor interdine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects

¹⁶ Judith M. Brown, *Modern India: The Origin of an Asian Democracy*, *The Short Oxford History of the Modern World*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 331-332.

[=perspectives?] on life, and of life, are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and different episode[s]. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent, and final. destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.¹⁷

The narrative of Pakistan as a Muslim state has continued since then and has been continually reinforced in a variety of ways. While Urdu was not originally widely spoken, it was chosen as the national language because of its use of Arabic or Persian script and association with the educated elite and Islam in the region. Pakistan further promoted the idea of itself as a home for Muslims through the promotion of Islamic education through madrasas and state sponsored textbooks. In attempting to create one Pakistani identity, these textbooks promoted only one way of practicing Islam that was beneficial to the state and many assimilated to it “for the sake of the nation.”¹⁸

In defining the Pakistani identity narratives, the Pakistani government is able to exert control over who is and who is not Pakistani. This is demonstrated in connection to religion, one must be Muslim to be Pakistani, but also with ethnicity. The exclusion of Pashtuns from

¹⁷ Muhammad Ali Jinnah, “Opening Presidential Address” (speech, All-India Muslim League, Lahore, March 1940).

¹⁸ Matthew J. Nelson, Dealing with Difference: Religious Education and the Challenge of Democracy in Pakistan,” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 3 (2009): 591, 602; Cheema, Nadir, “Why Pakistan’s Official Narrative is Not Serving Well,” *The Herald*, 2019.

national identity due to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North-West Frontier Province's (NWFP), now part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, different legal status and Pashtun association with Afghanistan. Pashtuns were in particular seen as heavily connected to groups such as the Taliban. Ethnic identities are downplayed or polarized by the Pakistani state, in particular Bengali identity due to Bangladesh's separation from Pakistan.¹⁹

Pakistan also maintains a security narrative in two aspects. First as a protector of Muslims and second with the idea that its security is constantly threatened by other states. This threat comes from both the Afghan and Indian border. The Afghan notion of Pashtunistan led the Afghan government to not recognize the Durand Line. This border was negotiated with Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan during the colonial era and brought the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into Pakistan. Afghanistan's instability also plays into this. Perhaps a larger concern for Pakistan is India. India poses a nuclear threat and has already fought three wars with Pakistan. India also played a part in the separation of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Additionally, the disputed territory of Kashmir is a constant security issue between the two countries.

The Pakistani state is willing to use whatever tools necessary to maintain its "one-size fits all" identity narrative.²⁰ Suppression of academics, activists, and international events is quite common. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), which is a movement to better integrate Pashtuns in Pakistan and discuss their experiences with terrorism, has seen many arrests.²¹ Academics often have similar experiences within Pakistan and with trying to hold

¹⁹ Nadir Cheema, "Why Pakistan's Official Narrative is Not Serving Well," 2019.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hurmat Ali Shah, "Redefining Citizenship in Pakistan." *Himal Southasian*, 2020.

events abroad.²² Additionally, human rights issues have been brought forward in both Indian and Pakistan administered Kashmir. These violations of free speech and human rights have caused Pakistan's narrative to be taken less seriously on the international stage.

India

India arguably had an easier time reconciling its history and geographic territory, especially with the inclusion of Delhi, the historical power center of South Asia. The Indian narratives are divergent from Pakistan's narratives despite the same origin event. India has molded itself as a Hindu nation. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is currently the ruling party in India. It is a Hindu nationalist party with connections to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist paramilitary organization. In fact, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a member of his local RSS chapter.²³ Despite the guarantee of freedom of religion in the Indian constitution, the BJP, being a Hindu nationalist party, has endeavored to position Muslims as 'the other'. This has been done through the idea of "love-jihad," incidents like that of the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, and general violence against Muslims like that conducted by "cow protection groups."²⁴ This also directly relates to Kashmir and India's treatment of Muslims there.

Another large aspect of the Indian national identity that plays a part in the conflict in Kashmir is the democratic narrative. With a population of over 1.3 billion people, India is the largest democracy in the world. Kholsa and Vaishnav state that "Scholars and commentators

²² Nadir Cheema, "Why Pakistan's Official Narrative is Not Serving Well," 2019.

²³ Lauren Frayer, and Furkan Latif Khan, "The Powerful Group Shaping the Rise of Hindu Nationalism in India," *NPR*, 2019.

²⁴ "India: Vigilante 'Cow Protection' Groups Attack Minorities," *Human Rights Watch*, 2019.

have come to associate Indian democracy with certain institutional features: the regular occurrence of free and fair elections, equal citizenship, checks on governmental power across vertical and horizontal dimensions, a judiciary with strong powers of review, and an elaborate bill of rights.”²⁵ This perception of democracy has often shielded India for international criticism, particularly from the West.

Despite the BJP’s othering of Indian Muslims, India remains a pluralistic society. Unlike in Pakistan, ethnic identity is not as polarized. Republic Day, one of three national holidays, includes a parade with floats from each state celebrating their unique culture. This celebration is similar to that of Independence Day in which India celebrates Gandhi’s legacy and the non-violent resistance to the British Empire. The ideal of Swaraj, self-rule, is woven into the fabric of Indian society and is even seen in PM Modi’s platform with his five pillars of self-reliance.²⁶ Modi’s five pillars focus on different aspects of economic development.

This drive for economic development as well as India’s large population and geographic expanse set the country up well to pursue regional hegemony. India has set its eyes on competition regionally with China. However, it still has to deal with Pakistan. Pew Research shows that 76% of Indian citizens believe that Pakistan is a threat.²⁷ The disputed area of Kashmir makes ignoring Pakistan impossible, especially with the goal of regional hegemon in mind. India developed nuclear weapons much sooner than Pakistan. With this and Pakistan’s population of less than 350 million people, and its significantly lower GDP, losing territory to

²⁵ Madhav Khosla, and Milan Vaishnav, “The Three Faces of the Indian State,” *Journal of Democracy* 32, no. 1 (2021): 111.

²⁶ “What are the 5 Pillars of a Self-Reliant India?” Narendra Modi.

²⁷ Kat Devlin, “A Sampling of Public Opinion in India.” *Pew Research Center*, 2019.

Pakistan would tarnish India's international reputation, something the country cannot afford if it is to successfully pursue hegemony.

Conflicting narratives in Kashmir

The Province of Kashmir is one of the biggest issues of tension between India and Pakistan. Around the time of partition, the Maharaja of Kashmir, who was Hindu, desired independence; however, he agreed to join India in return for protection from Pakistani invasion. Kashmir has since been the center of two of the three Indo-Pakistani wars. The current line of control divides the province into an Indian administered Kashmir and a Pakistan administered Kashmir.

The history of conflict in Kashmir does not end with the Indo-Pakistani wars. In the 1980s the Kashmir Pandit Tragedy occurred. Religious tension flared and Hindu Pandits decided to leave Kashmir after killings and threats. Police gunned down Muslim protesters and thousands of Hindus fled the province.²⁸ The current population is approximately 60% Muslim. In the last few years violence has increased again. 2017 and 2018 saw militant attacks against Indian forces including one performed by Jaish-e Mohammad, associated with the Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), which killed at least 40 Indian service members.²⁹ In 2019, India revoked Article 370 which gave Jammu and Kashmir its partial autonomy and statehood.³⁰ It also revoked 35A which gave residence privileges such as landownership.³¹ India furthered a

²⁸ Nirupama Subramanian, "Explained: The Kashmir Pandit Tragedy." *The Indian Express*, 2020.

²⁹ Dexter Filkins, "Why the War for Kashmir Burns On." *The New Yorker*, 2019.

³⁰ Vindu Goel, "What is Article 370, and Why Does it Matter in Kashmir?" *The New York Times*, 2019.

³¹ "Article 35A: Why a Special Law on Kashmir is Controversial." *The BBC*, 2019.

rule of law narrative and cracked down by shutting off internet and sending in additional troops.

The ways India chooses to act and how it places its strategic narratives is based on its own master and identity narratives, as well as the system narratives. In terms of system narratives, India uses the rule of law narrative in which it is upholding International Law. As such it cracks down on dissent and violence within Kashmir, often without regard for human rights. This violence is also a part of the system narrative that its neighbors, specifically Pakistan, are a threat to its security. The legacy of colonialism, partition, and the Indo-Pakistani Wars reinforce this system narrative, as have the connections between Pakistan and militant organizations. These and the narrative that Pakistan is a threat to Indian security undermine any long-lasting progress on the various ceasefire agreements between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.

Progress towards a resolution to the Kashmir conflict is also influenced by India's master narratives. As previously discussed, India's Hindu nation master narrative birthed by partition greatly influences how it behaves. Now with the BJP in power treatment of Kashmiri Muslims is an ever-present issue. The narratives of nuclear power and regional hegemony leave little room for defeat, especially against Pakistan. India also has a strong culture of military pride which goes hand in hand with its regional hegemony narrative. Additionally, India sees itself as the rightful ruler of Kashmir due to its 'inheritance' of the province from the last Maharaja. This makes it even more difficult for India to accept any kind of loss in Kashmir without significant damage to its narratives.

India	Master & Identity Narratives	System Narratives	Issue Narratives
	<p>Rightful rulers</p> <p>Democratic values</p> <p>Legacy of Colonialism & Partition</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>National military pride</p> <p>Regional leader</p> <p>Nuclear power</p> <p>Hindu nation/BJP ruled</p>	<p>Upholding International Law</p> <p>Military threats from neighbors</p> <p>Relations in areas legacy of Colonialism</p> <p>Ceasefire agreements</p>	<p>Pakistani menace</p> <p>Pakistan funding militants/terrorists in Kashmir</p> <p>Wars over Kashmir</p> <p>Nuclear threat</p> <p>Increasing violence</p> <p>It's an internal affair</p> <p>Kashmir as a Muslim state</p> <p>Article 370 & 35A</p>

Pakistan's strategic narratives also have to navigate system narratives, as well as its own master and identity narratives. The two-nation system narrative manifests in connection with Pakistan's master and identity narrative as a Muslim nation and the protector of Muslims. Pakistan sees BJP rule in India and its actions in Kashmir as undermining the fundamental rights of Muslims there and its position as a protector of Muslims means it has the responsibility to protect Muslim Kashmiris from India. This responsibility to protect also ties into the narrative of upholding international law. While India views this narrative as an issue tied to law and order within its own territory, Pakistan views it in terms of international human rights law.

Pakistan's master and identity narratives as the champion of Islam and Muslim state is the source of its view that it is the rightful ruler of Kashmir and not India. While India can claim that the Hindu Maharaja gave this territory to it, Pakistan can claim the province rightfully belongs to it as the majority of the population is Muslim. India as Hindu state, especially one run by the BJP, is seen as one that will abuse the Muslim citizens there and one that should have no interest in the area. Losing Kashmir to Pakistan would undermine its own master and identity narrative as a Muslim nation.

Pakistan	Master & Identity Narratives	System Narratives	Issue Narratives
	<p>Muslim Country – sanctuary for Muslims</p> <p>Rightful rulers</p> <p>Partition</p> <p>Champion of Islam</p> <p>Independence</p> <p>Nuclear power</p> <p>Muslim state</p> <p>Legacy of Colonialism</p>	<p>2 nations</p> <p>Freedom of religion</p> <p>Upholding International law</p> <p>Respect for democracy</p> <p>R2P</p> <p>Relations between countries legacy of Colonialism</p> <p>Ceasefire agreements</p>	<p>India police/military violence against civilians</p> <p>BJP as Hindu nationalist party – undermine rights of Muslims</p> <p>What Kashmiris want</p> <p>Wars over Kashmir</p> <p>India as occupational force in Kashmir</p> <p>Kashmir as a Muslim state</p>

			Nuclear threat
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India's democratic narrative being undermined

The recent actions taken by India in the Kashmir conflict have undermined its own democratic narrative. Revoking Articles 370 and 35A stripped Indian Kashmiris of long held rights and autonomy. Increased troops and the longest internet shutdown in a democracy caused international outrage.³² A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released a report alleging rights abuses in Kashmir by both Indian and Pakistani forces. "The Indian government dismissed the report as a 'false and motivated narrative' that ignored 'the core issue of cross-border terrorism.'"³³ This is in line with tactics India often uses of diverting attention to Pakistan's involvement with militant organizations. Additionally, in 2019 India passed the 1955 citizenship act which made religious minorities in South Asia eligible to apply for Indian citizenship; however, it excludes Muslim minorities.³⁴ These actions among others led U.S. based Freedom House and Sweden based V-Dem Institute to report on India's "democratic backsliding."³⁵ With this, India can no longer convincingly leverage the democratic narrative in an international setting or in relation to Kashmir.

³² Vindu Goel, Karan Deep Singh, and Sameer Yasir, "India Shut Down Kashmir's Internet Access. Now, 'We Cannot do Anything,'" *The New York Times*, 2019. Kai Shultz, and Sameer Yasir, "India Restores some Internet Access in Kashmir After Long Shut Down," *The New York Times*, 2020.

³³ "Kashmir: UN Reports Serious Abuses." Human Rights Watch, 2019.

³⁴ Madhav Khosla, and Milan Vaishnav, "The Three Faces of the Indian State," (2021): 112.

³⁵ Soutik Biswas, "'Electoral Autocracy': The Downgrading of India's Democracy," *The BBC*, 2021.

Pakistan unable to convince the world of its narrative

Pakistan has been unable to convince international actors of its narratives.³⁶ Its suppression of dissent from academics and other members of the public, as well as suppression of events that do not agree with its narratives abroad, have led the international community to view the Pakistani narratives as less valid. Pakistan has criticized India for its treatment of Muslims and minorities, particularly in Kashmir, and yet Pakistan has also committed abuses in Pakistan and suppressed minorities that do not fit into its narrative. These actions and the deflection of responsibility by pointing to India and other countries that have similar issues has caused further loss of validity to the Pakistani narratives.

What India and Pakistan Can Do?

Pakistan needs to address two different audiences, the international community and India. A spokesperson other than the Pakistani government would do well in addressing the international community. Involving academics and artisans at home and abroad in a positive manner could help Pakistan to deliver its narrative of being a nation for Muslims and that India does not have a valid enough claim to Kashmir. With the Pakistani government's failure to engage the international community properly, looking at a new approach to engagement, through a different speaker, makes the most sense.

This could do well in combating the India narrative well too. Since the Indian and Pakistani governments do not see eye to eye, perhaps engagement through the public sphere is a better tactic; however, this could be difficult to do without enflaming tensions. Pakistan needs to convince India that it has no use for Kashmir. Besides the legal claim to Kashmir,

³⁶ Nadir Cheema, "Why Pakistan's Official Narrative is Not Serving Well," 2019.

interest in its natural water resources and potential for tourism is of interest. The unstable nature of the region has made developing these aspects quite difficult. It is possible that if there is overwhelming public desire to join Pakistan that India may be forced to relinquish control. This is unlikely to occur without provoking violence. Pakistan is better off focusing on the international community and, secondarily, its ability to possibly convince India that Kashmir is not a necessary part of the country.

India also must address the international community and Pakistan. In order to reengage the international community and convince international actors of India's strategic narrative, India will have to reclaim its democratic narrative which once shielded it from criticism. Much of the recent discussion surrounding Indian democracy has been about elections. Criticism towards the BJP has been in regard to their focus on elections instead of the Coronavirus pandemic, especially as cases skyrocket. By focusing on the different election outcomes, such as the recent BJP loss in West Bengal, India could show that its electoral process is functioning properly.³⁷ India could also focus in on the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of religion and the historical connections India has to Islam.

Though emphasizing Muslim history and power in South Asia is unlikely to happen with a Hindu nationalist party in power, acceptance of Muslims into the narrative, or at least acknowledgement of their existence within India in a positive manner, could alleviate some of the fears of Muslim mistreatment in Kashmir and India more broadly. This would lessen the power of the Pakistani narrative as protectors of Muslims. Article 35A being revoked stirred fears that India would try to change the religious demographic makeup of Kashmir through the

³⁷ Krishna Pokharel, "Modi's BJP Suffers Setback in West Bengal State Elections," *The Wall Street Journal*, 2021

sale of land to mainly Hindus. By incorporating Muslims into the diversity and democratic narratives the public and, perhaps, Pakistan may see change and Kashmir as part of India as less of an issue.

Conclusion

Master narratives are deeply ingrained in every society and state, new and old. These narratives must keep being retold to maintain their validity. For every conflict and issue there are narratives behind each actor. Neither Pakistan nor India has successfully leveraged its narratives yet in the conflict over Kashmir. The dispute over Kashmir is a longstanding and is unlikely to be resolved soon. By altering their speakers and strategic narratives for different audiences, both India and Pakistan can work toward their goals, though ultimately only one can succeed.

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