

## Mythicizing Materiality: Self-racialization of the Brahmin

**Anu Ramdas**

*The myth of the brahmin svabhava or the constructed essence of inborn supremacism is maintained by a constantly evolving racist ideology about the distinctness of brahmins. The brahmin essence is fabricated through a complex interplay of self-racialization and racialization of the others, through which the brahmins constitute themselves as the perpetual ruling class of the caste society with full control over social discourses and material resources. Contemporary supremacist movements against reservation and the caste census are examined for proof of the continuity of the myth of the brahmin svabhava. This paper uses the Manusmriti as the evidential repository of self-racialization of the brahmin and it does not concern itself with the origins of the myth but with the sociology of its maintenance and focuses on the material and social manifestations of the brahmin svabhava.*

Notions of the inherent essence associated with specific groups of humans have no factual basis; they are deliberate myths with political purposes.<sup>1</sup> The construction and sustenance of mythical or pseudo-scientific claims of inherent essence requires a dominant belief system. Typically, a supremacist belief system is composed of three core elements: the myth of inherent essence, endogamic marital restrictions, and material inheritance. The splicing of the myth with the imposed restriction of who one can marry and procreate with depends on the potency of rewards and penalties associated with the maintenance or transgression of the belief system. For humans the tradeoff for their fundamental right to choose a marital partner would have to be substantial, a mere myth of superiority would hardly suffice, it has to come with tangible gains. Thus, endogamy must necessarily be linked to concrete social and material gains to make it compelling for members to adhere to marital restrictions and participate in the propagation of the myth.



Anu Ramdas: [timeandus@gmail.com](mailto:timeandus@gmail.com)

---

<sup>1</sup> “The question of genetic differences between races has arisen not out of scientific curiosity or the desire to find some important scientific truth or solve some scientific problem but only because of the belief, explicit and unstated, that the answer has political consequences. The claim that one group is genetically less desirable or capable than another has invariably been part of an attempt ‘to make nature herself an accomplice of political inequality’” Tucker, 1994, p- 5.

For extensive discussions on the topic of the misuse of science for the political purposes served by the quest for racial purity and superiority, see Tucker, W. H. (1994). The science and politics of racial research. Champaign, IL, US: University of Illinois Press.

World history is littered with ruling elites—pharaohs, monarchies, aristocracies and imperial ethnic groups operating on the same combination of the myth of inherent essence, endogamy, and associated rewards to group members.

In the Indian subcontinent, the caste system is an old but robustly functioning, dynamic management system of the myth of inherent brahmin essence and endogamy.<sup>2</sup> The law book of Manu states that in this system there are no competing myths of supremacy, there is just the brahmin svabhava.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the brahmin cannot be replaced or dispossessed by any other group even in theory until the caste system is annihilated in its entirety<sup>4</sup> (Ambedkar, 1936).

The correlation of the content of the Manusmriti with the sociology of the present-day ruling class is the focus of this paper and towards that the text's literary significance, its original or derivative nature are irrelevant. The main question being explored here: Is the myth of brahmin svabhava receiving continued socialization or is it being rejected? For this task, any document from the brahmin-authored textual corpus will carry significant elements of self-racialization, but the Manusmriti is chosen here for its expansive tracts that directly relate to the processes of self-racialization involved in the creation and maintenance of the myth of the brahmin svabhava, and with it the caste system (Buhler, 1886).

### **Caste Rights and Caste Penalties**

The Manusmriti<sup>5</sup> while giving the big picture of the organization and maintenance of the caste order, simultaneously codifies in micro detail the self-racialization<sup>6</sup> of the brahmin with extensive specifications for the racialization<sup>7</sup> of all others. In this text, the construction of the brahmin svabhava endows only the brahmin male with Caste Rights.<sup>8</sup> This is done through codes specified

---

<sup>2</sup> This paper uses the terms brahmin-svabhava, brahmin-essence and brahmin-supremacy interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> On account of his pre-eminence, on account of the superiority of his origin, on account of his observance of (particular) restrictive rules, and on account of his particular sanctification the Brahmana is the lord of (all) castes (varna). Laws of Manu, p- 402

<sup>4</sup> A Brahmana, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the law. Laws of Manu, p- 26

<sup>5</sup> 'Deign, divine one, to declare to us precisely and in due order the sacred laws of each of the castes and of the intermediate ones.' Laws of Manu, Chapter I, p -B

<sup>6</sup> Self-racialization of dominant groups involves self-glorification to distinguish themselves as superior to the others.

<sup>7</sup> Racialization by dominant groups involves assigning characteristics to specific groups in ways that impart negative stereotypes. For useful discussions on the concept of racialization and self-racialization see, Herbert J. Gans (2017) Racialization and racialization research, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40:3, 341-352, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1238497.

<sup>8</sup> 'A learned Brahmana must carefully study

for their everyday socialization to be cultivated from birth onwards, right down to what they eat, how they eat, who they interact with and above all how to safeguard their rights by invoking their sanctification in the sacred and legal texts.

These rights are encoded as inborn ‘inalienable’ rights, they are not earned or gained, they are innate to the brahmin male, hence cannot be taken away, transferred or reduced. They are born with them and will die with them. These rights are not to be mistaken with ‘caste privilege’, as this form of power cannot be held within the meaning and current usage of the term ‘privilege’, hence, Caste Privilege is a misnomer for the brahmin male.

The rest of the members of the caste system other than the brahmin male have Caste Penalties. The severity varies for different transgressions, the law book or Manusmriti elucidates in detail the dispensing and management of caste penalties. This is one of the reasons why Babasaheb Ambedkar focused on it so extensively compared to other brahmin texts.<sup>9</sup> In this text, the brahmin male is the sole entity within the caste system who is vested with the power to penalize every other entity.<sup>10</sup> Only the fraternity of male brahmins can impose penalties on each other, no other entity can impose caste penalties on the brahmin male, which largely secures the brahmin male as an unpunishable entity.<sup>11</sup> The roles of the others in the caste system is to simply manage the system of penalties for him, as caste ‘privileges’ or conditional rights of others depend on how well one can command resources and communities towards the singular (often disguised) duty of protecting the brahmin male. Conversely, the brahmin male is the most protected entity.<sup>12</sup>

Historically, societal protection is usually summoned for the most vulnerable or the most powerful—the infant or the King. Society responds to duties of protection of infants without too many written commands, not so simple for the King though. A complex set of authoritarian laws

---

them, and he must duly instruct his pupils in them, but nobody else (shall do it).’ Laws of Manu, p-26

<sup>9</sup> ‘In order to clearly settle his duties and those of the other (castes) according to their order, wise Manu sprung from the Self-existent, composed these Institutes (of the sacred law).’ Laws of Manu, p-26

<sup>10</sup> ‘The Brahmana is declared (to be) the creator (of the world), the punisher, the teacher, (and hence) a benefactor (of all created beings); to him let no man say anything unpropitious, nor use any harsh words.’ Laws of Manu, p- 436

<sup>11</sup> ‘Who could prosper, while he injures those (men) who provoked to anger, could create other worlds and other guardians of the world, and deprive the gods of their divine station?’ Laws of Manu, p- 316

<sup>12</sup> ‘What man, desirous of life, would injure them to whose support the (three) worlds and the gods ever owe their existence, and whose wealth is the Veda?’ Laws of Manu, p- 398

must be in place to command the systemic and dynamic response required to protect the King.<sup>13</sup> For brahmin supremacy, a ruling-class formation from twice-born castes had to be codified and socialized in a mutually beneficial but fixed hierarchical arrangement for the systemic protection of the brahmin male.<sup>14 15</sup>

We could frame the question: why does someone with so much power—guaranteed in the texts<sup>16</sup> and manifested through historical records of being the ruling class, and directly wielding authority over the masses, need protection? This would be akin to asking why was the King the most protected? The answer is evident. Without the king, there is no royalty, no nobility, no servility. The whole system collapses, therefore the protection is maximum for the most powerful. The same goes for the brahmin male and the caste system.

The brahmin male is accountable to no one<sup>17</sup> as no regulatory mechanisms like the papacy or canon law oversees the individual brahmin. This provides individual brahmin males maximum flexibility to adapt, deviate, innovate or repurpose the prescribed rules and duties as and when political, social, cultural exigencies arise, contributing significantly to brahmin supremacy's longevity.

### **Myth as Functional Belief System**

I argue that the belief system that sustains the myth of the brahmin svabhava is a very sophisticated system of concentrating power among a few, as compared to monarchy and other authoritarian forms. By design, brahmin supremacy is a distributed, self-regulating system within brahmin males. Every brahmin male is invested with the same kind of inherent rights and commands the same kind of powers to penalize others.<sup>18</sup> The distributed nature of identical powers invested in all male members performs several kinds of functions and is perhaps the most important aspect that

---

<sup>13</sup> Canon law [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM)

<sup>14</sup> 'Kshatriyas prosper not without Brahmanas, Brahmanas prosper not without Kshatriyas; Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, being closely united, prosper in this (world) and in the next.' Laws of Manu p- 399

<sup>15</sup> 'When the Kshatriyas become in any way overbearing towards the Brahmanas, the Brahmanas themselves shall duly restrain them; for the Kshatriyas sprang from the Brahmanas.' Laws of Manu, p- 399

<sup>16</sup> 'Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmana; on account of the excellence of his origin the Brahmana is, indeed, entitled to it all.' Laws of Manu, p- 26

<sup>17</sup> 'A Brahmana, be he ignorant or learned, is a great divinity' Laws of Manu, p- 398

<sup>18</sup> 'Thus, though Brahmanas employ themselves in all (sorts of) mean occupations, they must be honoured in every way; for (each of) them is a very great deity.' Laws of Manu, p- 399

contributes to brahmin supremacy prevailing long after other supremacist forms have perished. Also, crucially, resistance to and demolishing of a distributed dominance structure is strategically very difficult. The brute power of the brahmin svabhava is rarely visible as such.

The brahmin is like any other group in the subcontinent, spread across distinct regions, speaks different languages, has no ethnic commonality with other brahmins and is not racially distinct from the rest of the population. Such a social reality of the brahmin castes would present serious challenges for processes of ruling class formation. The absence of kinship and institutionalized bonds and control mechanisms are overcome using situational response strategies by providing support for actions and inactions of unrelated brahmins. The sociology of how disparate brahmin communities across regional and linguistic barriers respond to crises that threaten brahmin supremacy is beyond the scope of this paper: briefly, as it is in the interest of the brahmins to take care of each other's caste rights, they do manage to achieve this without forming any kind of permanent and identifiable brotherhood. For example, the most irrational of views expressed by brahmin judges to RSS members gets rationalized by some other brahmin. Similarly, policies and practices favorable to the brahmin while having no salience for the masses, get approval without serious upsets. This is made possible as the social discourse is under their full control, and it is easy to play the good brahmin-bad brahmin roles and debate counter points and settle issues 'democratically' to their mutual benefit and to the detriment of the larger society.

### **Socialization of brahmin supremacy - a continuum**

The propagation of the supremacist belief system depends centrally on the socialization of the myth of brahmin svabhava. What evidence is available to affirm or reject the continuation of the brahmin svabhava?

Racial, ethnic, religious, regional and other groups are distinguished by a) the members' self-perception, b) members' self-projection to outsiders, and c) perception of the group by outsiders (Marger, 2003). The statements 'I am a brahmin' and 'we are brahmins' depending on situations and audience are the performance of self-perception and self-projection, and the statement 'they are brahmins' is the perception of the group by outsiders.<sup>19</sup> The use of the term 'brahmin' by members as well as the outsiders is openly and fully complicit with the knowledge of its supremacist essence.

A rejection of such a prolonged socialization extending from the time of writing of texts such as Manusmriti to the everyday completely normalized self-introduction of 'I am a brahmin', 'we are brahmins', and the outsider's reference 'he is a brahmin', 'they are brahmins' would involve processes of social transformation of very significant proportions. Evidence of it would be documented in reforms within and outside primordial institutions of the family, marriage as well as religious and educational organizations of the brahmin. But no social transformative processes that reject the myth of brahmin svabhava by the brahmin class are known to date. As Ambedkar

---

<sup>19</sup> Ramdas, A. (2015) The Brahmin Problem ([http://50.116.66.156/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8104:the-brahmin-problem&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132](http://50.116.66.156/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8104:the-brahmin-problem&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132))

pointed out, there is no Voltaire and no imminent revolution even in the offing by and for the brahmins.

The behavioral codes specified in the textual base continue to animate the present-day ruling class. Almost every verse in the Manusmriti pertaining to the inborn rights and ways of living as an entity distinct from the rest of humanity finds resonance today in the conduct of the brahmins as a class. And positioned as they are in the ruling class, the dominant ideologies flowing from this class through institutions bear witness to the vibrancy of those supremacist behavioral codes, which in turn socializes the non-brahmin.

The social reality is, therefore, the continued socialization of the myth of the brahmin essence.

The above continuity is elaborated further by drawing attention to some of the most persuasive discourses of the Indian ruling-class in contemporary times.

### **Social reform must precede political reform ~Babasaheb Ambedkar**

Post-colonial scholarship evades the category of caste, referring to it as a relic and a premodern category. To relegate a category as being invalid in contemporary times, the processes of decay and disuse of the said category must be self-evident or be made evident.

The reorganization, disappearance, minor or major change of any oppressive social structure would be the product of prolonged resistance movements, struggles and literatures. Caste as a social stratification system with endogamy as its key feature has been well documented through the ages, including before and during the British rule. As Ambedkar had noted, the movement against the colonial rule was political while the social reform of the stratified society whose structure existed as an integrated birth based, endogamy restricted, caste system, remained unaddressed (Ambedkar, 1936).

A leap of the imagination of gigantic proportions is called for to entertain the fiction of a casteless new nation being formed post-independence. The post-colonial scholarship that renders Indian society arriving into a casteless state is as transcendental as time-travel in the brahmin mythology.

However, reality did catch up in the form of contemporary events making the ruling-class dominated academia to grapple with the concrete effects of caste supremacy—a large populace excluded from access to education and employment opportunities. A populace that the caste system designates for providing labor in an out-of-sight out-of-mind manner, had to now be envisioned as possible peers somewhere in the distant future. Dr. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the constitution enshrined the protection of rights of the excluded communities in the form of Reservations. Reservation as a policy in force when restricted to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) did not agitate the ruling classes significantly. An overtly paternalistic attitude towards it was projected (Jadhav, 2016), until the Mandal commission recommended reservation for the Other Backward Class (OBC), who are a major demography. Then, the ruling classes rose in revolt. A protracted on-the-ground protest that lasted months combined with an ongoing mainstream, academic and popular culture resistance movement against reservation policy is underway. This revolt of the ruling classes legitimizing an open display of supremacist behavior towards the majority marks the social environment of the last few decades.



## Anti-reservation Sentiment a Reaffirmation of the Brahmin svabhava

Anti-reservation agitation as a deeply emotional issue of the ruling class, led to a rapid re-socialization of supremacism of the myth of the brahmin svabhava hidden in the language of merit. Every child, teenager, and adult of the ruling class in the present generation was and is fully socialized to denounce entire communities as being inferior on the basis that such a law for their rights exists. Both progressive and regressive ideologies of the ruling classes, be they Left, Right, feminist, or humanist—they all have the same supremacist rhetoric against the communities that fall under the preview of reservation policy.

This kind of mass socialization over a short period does not emerge in a vacuum, it draws on all the preexisting socialization of the myth of the brahmin svabhava. The ruling classes' negotiation with modernity or enlightenment had superficially kept at bay, their animosity during the post-colonial years preceding Mandal.

No immediate threat was and is possible by reservation to the ruling classes' material realities and control over power structures. Yet, the revolt was swift, massive and enduring.<sup>20</sup> One possible reading is that reservations, in theory, introduce a competitive factor in the job and educational sectors. These sectors would, in the long run, give the members of SC, ST, OBC communities some competitive power. The possibility of displacing the ruling classes through this means is a long shot. But it was received and responded to by the ruling classes as an immediate and lethal threat. Towards this, the racist ideology of brahmin supremacy was developed into a more aggressive and publicly accepted belief system.<sup>21</sup>

## Resistance to Caste Census

The brahmin supremacist belief system constantly runs into conflict with the constraints of modern value systems such as accountability for material realities. Caste is a basic demographic marker in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>22</sup> The denial of caste as a social reality has been an ongoing political enterprise of the ruling castes starting in the pre-independence era and persisting into the present. For 80 years, data pertaining to caste was omitted in the census returns, the dubious reasons for it have been noted by Babasaheb Ambedkar:

*~I am sorry, I cannot illustrate these points by reference to facts and figures. The census which is the only source of information on these points fails to help me. The last census omits altogether the caste tables which had been the feature of the Indian census ever since its birth. The Home Minister of the Government of India who is responsible for this omission was of the opinion that if a word does not exist in a dictionary it can be proved*

---

<sup>20</sup> Kuffir, N (2012) The compulsive need to oppose reservations. [http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5623:the-compulsive-need-to-oppose-reservations&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132](http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5623:the-compulsive-need-to-oppose-reservations&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132)

<sup>21</sup> Kuffir, N (2012) Let's skim the upper caste creamy layer [http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5719:lets-skim-the-upper-caste-creamy-layer&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132](http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5719:lets-skim-the-upper-caste-creamy-layer&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132)

<sup>22</sup> Ramdas, A. (2012) Casteless academe, Name-calling Dalits? (<http://www.dalitweb.org/?p=1021>)

*that the fact for which the word stands does not exist. One can only pity the petty intelligence of the author.*<sup>23</sup>

The SECC 2011 census data<sup>24</sup> was to finally begin giving us an empirical picture of the material realities of the caste society, of approximately 4000 castes.<sup>25</sup>

The public domain would be able to access verifiable information about all castes, their regional spread, their numbers, their educational status, what they own and don't own. This is a very basic level of knowledge for a factual understanding of the social structure of a very complex society. And with it, the possible ways through which imbalances in resource distribution and access to opportunities can be addressed. Before the expected release of the data, opinion makers from the academia and media started setting up the discourse that this information was detrimental. At a time when there is commonsensical understanding that information is power, thought leaders from the Indian ruling class have decided to let the government withhold the caste census data.

We are looking at the collusion of a large number of departments of sociology and related subjects along with a very large contingent of social scientists and their students who opted out of claiming national level data which would have helped consolidate, course-correct off-base hypothesis, policies, and discourses. The process of withdrawing from the information collected from citizens was also peculiar. Only a handful of articles appeared presenting their views of the caste census data being detrimental. There is not a single article by any social scientist of worth who has written against the withholding of national data, demanding its release. This is happening at a time when the ruling classes do not miss a chance to call the government a fascist one, a database state or write volumes on an impending fascist regime's takeover of democracy.

In the few articles that did appear, the resistance to caste census is often exhibited by invoking reservation anxieties; the lone gripping fear of the brahmin-savarnas (ruling class) that more lower caste communities will demand their rightful share.<sup>26 27</sup>

There are even more intellectually dishonest narratives, such as academic worries about the cost of the caste census; worries about investing academic labor to sort through the taxonomy of caste

---

<sup>23</sup> Babasaheb Ambedkar in Thoughts on Linguistic States

<sup>24</sup> SECC 2011 <http://secc.gov.in/>

<sup>25</sup> The approximate number is based on caste returns in the Census reports of British India and the Post-Independence caste census reports of state governments that included caste. Also based on extensive discussion with Naren Bedide (Kuffir Nalgumdwar)

<sup>26</sup> Sundar, N (2010) Will counting caste help reduce inequality? (<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/will-counting-caste-help-to-reduce-inequality/article426584.ece>)

<sup>27</sup> Basu, A (2010) More than a handcount caste in the census would offer data useful in many ways (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/more-than-a-headcount-caste-in-the-census-would-offer-data-useful-in-many-ways/cid/514320>)



names; assumptions that the census will not reveal anything about the institution of caste etc.<sup>28 29</sup> Even though the corpus of Ambedkar's writings on the institution of caste, extensively uses census data and his critique of the misuse of the census by the dominant class are also widely known.

*~Unfortunately, no student has devoted himself to a demographic survey of the population of India. We only know from our census reports how many are Hindus, how many are Muslims, how many Jews, how many Christians and how many untouchables. Except for the knowledge we get as to how many religions there are this information is of no value. What we want to know is the distribution of castes in different linguistic areas. On this we have very little information. One has to depend on one's own knowledge and information.~*  
Babasaheb Ambedkar<sup>30</sup>

And writers extending upon the Phule-Ambedkarite-Periyar tradition of interrogating the institution of caste continue to painstakingly elaborate on the society's social structure based on their knowledge of local histories and sociology.<sup>31</sup>

The academic class voluntarily let the government withhold verifiable public information that was collected at the taxpayers' expense. Does this have anything to do with the placement of the brahmin as the apex ruling elite?

In fragmented parts, the brahmin's relation to x or y caste can be done through anecdotal, literature and other story-telling methods. But those methods don't permit the basic question to be asked about class formation: Who constitutes the ruling class from among these 4000 castes?

How is the myth of the brahmin svabhava related to the material realities of nearly 4000 castes? The caste census would be the surest way to demonstrate how the brahmin is placed relative to other castes. The propertied class with abiding political authority over state apparatuses must be unambiguously linked to their castes to categorically know how classes are formed. Are they formed along the caste hierarchies or is it varied, and diverse castes get represented in the composition of the ruling class?

The category of caste being numerically large, comparison of caste realities and material status cannot be carried out and interpreted in formats of one caste vs another, or one group of castes

---

<sup>28</sup> Sundar, N (2000) Caste as census category implications for sociology ([http://www.academia.edu/3320882/Caste as Census Category Implications for Sociology](http://www.academia.edu/3320882/Caste_as_Census_Category_Implications_for_Sociology))

<sup>29</sup> The post-colonial critique of the census as an instrument of the colonizer is not refuted by any student of history, nor has the use of the census by free nations been stopped. The ruling caste members in academia have no serious objection to the general census data and routinely use that information for pedagogy and policy-making. Their objection is only with caste being included in that. And they are also aware that their arguments for that lacks substance, hence even the usual pretense of debate between two groups within ruling classes (conservative and liberal cousins) too did not take place.

<sup>30</sup> Ambedkar, B R (1953) Need for checks and balances in The Times of India, dated 23rd April 1953

<sup>31</sup> This country is broken into a thousand pieces;  
Its cities, its religion, its castes,  
Its people, and even the minds of the people  
all are broken, fragmented.~Baburao Jagtap (<http://marathidalitpoetry.blogspot.com/2014/07/this-country-is-brokenbaburao-jagtap.html>)

against the rest, or the racialized Dalit vs an undefined rest, or even the formats of SC ST OBC and General category, as they only keep giving a skewed picture of the social structure, where the ruling class cannot be defined clearly. At no point can the comparison be outside the framework of Dr. Ambedkar's concept of the graded nature of the caste system. At all times it must be informed that the society consists of 4000 plus castes and tribal groups which do not have the caste structure. Each caste has its own a demography, with variable distribution and variable access to structures of power.

For instance: Caste X's experience in village Y cannot be extrapolated to the same caste's experience in town Z. Their numbers and networks, inclusions and exclusions, along with the current political environment will determine how justice against violence, opportunities, and rights are experienced.

Meaningful comparative contexts can only be had when we have information of all the castes, which the government does have now, but it is made unavailable. Which leads to the question: Why is it important for the ruling castes and the Indian academia to leave the caste structure unexamined in a scientific manner? Why would anyone armed with rational thought refuse to investigate caste which is an entity that can be enumerated, compared and contrasted like other demographic categories?

The most direct and simple answer: The caste census would lead to an exposition of the uninterrupted access to surplus, labor, and property of the brahmin through the ages, facilitated to a great extent by the continued socialization and consolidation of the supremacist brahmin belief system.

The other side of this answer is the forever interrupted access to basic resources for the majority of 4000 castes.

The consequences of having the caste census information in the public domain would be the clear delineation of the propertied and the property-less. A small minority of propertied class and a large majority subjugated to provide labor with no other bargaining power.<sup>32</sup> The understanding that this information would fuel the revolt against the minuscule ruling class is threatening at a very elemental level for brahmin-supremacy as a system of brutal exploitation and fixed stratification.

The question then would be, why don't most laboring castes come together and dismantle supremacy? Part of the answer to this question lies in the numerical structuring of the 4000 castes (Kuffir).<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusions

Ambedkar's theorization of the social structure of the caste system as that of graded inequalities is reflected in Lenski's recognition of class systems within a heterogeneous society that can be ordered into several class hierarchies based on key categories such as wealth, occupation, education, political authority and so on (Lenski, 1987). When assessed within the system of graded inequalities as well as within multiple class systems, the brahmin remains on top of these class

<sup>32</sup> Marx, K. (1844) Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts

<sup>33</sup> Kuffir, N. The mean size of caste groups (personal communications)

hierarchies in individual categories as well as in any permutation and combination of categories (Ambedkar, 1936).

The myth of inherent essence of the brahmin is very unlike the myth of white supremacy, which splits heterogenous societies in the west into races based on skin color. The resource concentration, labor and surplus exploitation is non-ambiguous and class formations between the white and the other races are easily deciphered, especially in societies like USA and South Africa. In other countries, supremacy is enforced within the same race, the biggest example being the Nazi regime. And in several Asian, Arab and African countries the experience of oppression is within a race, based on a variety of categories including ethnic groups perceiving themselves as different races (Sowell, 1985). However, castes are neither ethnic nor racial groups. Brahmin-supremacy segregates castes, by specifying graded inferiorities to different castes, which don't allow even two castes among the oppressed to be similarly placed in terms of numbers, wealth, occupation, ritual and social status. Therefore, class formation with intent to overthrow the ruling class among the oppressed is near impossible in this system. While endogamy is loosely practiced in other forms of supremacist systems, in the caste system, as Ambedkar theorized, it is the defining feature of caste (Ambedkar, 1936). The material basis underlying the endogamic restrictions that is adhered to faithfully by the ruling class, across time, has not been explored with a view of understanding the social structure of the Indian nation.

It is a foregone conclusion that the myth of the brahmin svabhava cannot be refuted with facts and attempting to dissuade endogamic restrictions are futile when material and social gains are tied to it. Hence, caste as the mode of production must be engaged with to dismantle the caste system along with its myths, restrictions, and hierarchies.

The myth of the brahmin-essence is inseparable from the brahmin, and the brahmin is inseparable from the brahmin belief system which is inseparable from the caste system. The myth manifests itself as a sociological entity, the brahmin. The brahmin by his existence as a brahmin enforces the supremacist social order of caste, negatively impacting the material, social and cultural lives of the majority of 1.3 billion people.

In Annihilation of Caste, Ambedkar had emphasized the scriptural base for the socialization of the myth of supremacy and the caste system. The sociology of the present-day ruling class is a mirror reflection of the brahmin occupying 'supreme' positions in all sectors. There is very little to dismiss in the declarations of the Manusmriti of the complete entitlement of the brahmin.

This paper extends on the anti-caste framework of recognizing the myth of inherent supremacy as the core belief system of the caste system enabled by endogamy and control over material realities. In the future, Bahujan scholars aiming to explore, the myth of Brahmin svabhava's seamless merging with the logic of capitalism and the unpacking of the blending of the myths of the Brahmin svabhava and White supremacy will bring more clarity and means to annihilate caste.

## References

Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). The Annihilation of Caste. Retrieved from <http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/mmt/ambekar/>

- Buhler, G. (1886). *The laws of Manu in The Sacred Books of the East*. Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Jadhav, A. (2016). *On the Hate Reservations Band Wagon*. Retrieved from Round Table India: [http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=8789:on-the-hate-reservations-band-wagon&catid=119&Itemid=132](http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8789:on-the-hate-reservations-band-wagon&catid=119&Itemid=132)
- Kuffir, N. (2012). *Let's skim the upper caste creamy layer*. Retrieved from Round Table India: [http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5719:lets-skim-the-upper-caste-creamy-layer&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132](http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5719:lets-skim-the-upper-caste-creamy-layer&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132)
- Kuffir, N. (2012). *The compulsive need to oppose reservations*. Retrieved from Round Table India: [http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=5623:the-compulsive-need-to-oppose-reservations&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132](http://roundtableindia.co.in/~roundta3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5623:the-compulsive-need-to-oppose-reservations&catid=119:feature&Itemid=132)
- Lenski, G. (1987). *Power and privilege*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Marger, M. (2003). *Race and ethnic relations: American and global perspectives*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Sowell, T. (1985). *The economics and politics of race: An international perspective*. . New York: Quill.