Introduction

In March 1948, Mridula Sarabhai sent a report from Anandpur Sahib, Punjab, to India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rameshwari Nehru and Lady Mountbatten. Sarabhai discussed how a group of Sikh women 'recovered' following abduction during Hindu-Sikh-Muslim violence had been transferred into the care of the Pakistan military. Sarabhai, the daughter of a powerful industrialist family of Gujarat and a key figure in the women's movement in India, had been tasked by the new Government of India to lead recovery operations for women abducted over the border during Partition violence. On three occasions, Sarabhai learned, this particular group of women had been 'handed back' to their 'abductors'. This practice, she claimed, was going on in more than one place in the border areas, and it was also suggested that the Pakistan military were 'making money through this scheme'.[1]

Partition – that is the division of British India into the separate states of India and Pakistan on 14/15 August 1947 – involved the massive transfer of people with perhaps as many as fourteen to sixteen million refugees eventually moving in opposite directions across the new border that was drawn up in the weeks leading up to Independence. The uncertainties, as illustrated by Sarabhai's report, bound up in what was the twentieth century's most significant exchange of populations (or alternatively forced migration) cannot, however, be easily explained as a simple narrative of victimhood. In the case of abducted women, many resisted the assumptions of the recovery operation based on its effect on their personal circumstances, with a number of first-hand accounts describing how women themselves refused to be 'saved', or to comply with the patriarchal assumptions of this particular population exchange.[2] Their

[1] 'Note on the visit to Anandpur Mela' 24/3/48 – to Jawaharlal Nehru, K. C. Neogy and Lady Mountbatten, Papers of Mridula Sarabhai, Reel 1, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter NMML).

[2] This is explored in a number of case studies in Kamla Bhasin and Ritu Menon, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998), and

agency meant that in some notable instances women identified as 'abductees' evaded recovery. On 1 March 1948, to give one example, Sushila Nayar and Gurbachan Singh acting as social workers reported to Nehru from Patiala that around 175 Muslim women had shown reluctance to leave their new homes or to be moved on from camps back to their original families.[3] Reportedly, around a quarter of these women directly resisted 'rescue' by running away from the recovery camp in which they had been housed.[4]

The often-forcible removal of people across newly drawn national boundaries highlights important dichotomies in the meaning of political independence in South Asia. On the one hand, there certainly existed a sense of powerlessness among many people who were directly subject to the vicissitudes of Partition. After all, the women of Anandpur Sahib and other places on both sides of the new border were 'recovered', whether they liked it or not, by the state authorities, both Indian and Pakistani, and so in many respects their individual freedom was denied. In the uncertain months and years that straddled British India's division, it was unclear how the supposed agents of each state were expected to act, and where the limits of their responsibilities for recovering citizens lay. But the predicament of abducted women did not represent a simple contradiction between powerlessness and agency. In practice, there was little consensus as to how the emerging rights of each state's new citizenry would be formed or framed in this period of significant political transition. The fate of India and Pakistan's recently created citizens was often determined either by high-level processes of intergovernmental negotiation or more precariously by the frequently arbitrary decisions made by local administrations, police officers and other government servants. Meanwhile, there were opportunities thrown up by this uncertainty – chances for individuals to shape and exercise their rights in new ways, and to take advantage of the ambiguities created by Partition and its accompanying movement of peoples on an enormous scale.

The idea of the citizen in both India and Pakistan was put together hurriedly and subject to change, not least because the geopolitical shape of postcolonial South Asia itself was decided in a matter of weeks. As late as March 1947, there was no absolute certainty that Partition should or would result from the decolonization of British India. Within the

similarly in Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 2000), particularly chapter 4 'Women'.

[3] Jawaharlal Nehru to Sushila Nayar, 2 March 1948, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (hereafter *SWJN*), Vol. 5, p. 118.

[4] Jawaharlal Nehru to K. C. Neogy, 3 March 1948, *SWJN*, Vol. 5, p. 120.

gradually forming imagining of 'India' and 'Pakistan' that emerged out of discussions during and after the Second World War, there was always scope for alternative scenarios. In the fraught negotiations leading up to the transfer of power, and especially during the Cabinet Mission in the spring and summer of 1946, the separation of India and Pakistan was not regarded as inevitable. In fact, it is now well established that the 'father' of Pakistan – Muhammad Ali Jinnah – would have welcomed a solution short of absolute division, and that the Congress under Nehru accepted the prospect of Partition from March 1947, at least at the central level, as a lesser of many evils, and a means of preserving Congress's political authority.[5] The constitutional frameworks of postcolonial South Asia were also in large part the legacy of the same structure of colonial governance and so retained much that was similar after 1947: the provisions of the 1935 Government of India Act that had envisaged a federal system within a greater India eventually formed the basis of India's 1950 Constitution, and it similarly underpinned much of Pakistan's 1956 Constitution. But in the decades since Independence, India and Pakistan have come to be seen as very different places. Their subsequent evolution has taken them in apparently diverging political directions, with India often held up as a postcolonial 'success story' in contrast to Pakistan's reputation as a failing, if not failed, state. This oversimplification of their post-1947 histories has emphasized difference at the expense of recognizing commonalities at work across the region. This book is about how in the mutually interconnected social and political histories of these two new states we can find the messy realities of citizenship in each place. This is a history that includes the highest decisions of states as well as the politics of the streets, but it is a narrative that can only be complete if told in both places at once.

The historian of Germany Celia Applegate, in her exploration of regional histories in a European context, has argued persuasively for the need to 'regard the specificity of places as the outcome of social and cultural processes interacting with physical environments'.[6] Likewise, for sociologist Alan Warde, 'places are not automatic contexts for collective life but [are] created', and so can be regarded as 'resources to be manipulated in the creation, recreation and restructuring of the contexts in which people

[5] See Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[6] Celia Applegate, 'A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times', *American Historical Review* 104, 4 (1999), p. 1181.

are made – or make themselves'.[7] Ignoring the spatial turn of the last couple of decades is no longer a realistic option for historians: to quote Doreen Massey, 'places' represent networks of complex associations that 'have over time been constructed, laid down, interacted with one another, decayed, and renewed. Some of these relations will be, as it were, contained within the place; others will stretch beyond it, tying any particular locale into wider relationships and processes in which other places are implicated too'.[8] Moreover, because people 'move and stop, settle, and move again … places are shifting and changing, always becoming through people's engagements – material as well as discursive – in, through and with them'. 'Place', therefore, 'is not where social relations simply take place, but an inherent ingredient of their modalities of actualization'.[9] In other words, rather than opposed to or disruptive of 'place', mobility – or movement – is an inherent part of how spaces are defined and operate,[10] and therefore central to the processes by which citizenship is also, imagined, constructed or contested.

Boundaries of Belonging responds to these conceptual insights regarding the significance of 'place' by centring its exploration of the impact of Independence on citizenship and rights in two specific localities – one Uttar Pradesh (UP), an Indian state after 1947, and the other Sindh, a province in Pakistan. Both were parts of British India that were less associated with the immediate upheavals of Partition as compared with the Punjab and Bengal, but which came to be hugely affected by its longer term consequences for Indian and Pakistani lives. Accordingly we use UP and Sindh – the focal points of our individual interests as historians of South Asia – as the common lens through which to investigate what 'belonging' came to mean more broadly in the recalibrated circumstances of the 1940s and 1950s. Crucially, our concentration on UP and Sindh allows us to explore the fallout from Independence and Partition from the perspective of two places that, on the one hand, were not physically divided, and, on the other, where the shifting status of local minority communities (which had become significant before 1947) proved to be critical to ideas about 'India' and 'Pakistan' moving forward.

[7] Alan Warde, 'Recipes for a Pudding: A Comment on Locality' *Antipode* 21 (1989), pp. 274–81.
[8] Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', in *Space, Place and Gender*, ed. Doreen Massey (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 120.
[9] Kostas Retsikas, 'Being and Place: Movement, Ancestors, and Personhood in East Java, Indonesia', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13 (2007), pp. 971–2.
[10] Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

UP and Sindh – the former occupying much of the Ganges basin in north India, the latter straddling the Indus River further to the west – may appear on first inspection to have been separated during the colonial period by more than simply geographical distance. In particular, UP's location at the political heart of British India, for instance, contrasted markedly with Sindh's relatively peripheral position under the Raj. But by the early twentieth century both places could boast key centres of imperial activity. In 1911, accompanied by great pomp and ceremony, the political capital of British India transferred from Calcutta to New Delhi, on the border of UP, and the province had become a political thermometer for much of the rest of the country with its vast population, key party political figures and important cities. Karachi's rapid expansion meant that that by the First World War it was exporting more wheat than any other port in Britain's global empire and hence challenging Calcutta and Bombay for business.[11] There were also clear, if not necessarily acknowledged, parallels in terms of the communal patterns that existed in the two provinces. Both possessed influential minority communities, whose horizons (not simply political) had for a long time extended beyond the borders of their provinces.[12] Moreover, by the time of the Second World War, UP arguably represented a microcosm of India as a whole: the proportion of Muslims to the total population in UP, combined with pockets of (urban) dominance, more or less mirrored the overall situation in India. But Paul Brass's statement that UP Muslims (15 per cent of the population according to the 1931 Census) during the late colonial period 'constituted a cultural and administrative elite' with higher rates of change 'in several respects, including urbanization, literacy and government employment', could equally have been applied to Sindhi Hindus (c. 25 per cent), albeit with the addition of 'commercial' to their description.[13] With the rise of competing nationalist organizations over the course of the early twentieth century, and the emergence of religion as a source of conflict, these local communal realities endowed political developments taking place in both UP and Sindh with broader significance.

[11] Sarah Ansari, 'At the Crossroads? Exploring Sindh's Recent Past from a Spatial Perspective', *Contemporary South Asia* 23, 1 (2015), pp. 7–25.

[12] For more information on the trading activities of Sindhi Hindus that took them far from the province, see Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Mark-Anthony Falzon, *Cosmopolitan Connections: The Sindhi Diaspora, 1860–2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[13] Paul R. Brass, 'Muslim Separatism in United Provinces: Social Context and Political Strategy before Partition', *Economic and Political Weekly* 5, 3/5 (January 1970), pp. 167, 169.

By the interwar period, UP's leading role in all-India politics had become well-established.[14] The province was now home to key movements that spanned the nationalist spectrum, including the Indian National Congress (the Nehru family famously had its base there), Hindu nationalism (the re-organized Hindu Mahasabha in Banaras in 1923 was headed by the Allahabad politician, Madan Mohan Malaviya) and Muslim political leadership (closely associated with Muslims living in the small towns or *qasbahs* of the province). UP spanned the 'Hindi' heartland of India, and its educational institutions, periodical publications and intellectual life were central to the crucial language debates of the late colonial period. It was in UP where early support for the Muslim League emerged in towns such as Aligarh, and it was UP Muslims who helped to drive the eventual claim of League politicians to speak for Muslims at an all-India level.[15] Another decisive development with far-reaching all-India significance were the knock-on political consequences generated by the decision of UP Congress politicians not to form a coalition with Muslim Leaguers there following the provincial elections of 1937. This move directly helped to set the scene for the increasingly separatist strategies of the latter at the all-India level.[16]

Meanwhile, as an outpost of Bombay Presidency, an increasing number of Sindhi Muslims during the early twentieth century grew more politically aware of their minority status within what they regarded as a Hindu-dominated administrative and political unit.[17] These concerns prompted discussion at the Round Table Conferences held in London in the early 1930s about whether Sindh should be removed from Bombay

[14] Gyanesh Kudaisya, *Region, Nation, "Heartland": Uttar Pradesh in India's Body Politic* (New Delhi: Sage, 2006).

[15] Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). For a more recent (revisionist) exploration of separatist politics in the UP during this period, see Venkat Dhulipala, 'Rallying the *Qaum*: The Muslim League in the UP, 1937–1938', *Modern Asian Studies* 44, 3 (2010), pp. 603–40, in which he tests out the arguments and evidence that drive his *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Another re-interpretation of the motives involved in Muslim separatist politics is provided in Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2013).

[16] Deepak Pandey, 'Congress-Muslim League Relations 1937–39: The Parting of the Ways', *Modern Asian Studies* 12, 4 (1978), pp. 629–54.

[17] For instance, see the case presented in M. A. Khuhro, 'A Story of the Suffering of Sind' (1930), in *Documents on Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency*, ed. with an introduction by Hamida Khuhro (Islamabad: Islamabad Islamic University, 1982), pp. 196–254. See also Sarah Ansari, 'Identity Politics and Nation-Building in Pakistan: The Case of Sindhi Nationalism', in *State and Nation-Building in Pakistan: Beyond Islam and Security*, eds. Roger D. Long, Yunus Samad, Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 285–310.

Presidency and turned into a separate province (which duly took place in 1936 in the wake of the 1935 Government of India Act). Supporters of Sindh's separation from Bombay deployed arguments that hinged (at least in part) on the 'logic' of its possessing a local Muslim majority, rehearsing (and perhaps contributing to) the League's later claims regarding Muslim-majority provinces en masse from 1940 onwards. Moreover, as Sindhis today still remind other Pakistanis, the first official resolution demanding the creation of 'Pakistan' was the one passed by the Sindh provincial assembly on 3 March 1943, its mover – G. M. Sayed (ironic in view of his later espousal of Sindhi nationalism) – arguing that Muslims in India were 'justly entitled to the right as a single separate nation to have independent national states of their own, carved in the zones in which they are in majority in the subcontinent of India'.[18] By 1947 – thanks to developments such as these – majority and minority communities in UP and Sindh alike had become increasingly sensitized both about their local position and in relation to the need (from their perspective) to protect their interests as the broader South Asian political landscape changed.

After Independence, UP and Sindh continued to play significant but different roles in the life of the new states of India and Pakistan. UP – as India's new 'Hindi heartland' and with the largest number of seats of any state in the Constituent Assembly, and later in the Lok Sabha – remained strategically placed at the hub of all-India politics and proximate to New Delhi as federal capital of the Indian Union. Its population, which was over 60 million according to the 1951 Census making UP by far and away India's biggest new state, endowed it with colossal political clout in relation to the nation-building politics of the late 1940s and 1950s.[19] Sindh, with the federal capital on its doorstep (Karachi was officially detached from the province in 1948 and turned into a federal territory), was also located in close proximity to the centre of power in Pakistan, though in practice many Sindhis felt that their province remained marginalized in political terms. From a population perspective, with only *circa* six million inhabitants in 1951, Sindh lagged considerably behind both East Bengal (42 million) and the Punjab (22.5 million). Like Bengalis, however, many Sindhis railed against what they regarded as the unfair dominance of Punjabis and *muhajirs* (Urdu-speaking migrants

[18] *Proceedings of the Sind Legislative Assembly*, Official Report, Vol. XVII, no. 6, Wednesday, 3 March 1943 (Karachi, 1943), p. 2, www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/downloads/Pakistan%20Resolution%20moved%20by%20G%20M%20Sayeed.pdf (accessed December 2018).

[19] Gyanesh Kudaisya, *A Republic in the Making: India in the 1950s* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017).

from India) within key institutions of the state such as the bureaucracy and the military, and for them, again like Bengalis, language became a particular bone of contention. With the introduction of the One Unit scheme in 1955, which merged the existing provinces in West Pakistan as a counterbalance to East Pakistan's numerical majority, the province's sidelining was further compounded, as was a growing sense of injustice among more nationalistically inclined Sindhis.[20] But these similarities and distinctions aside, what UP and Sindh most certainly did have in common after 1947 was the continuing presence of relatively sizeable religious minorities as well as considerable ongoing refugee traffic. Alongside members of minority communities who chose not to leave, UP became the destination of choice for large numbers of Sindhi Hindus, while Sindh (including Karachi) absorbed even greater quantities of migrants from UP. Sindh and UP, thus, found their own relationship transformed, thanks to these post–Partition demographic realities. As Vazira Zamindar has highlighted in her analysis of the content of contemporary cartoons in Karachi's Urdu-language press, refugees from UP who had taken refuge in cities in Sindh followed developments in their former home very closely from across the border.[21]

As one of the first multi-sited studies of its kind, *Boundaries of Belonging* also follows what Frederick Cooper has described for French Africa as a 'federal moment'. In it we explore postcolonial developments in the context of a possible larger set of processes related to South Asia's postcolonial history that are not based on 'automatic' assumptions of absolute separation after 1947.[22] As a consequence, our book deliberately refrains from revisiting developments in those former provinces of British India most usually associated with the traumatic end of empire in South Asia. Existing work on the main 'boundary' regions of the Punjab and Bengal, and later Kashmir, which were most obviously affected by Partition violence, have generated a picture of Independence as a

[20] Ansari, 'Identity Politics and Nation-Building in Pakistan'; Tariq Rahman, 'Language and Politics in a Pakistan Province: The Sindhi Language Movement', *Asian Survey* 35, 11 (November 1995), pp. 1005–16; Suranjan Das, *Kashmir and Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia* (London: Anthem, 2004); and for a more general study that includes discussion of developments in Sindh, see Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (London: Sage, 2004).

[21] Vazira Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 63, 87, 93.

[22] Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

moment of crisis, rehabilitation and border making. However, as we argue, some of the important 'hinterlands' of Partition were also affected by the impact of territorial division and population transfer, if less proximately, and so provide an effective context for examining broader meanings of Independence for Indian and Pakistani citizens. Moreover, the fact that UP and Sindh – entangled as they came to be with each another – cannot provide answers to every question about what being an Indian or Pakistani citizen meant during this period reinforces the necessity of looking beyond Partition's immediate 'hot spots' when assessing its longer-term consequences. UP – the key point of origin for Muslim migration to Pakistan in the years under scrutiny here – and similarly Sindh – the point of origin for many Pakistani Hindus who migrated to India from early 1948 onwards – may not have been physically cut in two as happened in the Punjab and Bengal, but these two particular places came to be intimately connected thanks to the pattern of migration flows between them that dragged on well into the 1950s. Both were also located in close proximity to where central state power was exercised, the federal capitals of Delhi and Karachi.

This approach also allows us to draw attention to how the 'state' in its different spatial guises operated on both sides of the new border, as well as what being a 'citizen' could signify for ordinary Indians and Pakistanis during a period of continuing flux and uncertainty. We explore how ideas and forms of citizenship in India and Pakistan were created by contingent processes of interaction between 'state' – its representatives and institutions – and 'society' – its citizens-in-the-making – in the decade after 1947. *Boundaries of Belonging*, therefore, is not principally concerned with the powerlessness of India and Pakistan's populations in the face of bureaucratic and police violence, but more with the ways that new or revised forms of citizenship and ideas about the rights of the citizen were articulated despite, or sometimes because of, violence and displacement. India and Pakistan today possess some of the world's most vibrant and diverse citizens' rights movements, which have emerged since the rise of political populism across the subcontinent in the 1970s. But many of their key themes and campaigns – work conditions, the cost of living, corruption, tribal and peasant rights – have deeper historical roots that relate directly to earlier moments in the definition of citizen rights in different parts of South Asia. At the same time, very often, these forms of activism have been obscured by larger, better-known or more accessible state-centred citizenship discourses. Such hierarchies are addressed by our exploration of the messy citizenship contexts of Partition, characterized by the struggles of relatively marginal communities to assert their rights.

This book accordingly sets out to move past explorations of 'formal' notions of the citizen that approach rights as something only 'transmitted' by law and constitutions.[23] Instead, it deliberately engages with everyday meanings of both citizenship and citizenship rights as these crystallized and – crucially – were contested in the two neighbouring countries. As well as narrating the apparent 'conferring' of rights from above, it explores ways in which ideas about rights were publicly circulated and how far these had an effect on early forms of legal activism. The creation and evolution of formal state-centred citizenship, and the particular entitlements and responsibilities that this status embodied, often stood in sharp contrast to vernacular ideas about citizen rights. The complicated link between these two levels of citizenship politics, we contend, sheds valuable light on tensions between belonging and exclusion, which we regard as the unfinished business of earlier nationalist struggles.

As part of our examination of the contested nature of citizenship in postcolonial South Asia, *Boundaries of Belonging* draws attention to the struggles for more inclusive citizenship that took place in both states, as marginalized groups to varying degrees excluded from 'citizenship in practice' sought to secure rights that they believed were due to them after 1947. That their demands for entitlements were often articulated in the vernacular – whether that of language, religion, caste, ethnicity or tribe – is significant for understanding what citizenship meant for ordinary people. The vocabulary of gender also entered the contemporary political equation as women similarly questioned – and challenged – what citizenship had really brought for them. Alongside formal efforts to establish notions of citizenship that squared with state-formulated priorities, 'hidden citizens' in both states appropriated the language of entitlement and rights to challenge asymmetries of power and exclusion that operated on both sides of the border.

None of these movements for rights in the late 1940s and 1950s made sense without some kind of reference to the idea of the state. In his famous 1991 article, Timothy Mitchell proposed that the idea of a boundary between state and society is simply an 'effect', namely an idea bound up with techniques of any particular political order.[24] Mitchell

[23] Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Zamindar, *The Long Partition*.
[24] Timothy Mitchell, 'The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics', *American Political Science Review* 85, 1 (March 1991), pp. 77–96.