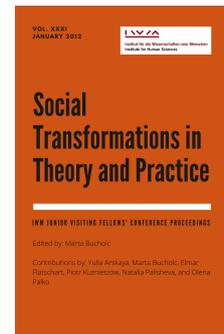


The Influence of the Global Context on the Perception of the Sources of Social Inequality

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Abstract: *The colonial system is a specific form of communication between different cultures and societies. In this article, I analyze the influence of Western colonialism on Indian society. I pay particular attention to the emergence of a new Indian colonial elite and to the development of its political and social thought. The elite held views about inequality in society which were absolutely novel in Indian thought. Their ideas about inequality in the larger framework of the colonial system also evolved during the colonial age. On the one hand, such development could be explained by the encounter of traditional Indian thought with European social, political and legal conceptions. But on the other, this new Indian line of thought originated from different and very often contradictory tendencies.*

The Example of the Transformation of Social and Political Thought among the Indian Elite in the Colonial Period

Colonialism as an institutional fixed system of inequality has very often been researched not only in terms of its economic, geopolitical and military significance, but also from the standpoint of the mental and ideological underpinnings which served as a basis for establishing this system. As a specific phenomenon of modern history, colonialism led to interdependence between different regions and their development. Accordingly, it is impossible to study the process of regional social development in this historical period in isolation, without taking into account a variety of factors affected by common historical, political and other contexts of the age. In this regard, the example of colonial India is particularly clear and revealing. Firstly, this form of colonial interaction was most explicit. Secondly, the issue of the extent and nature of the influence of British colonialism on the processes of political modernization in India is one of the most important issues in Indology.

When we consider the problem of inequality perception in the framework of the colonial system, we should understand the legal and ideological prescriptions of Western society in the modern age, which determined the existence of the institutional fixed system of inequality in the relations between different regions.

One of the main contradictions of the legal culture of the modern age was the fact that in this period the idea of international law and the concept of state sovereignty appeared. Sovereignty was understood as the supreme legal power within the borders of a state's territory which had to apply to all inhabitants and had to be independent from the undesirable intervention of external powers. That means that the concept of territoriality was the keynote which was absent in the legal conceptualizations of the previous periods. [1] At first sight, European colonial expansion contradicted all of these achievements of the legal thought. But its ideological foundation was actually based exactly on the political and legal theories of the period. In particular, the popular social evolution theory was transferred into the political sphere, which allowed to disregard the cultural difference between various geographical regions. Thanks to political evolution theory, the thesis of the essential unity of mankind appeared. According to this thesis, the only reason for differences between separate races and nationalities was that they were on different development levels. This theoretical precept became the basis of the so-called «Victorian worldview», according to which all the relations between Western and non-Western societies were resolved only in the dichotomy of «civilization/barbarism». The political and legal systems of Western countries implied the formal equality of all citizens, which was the main characteristic of the «civilized» societies. According to this worldview, societies and nations which had no such systems were considered as «barbarians». Consequently, European societies regarded themselves as the highest degree of development. And this confidence allowed them to consider themselves as «preachers» of the transformations of non-Western «barbarian» societies and races into «civilized» ones. [2] The ideological rationale of colonial expansion was the thesis about a Western mission in non-Western societies. Accordingly, international law was considered as achievement and necessary attribute of the Western community, so the «barbarian» countries were automatically excluded from this system. For another thing, only European countries could be considered as full subjects of international law because the concept of political organization was associated mostly with Western countries. In such a way, international law was considered as part of «the modern civilized state life». And the state had to reach the level of «civilization» to be included in this system. [3]

Colonialism was one of the elements of the international law system. And the core of it was the fact that colonizers needed a legal foundation for their territorial rights that was valid against those of other European states, which were considered as equal subjects. The missionary idea corresponded to political evolution theory and justified the legitimacy of colonial expansion in front of other subjects of international law. As for relations with colonized countries, they were basically out of the legal sphere, being built according to the model «civilization/barbarism». On the other hand, the contractual system which was used by the East India Company in the beginning of European intervention with local rulers testified to the existence of a special legal basis in their relations. Furthermore, the contractual system was unknown to the Mughals before the arrival of the Europeans.

However, the analysis of these contracts showed that they were based not on parity, but actually nailed down the military achievements of the more powerful. In addition, the practice of their systematic disturbances and one-legged dissolutions implied that these contracts had no legal validity for the English. These contracts were important rather for legitimizing their rights against the claims of other European countries.[4] This feature of the European worldview was much wider in range than just the political sphere. For Western societies regarded not only their political, but also their religious and educational systems as the only legitimate ones.

Nevertheless, colonial discourse consisted not only of the conviction that Westerners were superior. In the colonial period, a profound interest in Asian culture appeared among Europeans. But the point here is that the idea of superiority became just one of the main bases of colonization and determined appropriative perceptions of the sources of social inequality.

Eventually, the change of the space-time context led to the evolution of inequality perceptions in Europe. Thus, in the 20th century the development of the global community was the cause not only of the transformation of the world order, but of the general rethinking of the political organization of the world and the system of relations between different regions. Of course, some traditions of Victorian lawyers remained alive in certain spheres of scholarship. For example, the collective monograph of the Foreign Policy Research Institute of the University of Pennsylvania was published in New York in 1958.[5] The authors of this volume very often took a defensive position against the ideological tenets of anti-colonialism, although the book contained in some ways a rational analysis of the historical value of European colonialism for the former colonies. In particular, the opinion that European colonialism was the cause of poverty, race discrimination and economic exploitation in Asia and Africa was contested. The authors claimed that poverty had existed in Asia and Africa during all along, due to the endless wars and conquests at the time when one Asian nation enslaved another. Talking about the Indian example, they pointed out that the caste system rather than European expansion was the cause of exploitation and discrimination. They said that Western colonialism was just like any other chapter in Asian history and that it never brought more violence than there had been before. [6]

But decolonization and the emancipation of Third World countries triggered, firstly, a general rethinking of the sources of social inequality and, secondly, it was one of the reasons for a paradigm shift in Western scholarship. But it is necessary to point out that, in the second part of the 20th century, national historiographical traditions of former colonies started more and more to influence Western science. As a result, it became impossible to talk separately about Western and non-Western science. This applies, in particular, to the questions of colonialism and historical inequality between different regions and nations. In effect, postcolonial discourse arose as a result of the paradigm shift in scholarship.

It is generally believed that a thorough rethinking of the relations between West and East was triggered by the publication of E. Said's book «Orientalism. Western conceptions of the Orient». According to Said, it was necessary to focus attention on the perception of the

«Orient» image as an « Other» of Western civilization, so it was one of the reasons for the genesis of the colonial system. Said asserted that all European perceptions of Afro-Asian communities were founded on the fallacy of prior ideas about Eastern backwardness. The idea of imaginative geography as a basis for colonial domination was one of the starting points of Said theory. This process was one of the reasons for the transformation of geographical borders into mental ones.[7] According to E. Said and H. Bhabha, the construction of a specific “Orient” image as “the other” was a major factor in shaping Western identity in the age of Enlightenment. In this context, the internal contradiction of Enlightenment civilization became obvious. On the one hand, the Western community positioned itself as a universal model for the development of the rest of the world. But, on the other, its existence was impossible without “the other”. Despite the fact that the inclusion of the non-Western world into European civilization was a mission of Enlightenment, successful realization of this purpose seemed dangerous for European identity.

From this perspective, the “East” became a potential menace for the Western community. Therefore, H. Bhabha summarized the dual essence of the colonizers’ attitude to the colonized societies in the following way: on the one hand, an idea of the inclusion of “barbarian” societies into civilization is traced in Western colonial discourse while, on the other, the attempts of some “barbarian” societies to adopt attributes of Western civilization were disparaged and ridiculed by the Europeans. The main conflict between colonial and post-colonial historiography is the transition from the stadial perception of an unequal world system to the admission of cultural, national and other differences.

The transition from the perception of the historical process within a framework of national history to its interpretation through the global process of intercultural communication is inherent in post-colonial discourse. The majority of post-colonial scholars perceive the unequal world system from the perspective of cultural and historical hybridity. This hybridity was a result of the permanent and inescapable process of intercommunion between fixed identities. As a rule, this process is based on antagonism and dependency.[8] G. Spivak has actualized this problem in the framework of post-colonial discourse. She paid attention to the problem of “subordinate voice” in any system of inequality based on national, cultural and other differences.[9] The analysis of colonial discourse is important for understanding the attitude of colonized societies to the colonial system. One of the main questions is the search of a point when the colonized community stopped to perceive itself as dependent despite the fact that the colonial system continued to exist.

From this point of view, it is necessary to analyze the evolution of the perception of the colonial system by the representatives of the political class of colonial India. But first of all, it should be stated that the analysis of Indian colonial discourse will not show all the tendencies and aspects of the development of Indian political thought, not only due to the limitations of this study, but also due to the fact that Indian society was extremely segmented in this period. And there is an attempt to recognize some aspects of the influence of Western expansion on the transformation of the idea of inequality as expressed in some representations of the colonial elite. Above all, it should be said that

the formation of the political elite in colonial India was the direct result of colonial interaction. This group of people was formed in the colonial period because colonial rule needed some kind of alimention in the indigenous society. And speaking about the influence of the global context on some perceptions and representations in colonial society, it could be interesting to take this group as though its appearance was a result of the arrival of modernity in India.

The importance of the emergence of this new social group for India's historical development consisted in the fact that it was the beginning of secular political and social discourse. Before this time, there were no secular reflections on the political system, personal rights and obligations, and there was no concept of the nation in Indian consciousness, so there was no understanding of national rights. To understand this better, it is necessary to point out some aspects of traditional Indian thought.

The distinguishing feature of the Indian perception of the world, including thinking about human rights as the regulation of social and interpersonal relations, was religious orientation. The idea of primary inequality of people, defined by their ancestors, abilities, social status, age and sex was one of the main elements in traditional thought. The sophisticated hierarchy of law statuses was supplemented by the law of *karma* and reincarnation. According to the law of *karma*, rights and obligations of a person depended on his or her merits (achievements) in the previous life. The core of the caste consciousness was included in the basic law principle of *dharmashastra*: each caste had its own *dharma*. The caste system was not only the basis of social stratification but also of the legal system. The ideas of «right» and «obligation» were both joined in the one concept of «*dharma*» in the Hindi consciousness. «Dharma» was like a sacred duty for the Hindu, and its observance was ensured also by the compulsion of the caste (*panchayat*).

The other main feature of the Hindu legal consciousness was its focus on tradition, on the way of living and views of the ancestors. Of course, some of these elements were present in the European medieval conciousness, too. For example, the latter was also influenced by religion and tradition. Religion was important not only as a special way of legitimizing secular authority, but also as a way of self-identification of the all-Christian world. And this aspect had a major impact on the internal and external policy of many European states. Moreover, it is well known that European intolerance to other religions and beliefs was one of the reasons for militancy and expansionism, whereas the followers of the various Hinduist sects have never tried to impose their beliefs on others. But it is impossible to consider this feature as some kind of equivalent to the Western idea of religious tolerance, which appeared in the age of Enlightenment and received legal sanction after the bourgeois revolutions, such as the personal right of self-expression and the freedom of belief. The absence of the struggle for «the true belief» could be explained by the deep introversion characteristic of Hinduism and its focus on all-religious thoughts and attention to self-salvation. And there were no reflections on some kind of social or collective religious or other purposes.

Be that as it may, the absence of religious hostility was characteristic of the majority of polytheistic beliefs. In the case of Hinduism, it had a heavy impact on political life. Here it was not only reflected in the absence of the aspiration to convert others to one's religion,

but also constituted a crucial factor that explains why the territory of India was conquered first by Muslims and after that by Europeans. Many experts think that the success of external conquest was broadly conditioned by the political apathy of Hindus. All that mattered to them was to live on their sacred land, which was inhabited by their ancestors. But from this point of view, it was not important who governed their land. Their attitude to political power was determined by the idea of *raja dharma*, which was formed in ancient times. Governing the state, maintaining peace and order were considered as *dharma* of the ruler. Accordingly, Hindus initially considered the participation in political affairs as an alien right and obligation. So we can say that, traditionally, Hindi perception of the sources of social inequality was very specific, sophisticated and influenced by a set of particular religious and mental factors.

In the colonial period, the situation began to change, but only for certain social groups. In particular, it was then that the colonial elite was formed, which began to reflect on political and social problems and the place of Hindu society in world history. One of the most interesting questions regards the evolution of the colonial power's attitude towards the colonized society and hence the perception of inequality in the framework of the colonial system.

First, it is necessary to say that the colonial elite was formed thanks to the extension of European education and Western human and social science. These people grew up reading and studying Western Enlightenment political thought, which inevitably led to rethinking and reflection on their own political and social history. But in those days there was no idea of a Western-style nation in the Hindu consciousness. And there was no sense of identity. It was only then that it started to take shape. When we talk about rethinking the sources of social inequality, it is necessary to recall the role of Ram Mohan Roy, who is considered one of the main figures of the Hindu Enlightenment. The major influence of Western political thought manifested itself more clearly in the idea of reforming Hinduism and the rational rethinking of Hindu social institutions. But the start of the reform and enlightenment movements did not involve large sections of the Hindu population. On the contrary, the history of the Hindu Enlightenment was accompanied by a confrontation between the opinions of individuals and groups of societies on the one hand and the majority of the population on the other. Ram Mohan Roy expressed ideas about human rights which were diametrically opposed to the main principles of traditional religious and legal ideas. Above all, this was reflected in the idea of religious universalism. But one must not exaggerate the extent to which he was influenced by British education; although Roy was very familiar with Western knowledge, he had formed his ideas at a young age, before getting acquainted with Christianity. He studied Persian and Arabic, he knew the Quran very well, and he developed the idea of religious universalism as he studied Muslim texts and Hindu sacred manuscripts. Therefore, he came to the view that the core of both religions was the same and all the differences were just formal. The idea of religious equality was the basis of his legal views. Thanks to work in the East India Company and Western education, this idea was developed more clearly.

Roy's legal views concerned spheres which were unshaken from ancient times: he criticized the practice of Hindu marriage, family and inheritance relations.

The legislation concerning these relations was not the same throughout the country. It was based on the ancient legal books (*dharmashastras*), but practically the norms from Middle-Age commentaries were applied. *Dayabhaga* was such a source in Bengal, whereas *Mitikshara* was the source in other districts. The pundits were obliged to obey these laws but practically they confined themselves to the study of commentaries. This dual interpretation led to a distorted understanding of the laws. Roy criticized this system of law enforcement.[10] In fact, the core of his criticism did not relate to the European humanists, but to the texts of *dharmashastras* directly. The ancient Hindu manuscripts were the sources or law for him. The novelty of his views lay in the critical and rational rethinking of his own Hindu customs and beliefs. From this perspective, his worldview corresponded to European reflections. This was clearly shown in his struggle against the custom of *suti*. *Suti* meant that widows had to burn themselves in the funeral balefire of their husbands. It was thought that it was the only *dharma* of a wife after her husband's death. Roy referred to the *Laws of Manu*, which dictated widows to live an ascetic life, to be devoted to one man and even «not to pronounce the names of other men». He said that the woman had to make *suti* because of the pressure of relatives. He qualified it as murder, which was forbidden by *shastras*, thinking that the organization of *suti* was murder, too.[11] Roy defended the rights of women who refused to follow this cruel custom. These women were disowned, driven out, and they could not participate in family festivities. Roy thought that *suti* was also grounded in social reality: the widow stayed without property and became dependent on sons and daughters-in-law. According to Roy, it was written in *Yajnavalkya* – one of *dharmashastras* – that mothers and sons should receive equal shares of the inheritance.[12] Roy merely conceded that a decrease of the *sati* amount might be possible due to polygamy.

Ram Mohan Roy was against the caste system. His harsh critique of the caste system was based not on the authority of sacred texts, but on considering it in terms of the prospects for future development. The novelty of his ideas derived from the fact that he was not an advocate of following sacred texts as timeless prescriptions. In his opinion, it was possible to restore the power of authority only if customs were rational. He never doubted that injurious and irrational customs should be abolished, even though they were sanctioned by sacred texts.[13]

Roy clearly understood the nature of law. He wrote that laws which defend inheritance rights and the alienation of property were created by conventional choice or authority, but that these laws were then approved in common practice or court proceedings.[14] Thus, Roy did not limit the appearance of laws to ancient sacred texts, but he gave to the people the function of lawmakers.

Roy's understanding of political rights was influenced by Western thought. He recognized democracy, liberalism and political freedom as absolute benefits for all mankind. But he believed that there was no development for India outside the British Empire. In his opinion, the reception of Western culture was a great benefit for his own country, and the caste system and social inequality were the most serious barriers to social and political

development. Roy considered the development of civil rights of Hindus, such as property rights, freedom of thought and legal equality, to be the main purpose of reform, prior to changing the political system.

In such a way, the idea of human rights was formed in a transitional society and was referred to clearly delimited spheres of legal relations. But it is impossible to say the same about the idea of sovereignty. Roy thought that the development of human rights was a purpose more important than independence; from this point of view, he fully supported the colonizers' idea of superiority. But in the second part of the 19th century, a rethinking of the relationship between Western and colonized societies began. This manifested itself in the Hindu nationalist movement. Thus, a kind of identity started to take shape in this period, which gave rise to reflection on the place of native culture in the world system and in world history. And this reflection was far from explaining inequality by differences in levels of development.

Vivekananda offered his own conception of the «missionary outreach» of different nations and religions. In the framework of this worldview, India was seen as a spiritual guide of mankind. He said that religion was the core element of Hindu civilization, which allowed people to survive behind the façade of external conquest. But in his opinion, the core of Western civilization was politics. He wrote that it was necessary to talk about religion in terms of political conditions in the USA and to talk about politics in the language of religion in India. The missionary religion was, of course, Hinduism in India, in his opinion.[15] These views helped to overcome the image of the backwardness of Indian religion and culture. Evidently, the idea of cultural and civilizational uniqueness was fundamental for these conceptions. It helped him recognize the specific nature of his own culture and, thanks to this, many Hindus began to support their own civilization as equal to the West. But, on the other hand, a Hindu nationalism based on these views was an obstacle to national unity in so far as it deepened the divide between Hindu and Muslim populations.

But Vivekananda perceived all elements of Western political life as a model for Indian political development. In particular, he paid attention to social and political questions. He was against all forms of caste, sex and class discrimination, which he believed to be the cause of Indian poverty.[16] As to his attitude towards the colonial system, he regarded its influence on Indian political development as positive. He sought to improve life in his country, among other things, by way of help from outside. He also suggested that Hindus needed to communicate with other nations to become a nation themselves.[17]

Thus, in the first part of the 19th century the colonial elite considered the system of inequality in the framework of the colonial system as normal. But an active development of social and political thought led to the formation of some kind of opposition and rethinking of the sources of colonial inequality. It is interesting that this first became manifest in the appearance of economic nationalism, whereas, in the earlier days, Indian colonial thinkers had got more interested in political and social questions. The ideas of economic nationalism were expressed in the views of D. Naoroji and R.C. Dutt. They offered a theory of a drain of wealth from the colony. This theory placed in doubt the widespread opinion about the benefits of colonial rule. Early Hindu thinkers saw the

reasons for economic disorganization in the misunderstanding of the Indian situation by the colonial rulers, but they had never identified such reasons in the essence of the colonial system as such. D. Naoroji analyzed the causes of poverty and reached the conclusion that India did not produce enough supplies to satisfy its needs and that a constant process of impoverishment was under way. He thought that this was mainly due to the activity of the colonial power. According to his theory of drain, Great Britain constantly extracted Indian national wealth by using it for the supply of its army and officers at the expense of the colony. Naoroji held that it deprived the country of the possibility to accumulate its own capital and preserved the monopoly of English traders and industrials. He said that the contemporary political system was destructive and oppressive for India and, ultimately, harmful for England, too.[18] In such a way, the idea of incompatible interests of colony and metropolis was expressed.

The problem of the sources of inequality in the framework of the colonial system remained the keynote in the Indian discourse of the time. While earlier Hindu thinkers had paid more attention to internal inequality in their society and agreed with the colonizers' theory about Western superiority, they began in this period to talk about the reasons for inequality among races, nations and civilizations. Of course, the emergence of new views and concepts was based on a close encounter with Western civilization and deep knowledge of it. The perception of the sources of inequality was directly connected with and determined by ideas of universal history and the movement of the historical process. Thus, it was impossible to think about inequality among nations without a comparative outlook on the whole history of civilizations.

From this point of view, it is necessary to consider the perception of inequality by M.Gandhi and J.Nehru, not only because these leaders were highly influential, but also because they held very strong views of inequality between civilizations.

For M. Gandhi, the Western and Indian civilizations were totally different and followed different paths of development. First, Gandhi redefined the idea of «civilization», which the colonizers used to justify their expansion, so as to make it signify the criticism of Western civilization and therefore the rejection of all “achievements” which England had introduced to India. He compared Western and Indian societies in terms of spiritual/spiritless and moral/immoral. In his opinion, contemporary Western civilization was based only on the quest for material wealth. Accordingly, Gandhi's attitude towards technical achievements was extremely negative. He wrote that machines turned people into slaves and became the cause of evil in Europe and later in India.[19] Consequently, he considered the modern development and expansion of Western civilization a regress. India was crumbling down, not under the English heel, but under that of modern civilization. For Gandhi, the counterpart of Western civilization was ancient Indian society. Ancient Indian civilization was based on belief in God, and its core was the aspiration to spread morality, while Western civilization had supposedly spread immorality. In Gandhi's opinion, British expansionism broke the back of traditional Indian civilization. But he never agreed that the conquest was forced. He said that the Indians themselves had given their land to Europeans, because they had actively cooperated with traders from the East India Company and later served colonial rule

because of their selfish business interests.[20] Accordingly, the order of ancient India was something like an etalon for the future development of his country. And it was the key for solving the problem of social inequality. In his view, the future path of development was to lead to the return from machine production to a decentralized and closed economy based on manual work. In practice, this meant returning to handicraft industry and minimizing trade connections. He wrote that in ancient times everybody was engaged in his/her own handicraft and no one wanted to invent machines, not because the ancestors did not know how to do it, but because they knew that it could serve to enslave the people. Against this background, he contrasted the ancient village civilization and the mechanized Western society. He called the ultimate goal *swadeshi*, which could broadly be understood as realization of the Indian way of development. The ideal of *swadeshi* in the political sphere was decentralization and a non-violent state. Gandhi saw the future of India in terms of a federation of village communities, and this model too was taken from the ancient age, when every community had an elected body – *panchayat*. [21]

Furthermore, Gandhi suggested that such a political structure should be based on democratic principles; he recognized the idea of universal suffrage and the concept of the separation of powers. But the latter was to be realized only on the highest level. Thus, Gandhi saw the most serious sources of inequality in contemporary India in the expansion of Western civilization. As to internal Indian problems, such as child marriage, child widows and so on, he said that they were defects, but the ancestors never knew them.

A certain kind of irrationality and the idea of historical regress were characteristic of Gandhi's views. He considered the historical development of Western and Indian civilizations as potentially different. From this point of view, their societies could never be equal, and their unification would actually constitute a major source of inequality.

As for J. Nehru, he held a very different view on this issue, which was based on ideas about the universal development of mankind and historical progress. Nehru studied the development of India in comparison with other countries and identified a substantial number of common features. He saw Indian history as part of a global process. Then he compared contemporary India with Europe in the 19th century, concluding that there were a lot of things they had in common, such as a great significance of religion and a mixture of political and economic interests with religious concerns.[22] He suggested that the deepest difference was not in the spiritual character of India and a corresponding lack of spirituality in the West, but in the industrialization of the West and the pre-industrial character of the East. Nehru's opinion of colonial expansion was negative. He thought that it led to the destruction of the Indian economy and did not build anything in its place. But in his opinion, the reason for colonial conquest was that the Europeans were stronger in terms of military and political organization. And the main positive result of colonization was the awaking of a sentiment and idea of national unity in India, which was due to its encounter with the Western way of life.[23]

At the same time, Nehru recognized such Western achievements as the Industrial Revolution, and especially the appearance of Marxism, which he valued because of the attempt to adopt a scientific approach in the study of economic and political problems. [24]

We can conclude that changes in the global context of the epoch influenced both colonizing and colonized societies. The influence on colonial society was quite complex and became apparent in different ways and at different levels of evolution. On one level, there was a rethinking of the sources of individual and social inequality in terms of colonial communication. Above all, a great deal of attention was directed to the problems of caste, gender, and legal inequality in colonial discourse. On another level, concerning the attitude towards the colonial system, the Indian elite initially perceived it as positive and shared the colonizers' idea about Western superiority. But gradual development of Indian thought led to an appreciation of the negative and unfair character of colonial expansion, which was represented in different ways. One tendency of political thought was based on the understanding of an essential difference between the paths of Western and Indian development. This tendency was rooted in the 19th century and finally took shape in Gandhi's conception. Another strand of intellectual tradition said that there was one path of progress for both societies, but the existence of the colonial system was recognized as a barrier to Indian political and economic development. The difference between these two readings was crucial from the point of view of the future fate of the country, including the solution of the inequality problem. It can safely be said that, even among the Indian national elite, the perception of the sources of social inequality was not uniform, even though it was clear to all that it was strongly influenced by the parameters of colonial rule.

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