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Citation: Adeney, K. (2015). "A Move to Majoritarian Nationalism? Challenges of Representation in South Asia." *Representation* 50(1): 7-21.

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### **A move to majoritarian nationalism? Challenges of representation in South Asia.**

Despite India's status as the world's largest democracy and increasing turnouts in many of the countries of South Asia, recent elections raise concerns about the threat to democracy in the form of majoritarianism. Many of the countries of South Asia are extremely diverse and (mainly) informal mechanisms of accommodation of minorities have been deployed. At the same time concerns about the threat to minority rights in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have been strongly articulated. It is notable that those countries of South Asia, such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan, which have not accommodated their non-dominant groups, have witnessed high levels of conflict. India has been more accommodative, of both linguistic and religious minorities. However, it is precisely this process of accommodation that many in India now worry will be undermined by Hindu majoritarianism.

## A move to majoritarian nationalism? Challenges of representation in South Asia.<sup>1</sup>

2014 witnessed the biggest election the world has ever seen. India, democratic since independence in 1947,<sup>2</sup> held elections between April-May for its 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha, House of the People. In the previous twelve months three other South Asian countries held elections; Pakistan in May 2013, Nepal in November 2013 (to its Constituent Assembly) and Bangladesh in January 2014. However, although elections have been held, and turnout has increased in both India and Pakistan, Dibyesh Anand (2014) has argued that there is a threat to democracy in the form of ‘majoritarianism’. This builds on the work of Ayesha Jalal (1995) who has previously argued that the ostensible democratic differences between the states of South Asia conceal a latent authoritarianism. Anand argues that ‘democracy is not a number game; it is more than a political system that allows for regular elections to choose those who govern ... it is very much about minority rights and about individual rights – such as the right to dissent without fear’ (2014). Concerns he, and many other prominent academics and political commentators, such as Zoya Hasan (2014) and Ramachandra Guha (2014) articulate about India and Pakistan are seen even more strikingly in Sri Lanka. This majoritarianism expresses itself in many ways; what is striking is the limited extent of minority representation in both the executive and legislature since the recent elections.

In societies as diverse as those in South Asia, as Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate, concerns about majoritarianism, the demonization of certain groups within the political discourse of the state and the lack of access to effective power raises real concerns about the quality of democracy. Elections are an important aspect of democracy but, as Arend Lijphart (1977) has reminded us, majoritarian structures undermine the effective representation of groups and can lead to conflict.

**Table 1. The effective number of religious groups – ENRG - in South Asia**

<b>Bangladesh</b>		<b>India</b>		<b>Nepal</b>		<b>Pakistan</b>		<b>Sri Lanka</b>	
Muslim	89.5	Hindu	80.5	Hindu	81.3	Muslim	96.3	Buddhist	76.7
Hindu	9.6	Muslim	13.4	Buddhist	9	Hindu	1.6	Muslim	8.5
		Christian	2.3	Islam	4.4	Christian	1.6	Hindu	7.8
		Sikh	1.9	Kirat	3.1	Sch Caste	0.3	Catholic	6.1
		Buddhist	0.8	Christian	1.4	Ahmadi	0.2	Other Chr	0.9
		Jain	0.4	Pakriti	0.5				
<b>ENRG</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>ENRG</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>ENRG</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>ENRG</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>ENRG</b>	<b>1.7</b>

As Table 1 demonstrates, all the states under discussion in this paper have a dominant religious group; dominant both numerically and politically. Pakistan is the most homogenous, although these data on religion conceal the Sunni-Shia divide, which

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Filippo Boni and Oana Burcu for providing research assistance for this article, Carole Spary and Andrew Wyatt for commenting on an earlier draft, and Lori Thorlakson and Louise Tillin for discussing specific issues with me. All errors are of course my own.

<sup>2</sup> With a short interregnum 1975-77 for its ‘Emergency’

has polarised Pakistan since the 1970s. All the other states have a sizeable religious minority or minorities. Many of the populations of South Asian countries (especially India) are large. Therefore, Sikhs, with less than two percent of the Indian population comprise almost 20 million people. Some of these religious minorities are concentrated, others are more dispersed. This has implications for effective representation. Federal solutions may recommend themselves to territorially concentrated minorities such as Sikhs in India, Tamils in Sri Lanka or Seraiki speakers in Pakistan<sup>3</sup> but they are less applicable to territorially dispersed groups, such as Muslims in India (with the exception of Kashmir).

**Table 2. The effective number of linguistic groups – ENLG - in South Asia**

<b>Bangladesh</b>		<b>India</b>		<b>Nepal</b>		<b>Pakistan</b>		<b>Sri Lanka</b>	
Bengali	98	Hindi	41.0	Nepali	44.6	Punjabi	44.1	Sinhala	74
Others	2	Bengali	8.1	Maithili	11.7	Pushto	15.4	Tamil	18
		Telugu	7.2	Bhojpuri	6	Sindhi	14.1		
		Marathi	7	Tharu	5.8	Seraiki	10.5		
		Tamil	5.9	Tamang	5.1	Urdu	7.6		
		Urdu	5.0	Newar	3.2	Balochi	3.6		
		Gujarati	4.5	Bajjika	3				
		Kannada	3.7	Magar	3				
		Malayalam	3.2	Doteli	3				
		Oriya	3.2	Urdu	2.6				
		Punjabi	2.8						
		Assamese	1.3						
<b>ENLG</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>ENLG</b>	<b>5.07</b>	<b>ENLG</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>ENLG</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>ENLG</b>	<b>1.72</b>

As Table 2 demonstrates, South Asia is even more linguistically heterogeneous, with the exception of Bangladesh. India, Pakistan and Nepal have very sizeable and numerous minorities. Sri Lanka appears relatively homogeneous but the size of the minority community (and its territorial concentration) have ensured that the (ethno)linguistic divide is significant. Ethno nationalism along linguistic lines (sometimes crosscutting with religious identities) has posed challenges for India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Most of these states adopted majoritarian constitutions, although some, such as India, possess informal consociational features (Adeney 2007). In India, the nationwide Indian National Congress (INC) informally represented the different regions of India. This contrasted to both Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where there was no nationwide political party straddling (and thus accommodating) the diversity (Adeney and Wyatt 2004).

In today's India however, as well as the other countries of South Asia, many of the political parties are weak, personalistic and undermined by dynastic politics (Mufti and Waseem 2012, Wilkinson 2007, Wyatt 2009). Political parties are important elements in a democratic system, training potential future leaders, assisting the representation of people and aggregating their interests (Randall and Svåsand 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Seraiki speakers are concentrated in the south of the Punjab and there are longstanding demands for the creation of a Seraiki speaking state and to divide the Punjab.

Weak and personalistic political parties therefore potentially weaken the quality of a democracy.

In ethnically divided societies, it is important that the different groups have a stake in the political system. This can occur through different processes. The *effective* representation of a group and its interests does not solely depend on securing representation in a legislature or executive. It is of course, possible that, in a Burkean sense, groups may be represented by members of groups other than their own. Such an approach is promoted by integrationists such as Donald Horowitz (1985) who argue for electoral systems that favour moderates seeking to bridge ethnic divides. Others, in the consociationalist camp (O'Leary 2005), have argued that in ethnically divided societies it is vital to empower group leaders and that group interests (and stability) are best promoted through the inclusion of these leaders. However, it is also possible that groups can be represented through informal mechanisms, such as representation in a political party or alliance that secures support from different groups. This has been the most common form of accommodation in the executive in South Asia, particularly in India.

Although representation in the executive will not necessarily result in better policy outcomes for a particular group (which is beyond the scope of this article to analyse), and descriptive representation (the representation of a group by members of that group) may not lead to *substantive* representation in terms of policy outcomes (Pitkin 1972), in ethnically divided societies, such as in South Asia, when relations between groups are conflicted and there is a contested history, exclusion from central coalitions has been problematic.

This article analyses three states, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, which have held national elections since 2010. To what extent is majoritarianism taking hold in these three countries? This article analyses whether different groups and regions are represented in the governing coalitions of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and analyses the regional distribution of support for governing coalitions in India and Pakistan. It finishes with an assessment of the possible policy implications of this representation (or lack of it).

## **India**

India held its first elections under universal suffrage in the winter of 1951-2, ushering in a period of one party dominance. The Indian National Congress reaped not only the benefit of being a genuinely national political party, with local roots (partly as a result of reorganising its party structures along linguistic lines in 1921), but also the fact that it secured a Condorcet majority as a result of the simple plurality electoral system. Congress accommodated many different groups through the 'Congress System' (Kothari 1964), although authors such as Steven Wilkinson have rightly questioned the extent to which the accommodation was essentially tokenist for religious minorities (2000). However, Congress dominance waned in the late 1960s as regional parties came to power in several of India's states. As James Manor (1982) has analysed, Indira Gandhi's split with the organisational wing of the Congress in the late 1960s led to a populist style of campaigning, seeking a direct link with the electorate. This atrophied the Congress organisation, a situation from which it has never recovered (the party remains in thrall to the Gandhi family today – at the

expense of much needed organisational renewal). Indira Gandhi's centralisation and personalisation of Indian politics alienated many groups, and by the late 1980s Congress's presence at the national level was diminished.

Despite the personalisation of politics, the realities of alliance politics (coupled with the changes introduced by economic liberalisation in the early 1990s (Jenkins 1999)) led to a revival of the power of the states of the Indian federation. One of the new developments within the new political architecture was the rise of Hindu nationalism as an electoral force, with a short lived coalition formed at the centre in 1996, and a BJP led national coalition government in 1998 and again in 1999. The BJP was quick to adapt to the new realities of coalition politics, realising that its message of *Hindutva* would not appeal to a pan-Indian base (Hinduism is a diverse religion, and much of this diversity manifests itself along regional lines). The BJP embraced federalism and, to some extent, the regional diversity of India (Adeney 2005, Tillin 2013). The electoral success of the BJP did however raise concerns over the fate of religious minorities within India, enhanced by the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 which led to the death of between 1000-2000 Muslims (a state of which Modi was Chief Minister at the time) (Human Rights Watch 2002).

Since 1989 it had been the new 'certainty' of Indian politics that single party government was impossible; governments now being formed through pre or post election coalitions of national, regional and caste based political parties. Many of these parties are personalistic machines, and dynastic politics is alive and well. Patrick French has calculated that two thirds of MPs under the age of 40 in the previous parliament had a near relative in politics (this increased to nine out of ten of sitting Congress MPs) (2014) and for the current Lok Sabha, Kanchan Chandra notes that 22 percent of MPs had 'family precede them in politics' (Nerukar 2014) and that 66 percent of political parties have leaders with dynastic connections.

Narendra Modi's triumphant ascension to power in May 2014 as head of a BJP government (the Congress led UPA had ruled between 2004-2014) revitalised concerns of ethnic majoritarianism. Despite (or perhaps because of) being a divisive figure, Modi managed to secure the BJP a majority of seats in the lower house, the Lok Sabha. This was unexpected, the first time since 1984 that a single party had managed this. The BJP benefitted from Modi's 'strong man' image and impressions of weak, corrupt and ineffectual governance under the previous prime minister, Manmohan Singh.

The aspirations of the youth (approximately half of India's population are under 26 and young voters comprised the overwhelming majority of the 100 million extra voters added to the electoral roll in 2014) were important in this election, and although projections of the 'economic miracle' of Gujarat were overplayed (other states have actually done better economically, and by other indicators, such as the HDI, Gujarat performs badly) (Ghatak and Roy 2014), Modi's promises to make India an economic powerhouse resonated. Congress had empowered many of the poor, but many of those who benefitted from Congress policies saw the BJP as better poised to deliver their aspirations (Barry 2014). Modi worked hard to cultivate a cult of personality, at the expense of the BJP (Sinha 2014). However, Modi also relied on the RSS (National Volunteer Association), a rightwing Hindu nationalist cadre based organisation, to 'get out' the vote, and there were many instances of anti-religious

minority rhetoric in the campaign in the Hindi speaking heartland (Daniel and Kumar 2014). This prompted the Election Commission to call for ‘preventative measures’ to be taken against two BJP leaders for ‘creating disharmony between different religious communities’ (Reddy 2014).

Although the overall majority Modi secured was extraordinary, it is important to stress that the BJP was a beneficiary of the simple plurality electoral system. It secured 31 percent of the vote and converted this to 282 (52%) seats, compared to Congress’s 19.3 percent converting to just 44 (8%) seats. Table 3 demonstrates the cumulative regional inequality score (Rose and Urwin 1975). This calculates the degree to which party support is homogeneous across the units (in India, the States and Union Territories of the federation). A score of 1 indicates perfect territorial concentration; a score of 0 indicates perfect territorial dispersion.

The CRI has been calculated using individual state data; although in Table 3, a regional breakdown is presented, for ease of tabulation. These data change very slightly when the States and Union Territories that return only 1 or 2 members to the Lok Sabha are excluded from the calculations, but not for the vast majority of parties or alliances (and not for the INC, BJP, BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) or Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Although the CRI can produce counter-intuitive results when a large amount of the population is concentrated in one state (such as the Punjab in Pakistan with 56 percent of the population), although Uttar Pradesh has 16.5 percent of India’s population, this does not skew the scores.

Those parties with a regional base such as the TDP in Andhra Pradesh, and the ADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu are very territorially concentrated, all with scores between 0.91-0.93. In contrast, the NDA is relatively evenly distributed with a CRI score of 0.15. It is *more* regionally distributed than the UPA. The BJP on its own scores 0.24, reflecting its reliance on its alliance partners for territorial spread, but a score of 0.24 is still more nationally distributed than that of the Congress in the 2014 election, with 0.28. These data demonstrate that the BJP’s reach is more ‘national’ than often supposed.

**Table 3. Index of Cumulative Regional Inequality for Indian Election 2014 by Alliance and by Party (calculated from vote shares)**

Alliance	CRI	Vote share	NE	N	S	NW	E	W	Isl	Total
NDA	0.15	42.95	3.50	46.09	18.82	3.72	8.77	19.05	0.04	100
UPA	0.26	27.33	4.93	38.72	20.60	5.04	11.38	19.23	0.09	100

Party	CRI	Vote share	NE	N	S	NW	E	W	Isl	Total
BJP	0.24	31.00	3.59	53.60	12.54	2.45	10.80	16.97	0.05	100
Congress	0.28	19.31	6.12	35.29	24.11	6.33	11.47	16.58	0.10	100

Party	CRI	Vote share
AAP	0.54	2.05

BSP	0.55	4.14
NCP	0.79	1.56
CPM	0.81	3.25
SP	0.82	3.37
AITC	0.87	3.84
SHS	0.89	1.85
TDP	0.91	2.55
ADMK	0.93	3.27
DMK	0.93	1.74
SAD	0.97	0.66

Notes:

Data calculated from Election Commission of India website [www.eci.gov.in](http://www.eci.gov.in)

It is difficult to accurately define NDA members, even BJP leaders differ. I have included the parties listed in Mohan (2014).

Regions:

NE = Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura

N = Bihar, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand

S = Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu.

NW = Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh

E = Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand,

W = Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra

Islands = Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands

**Table 4. Number and percentage of seats for Party/Alliance by region of India**

	NE		N		S		NW		E		W		Islands		Total Seats
BJP	8	3%	174	62%	21	7%	10	4%	15	5%	53	19%	1	0%	282
INC	8	18%	8	18%	19	43%	3	7%	4	9%	2	6%	0	0%	44
NDA	10	3%	185	55%	39	12%	14	4%	15	4%	72	21%	1	0%	336
UPA	8	13%	15	25%	22	36%	3	5%	6	10%	6	10%	2	1%	61
Others	7	5%	7	5%	69	47%	7	5%	56	38%	0	0%	0	0%	146

Notes

Data calculated from Election Commission of India website [www.eci.gov.in](http://www.eci.gov.in)

Regions defined as in Table 3

Despite the national reach of the NDA and BJP seen in Table 3, Table 4 demonstrates that in terms of seat share, the BJP's success was in the northern states – returning 62 percent of its seats. When the other Hindi heartland states of Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand are added to this total, it rises to 67 percent. This partially reflects the fact that 41 percent of India's seats are returned from the Hindi heartland (despite a freeze on redistricting constituencies to counter the political implications of the disproportionate population growth of the north of the country) (McMillan 2001). Even so, the BJP decimated the opposition in states such as Uttar Pradesh (which returns 80 seats to the Lok Sabha) and Bihar (which returns 40 seats). In Uttar Pradesh it secured 71 out of 80 seats and all 25 seats in Rajasthan. In addition to the Hindi heartland states, it won all 26 seats in Gujarat.

Taken with the composition of the cabinet, the dangers of a northern Hindi dominated government emerging are clear. Only 17 percent of Modi's original 24 member<sup>4</sup> cabinet are from the southern states (21 percent of the population). 54 percent are representatives of Hindi-speaking states (although this number increases to 63 percent when the birth place of the individual is used rather than the state they are representing). This over-represents an already dominant group - the Hindi speaking states comprise 46 percent of the population. While this is not surprising in that the BJP did not secure much support in the southern states, there are dangers of concentrating representation around the northern states e.g. Modi has championed the cause of Hindi over that of the other official language, English (Kalra and Asokan 2014). In Modi's Teacher's Day online Q and A session with school children, even those children from non-Hindi speaking states who asked questions in English were responded to in Hindi (The Hindu 2014). Although Modi is more comfortable conversing in Hindi rather than English, such an attitude benefits the northern Hindi-speaking states over those, many of which are in the south, which speak different languages. The debates over the official language of India were heated in the 1960s. Protests were recently made to Modi over the attempt by the University Grants Commission to instruct Universities to teach in *both* Hindi and English (Zee News 2014). The directive was withdrawn, but the incident illustrates the concerns of the non-Hindi speaking states, reinforced by Modi's insistence on the use of Hindi within the central civil service (Rediff.com 2014a).

The 'Modi wave' has also had implications for religious minority representation, as the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) traditionally captured the Muslim vote. In terms of seat share, neither did well in this election. The BSP failed to secure any seats (after securing 21 in 2009) despite securing 19.6 percent of the vote in Uttar Pradesh. The SP was reduced from 23 seats to 5. This is important because seats reserved specifically for religious minorities such as Muslims were abolished after independence (Adeney 2007, Bajpai 2011), and Muslims have been disproportionately under-represented since this time. The current Lok Sabha is not an aberration in this regard, but with 23 Muslim members out of 543, 'the representation of Muslims is the lowest since 1952. For the first time also, the ruling party does not have a single Muslim MP in the Lok Sabha' (Verniers and YIF Electoral Data Unit 2014). The Muslim member of the cabinet, not coincidentally the Minister for Minority Affairs, is a member of the upper house. The cabinet includes four members of religious minorities, 1 Muslim, 2 Sikhs and 1 Zoroastrian. None are in senior positions.

As noted, the limited number of Muslims who achieve representation in the Lok Sabha is longstanding. Even under Nehru, Muslims did not hold senior positions in cabinet (Wilkinson 2000, 779). The 2006 Sachar Commission Report argued that India needed to change the procedure for the delimitation of constituencies to 'improve the opportunities for ... Muslims, to contest and get elected to the Indian Parliament and the State Assemblies' (2006, 241) (currently, many Muslim majority areas are designated as reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes). In the view of the Sachar Commission this 'certainly reduces the opportunities that Muslims have to get elected to democratic institutions' (2006, 25).

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<sup>4</sup> One member was killed in a car crash in June 2014.



Although it is too soon to say whether the reduced Muslim representation in parliament will result in policies detrimental to the Muslim community, in its first 100 days the BJP has rolled back from several policies of the UPA, notably in relation to the position of Muslims within India (Economic Times 2014). Prominent Indian academic Zoya Hasan articulates the concerns of many when she argues that there is a 'template of 'majoritarianism' running through Modi's government (2014). Modi 'has been careful not to speak the language of division and Hindutva' (Subrahmaniam 2014) but several appointments he has made have challenged his inclusiveness (such as the personnel changes at the Indian Council for Social Science Research). He has also failed to prevent 'communal polarisation as an instrument of political mobilisation' (Hasan 2014) e.g. the provocative use by the RSS and BJP politicians seeking election of the phrase 'love jihad' to describe the 'misbehaviour' of (Muslim) men with (Hindu) women. Hasan concludes that the 'hiatus between the rhetoric of Modi and the reality on the ground is palpable. The plethora of communal statements indicates a concerted attempt to impose a majoritarian concept of nationhood' (2014). There are ominous signs for non-Hindi speaking and non-Hindu minorities. In October 2014, the state broadcaster, Doordashan, televised an hour-long address by the leader of the RSS (Rediff.com 2014b), a move that was seen to be inflammatory, and, in the words of historian Ramachandra Guha, 'naked state majoritarianism' (2014).

However, although Modi managed to secure an overall majority for the BJP, Modi is still dependent on alliance partners in the upper house. Although the BJP performed extremely well in state elections in Haryana and Maharashtra in October 2014, this was partly as a result of opposition disunity (Wyatt 2015). The result of May 2014 may not be repeated. It would be a brave BJP election strategist who would jettison the alliance partners for the next general election. This is likely to constrain rampant majoritarianism along Hindu nationalist lines, for example the adoption of a Uniform Civil Code (which would remove the personal laws of Muslims and Christians). But it is less likely to constrain the rhetoric of the Sangh Parivar (Hindu family) of organisations at the state or local level, with detrimental consequences for the religious minorities of India. And the discourse of politics is likely to continue in a majoritarian direction, as seen by the recent broadcast on Doordarshan. In India, the logic of coalition politics is likely to constrain exclusionary *national* initiatives, but there are concerns about how this will play out at the local and the state level. In addition, the well publicised under representation of Muslims within political life is to the detriment of that community.

## **Pakistan**

The dangers of one group's domination of the state have also been expressed in Pakistan, with the election of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) government in 2013 – another government elected with an overall majority that defied predictions. Pakistan's democratic journey has been very different to India's (2004). The lack of a genuinely representative national political party and the refusal to accept the legitimacy of linguistic claims to recognition (in stark contrast to India) contributed to the delaying of national elections and the proclamation of martial law in 1958. National elections were not held until 1970, 23 years after independence. When elections were finally held, the elite of the western wing, notably Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, refused to recognise their legitimacy as the Awami League of the eastern

wing had secured an outright majority. The National Assembly was not convened, leading to a bloody war of secession and the ultimate creation of Bangladesh in late 1971. Pakistan's experience with democracy after 1971 fared little better – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's prime ministership being brought to an end by Chief of Army Staff Zia-ul-Huq after the elections of 1977. After Zia's sudden and unexplained death, the period of 1988-1999 saw four governments elected but then dismissed by the president on the behest of the military, or in 1999, by an outright coup (Talbot 2009).

The current democratic transition however, after the elections of 2008 and 2013 has more democratic substance – two relatively free and fair elections have been held, *and* there has been a turnover in office between the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the PML-N. Freedom House has changed Pakistan's democratic status to that of an electoral democracy. However, political parties in Pakistan, even more so than in India, are personalistic machines, and dynastic politics is rife. For example, '[a]pproximately 44 per cent of all seats in the outgoing National and provincial assemblies were occupied by individuals who had relatives serving in previous assemblies' (Kohari 2013). Despite this, it would be mistaken to conclude that there are no differences between the parties. The ruling PML-N draws more of its support from the urban middle class than does the PPP for instance, and there are many regionalist parties (although the latter gain little electoral support). There are also policy differences between political parties concerning strategies to deal with the Pakistan Taliban and on US drone strikes e.g. with Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) taking a softer position on the former, and a harder position on the latter, than the PPP.

Sharif's election has revived fears of Punjabi domination. Pakistan has suffered from both real and perceived threats of Punjabi domination since independence. Not only do Punjabis dominate the armed forces, the province (with 56 percent of the population – as of the controversial 1998 census) returns 54 percent of the general seats to the National Assembly. All political parties have to target the Punjab if they aspire to national power; this includes the Sindhi based PPP.<sup>5</sup> Following the 2013 election in which the PML-N managed to come to power on its own, Punjabi domination was confirmed. The PML-N is a northern Punjabi dominated party, as opposed to the PPP who traditionally garnered nationwide support. In 2008 the PPP achieved a CRI score of 0.10 compared to the PML-N's of 0.29 (Adeney 2009), one of the only truly national parties. However in 2013, because of the massive reduction in votes for the previous ruling party (although less of a decimation than the Congress in India) its CRI increased to 0.28, reflecting its failure to secure as much support in the provinces of KP and Balochistan as it did in 2008.

In 2013 the PML-N score was 0.27, a similar level to its 2008 figure, reflecting its electoral reliance on the Punjab. Although the scores are similar to the PPP, these data demonstrate the limitations of the CRI as a measure when such a large percentage of the population is concentrated within one unit. Intuitively, the PPP should receive a much more 'national' score than the PML-N because its vote share is divided almost equally between Punjab and Sindh. Table 5 therefore also reports the Party Nationalisation Score (Jones and Mainwaring 2003). This measure produces a score between 0-1 (unlike the CRI, higher numbers mean a more nationalized party and

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sherry Rehman of the PPP, Islamabad, 2005.

lower numbers mean a more territorially concentrated party). Unlike the CRI, this measure treats all units equally, irrespective of population. The PPP's PNS score of 0.63 compared to the 0.54 of the PML-N better reflects its greater nationalisation than the PML-N.

**Table 5: The CRI and PNS for the Pakistan 2013 National Election**

Party	CRI	PNS	Vote share (percentage)	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan
PTI	0.13	0.91	17	66.01	10.87	20.52	1.37
PML-N	0.27	0.54	33	89.14	3.49	5.68	0.92
PPP	0.28	0.63	15	41.24	51.78	4.69	0.70
JI	0.28	0.49	2	36.00	20.66	38.01	1.10
JUI-F	0.68	0.53	3	7.73	9.49	63.88	0.02
MQM	0.73	0.3	5	1.63	97.78	0.21	0.01
ANP	0.79	0.3	0.9	0.45	4.97	89.69	0.02

Imran Khan's PTI, was the most 'national' of all the parties, with a CRI score of 0.13, or PNS score of 0.91, reflecting the fact that levels of support may not always translate into seats, particularly in simple plurality electoral systems such as Pakistan.

**Table 6: The distribution of party seats between provinces**

	Punjab		Sindh		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa		Balochistan		ICT		FATA		General Seats	
	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%
PML-N	119	92.2%	1	0.8%	5	3.9%	1	0.8%	1	0.8%	2	1.6%	129	100%
PTI	7	25.9%	1	3.7%	17	63%	0	0%	1	3.7%	1	3.7%	27	100%
PPP	3	8.1%	34	91.9%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	37	100%
MQM	0	0%	19	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	19	100%
JUI-F	0	0%	0	0%	4	44.4%	4	44.4%	0	0%	1	11.1%	9	100%
JI	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%
ANP	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Others	19	44.2%	6	14%	4	9.3%	5	11.6%	0	0%	9	20.9%	43	100%

Notes: these data have been calculated from the original seats gained by the parties, before Independents joined these parties after the elections e.g. 12 independents joined the PML-N from Punjab, bringing the overall tally for the PML-N to 131 general seats plus 32 top up seats for women. For the purposes of understanding regional concentration of the votes, it is more appropriate to use the original seat distribution.

Table 6 demonstrates that the PML-N gained over 90 percent of its seats from a single province, the Punjab (and it gained over 80 percent of the seats of that state). In comparison, Khan's PTI, was more evenly distributed (albeit with lower seat share), with 63 percent from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 26 percent from the Punjab. The PPP was confined almost entirely to its Sindhi base, with 92 percent of the seats coming from that province. Regional parties such as the ANP and the MQM were also confined to particular provinces, as was the Islamic JI. The JUI-F split its seats between both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Given that a major tension in Pakistan concerns the domination of the Punjab, it is significant that of the 31 members of Sharif's 2013 cabinet, 70 percent were either elected from Punjab or are listed on the Senate website as being from Punjab, well in excess of the 54 percent of the population from that province. In addition, as Javid also notes, many of the positions non-Punjabis hold are 'of lesser importance and significance' (2014). The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Pakistani constitution in 2010 and the Finance Commission Award went some way to redressing some of the historical imbalances in the federation (e.g. amending the formula for the horizontal distribution of resources between provinces, renaming the province of NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – a longstanding demand of Pakhtuns - and giving greater provincial control over revenues from natural resources to Balochistan) (see Adeney 2012 for more details). However, the fact that Nawaz Sharif, a Punjabi, accused of perpetuating Punjabi dominance (Ranjan 2013), has overrepresented Punjabis in his cabinet, reinforces one of the major fault lines in Pakistani politics – that of perceptions of the 'evil Punjabi empire'.<sup>6</sup>

In both India and Pakistan therefore, there are both perceived and actual concerns about majoritarianism. These pale into insignificance when considering Sri Lanka.

### **Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka has ostensibly been a democracy since independence in 1948, with no break in elections. However, the two main parties have played a very uneven role in democratic development. Both the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP) have cleaved to the Sinhalese ethnic majority. The parties were also dominated by a small clique of prominent families. The parties did much to polarise the ethnic divide between the majority Sinhalese community and the minority Tamils. Adopting a majoritarian democracy after independence (Adeney and Wyatt 2004), Tamils were gradually frozen out of positions of power, and demands for devolution and recognition of language rights were refused as the majority Sinhalese engaged in 'ethnic outbidding' (Devotta 2002), partly under pressure from Buddhist monks. In 1983 a secessionist conflict broke out after decades of refusal to concede demands for recognition and autonomy. This was finally crushed in 2009 with the elimination of the LTTE leadership. Yet since the victory of the government, rather than promoting national reconciliation, Sri Lanka has been described as 'authoritarian' by the UN Human Rights Commissioner in 2013 (Francis 2013).

President Rajapaksa was re-elected to the presidency in January 2010, and his opponent, former army chief Fonseka, jailed for corruption for two years in September 2010. Sri Lankan politics continues to be dominated by a few families, but the current domination of the political hierarchy by members of Rajapaksa's family has exceeded that of other regimes, with four members of his immediate family represented in the government (Blair 2013, Devotta 2011). A clamp down on press freedom (particularly in the Tamil region but also the Sinhala heartland) had led to '39 media workers [being]... killed or abducted and made to disappear while many media institutions have been bombed and burned, forcing many in the profession to flee the country. Not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice' (Reporters

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<sup>6</sup> Mehmood Achakzai, leader of the PKMAP, a Pashtun regionalist party based in Balochistan – interview with author, Islamabad, May 2005.

without Borders 2013). Sri Lanka has been classified as 165<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries on the 2014 press freedom index, a position that is getting steadily worse.

After the success in quelling the insurgency of the LTTE, in 2010 Rajapaksa's SLFP has dominated party politics. The United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) coalition led by the SLFP won 60 percent of the vote, compared to 29 percent for the UNP. It won an overwhelming majority without external Tamil support, 'almost exclusively in the Sinhalese-majority electoral districts' (Uyangoda 2011, 133). In addition, the radical Sinhala nationalist JVP was weakened, reduced from 40 to seven seats in the 2010 parliament, its mantle of Sinhala nationalism successfully appropriated by the SLFP (Uyangoda 2011, 134). UPFA does include a Tamil party – the EDPD - but this is the party of a pro-government militia that fought against the LTTE. Tamil marginalisation is evident; despite the fact that Tamils comprise 18 percent of the population, only one Tamil was included in the 67 member cabinet, and that was the leader of the EPDP.<sup>7</sup> He holds the position of 'Traditional Industries & Small Enterprise Development'; hardly a major portfolio. The antipathy of the Tamil community to Rajapaksa is evident by the fact that they voted overwhelmingly for his opponent in the 2010 presidential election, *despite the fact* that Fonseka had 'headed the Sri Lankan Army during the war against the LTTE' (Uyangoda 2011, 132). Despite the previous decades of conflict in the country, President Rajapaksa has made few efforts to introduce further provincial autonomy as a means of meeting the aspirations of the Tamils. Dissatisfaction with his policies is demonstrated by the 78 percent vote share the Tamil National Alliance achieved in provincial elections in the north in 2013. Subsequently 'the government has refused to allow the NPC [Northern Provincial Council] to establish an effective administration' (International Crisis Group 2014). A lack of representation at the national and the provincial level is a marked demonstration of the exclusion of Tamils from the political process in the country. This raises real concerns about the state of democracy in Sri Lanka, although it must also be noted that the rise of authoritarian majoritarianism in the country has also resulted in the targeting of Muslims and political opposition within the Sinhala community.

## Conclusion

The states of South Asia are diverse and many of the countries in the region have adopted political, employment and educational affirmative action policies for particular groups. South Asia has also witnessed the reorganisation of state structures to accommodate some diversity, such as linguistic reorganisation in India. However, much of this accommodation of groups has been achieved through informal mechanisms, such as representation in a large national political party or governing coalition (such as the PPP-led coalition from 2008 in Pakistan). It is notable that in those countries of South Asia, such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan, which have not accommodated their non-dominant groups, have witnessed high levels of conflict. Pakistan has taken important steps in recent years to accepting the multinational nature of the state, but the domination of Punjabis under Nawaz Sharif has reinforced concerns about majoritarianism in that country. The authoritarianism in Sri Lanka has sought to consolidate itself around Sinhala nationalism, a majoritarian ideology that undermines Tamil identification with the state and its institutions. In contrast, the

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<sup>7</sup> Although there are a handful of deputy cabinet Tamil ministers.

recognition of diversity within the constitution making process in Nepal, while currently stalled over the design of the federal arrangements in the country (whether it should be an ethnic federation or an administrative one), is designed to facilitate an inclusive democracy (Malagodi 2013). Nepal has been following the successful Indian experience of accommodation. However, it is precisely this process of accommodation that many in India now worry will be undermined by Hindu majoritarianism.

Article accepted for publication 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014.

Addendum:

In January 2015, President Rajapaksa was unexpectedly defeated in the presidential election by his former Minister of Health, Sirisena. Tamils and Muslims voted overwhelmingly against Rajapaksa, as did those Sinhalese who rejected his increasingly authoritarian rule. Since his election President Sirisena has moved to reassure Tamils, appointing Kanagasabapathy Sripavan, a Tamil, as Chief Justice. However, we should be wary of predicting that there will be a long-term move to more substantive Tamil accommodation. Sri Lankan history is replete with Tamils voting for a Sinhalese leader or a party who is then subject to 'ethnic outbidding' by another Sinhalese political party. It is also possible that Rajapaksa (who received 47.5% of the vote) could make a comeback in the parliamentary elections due mid 2015, especially given the fragile nature of the governing coalition.

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