Representing conflict: A study of the Indian Government's use of legitimisation and de-legitimisation in its internal security policy

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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List of Abbreviations

All India Sikh Students Federation	AISSF
All Parties Hurriyat Conference	APHC
Anandpur Sahib Resolution	ASR
Armed Forces Special Powers Act	AFSPA
Central Reserve Police Force	CRPF
Commando Battalions for Resolute Action	CoBRA
Communist Party of India	CPI
Communist Party of India Marxist	CPM
Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist	CPI ML
CPML-PW and CPN	Maoist
International Committee of the Red Cross	ICRC
Irish Republican Army	IRA
Jammu and Kashmir	J&K
Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front	JKLF
Left Wing Extremist	LWE
Line of Control	LoC
Maoist Communist Centre	MCC
National Conference	NC
National Security Guards	NSG
Pakistan-occupied Kashmir	PoK
Patiala and East Punjab States Union	PEPSU
People's War Group	PWG
Shri Amarnath Shrine Board	SASB
Sutlej Yamuna Link	SYL
United Nations Human Rights Council	UNHRC

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Abstract

Representing conflict: A study of the Indian government's use of legitimisation and delegitimization in its internal security policy

Priyanka Talwar

Amongst the various internal challenges facing states, armed conflict presents one of the most serious policy issues. The representation of such conflicts is closely intertwined with the policy measures taken to address them. The legitimization and delegitimization of certain kinds of actors or demands is not however fixed; these often change over time, creating space for alternative policy options. India, in the unique position of being one of the few countries with the existence of simultaneous but different internal conflicts, offers a ready canvas for studying the discursive representations of conflict and conflict resolution. In this thesis, state discourses on the conflicts in Punjab, Kashmir and Naxalism are analysed in order to draw a comparative framework of India's internal security strategy which, in the absence of a cohesive declared policy, highlights certain common patterns. The analyses show how identities, policies and demands are represented in the framing of these internal conflicts and point to India's ambiguous, and often ad hoc, internal security strategy. Moreover, this study shows that as the representation of these conflicts changes over time, policies exhibit certain continuities and changes, suggesting an inter-relatedness between discourse and policy. The public discourse of the Indian Government on the legitimacy of political actors involved in armed insurgency strongly reflects and in turn influences its overall discourse on internal armed conflicts and its policy response to them.

Chapter 1: Democracy, Domestic Conflict and Security Strategy: The Curious Case of India

The central focus of this thesis is on the mutually constitutive relationship between the representation of domestic conflicts by state agencies and policies intended to address them. Conflict management and conflict resolution have much to do with how conflicts are represented—whether they are represented as secessionist conflicts, revolutionary conflicts, conflicts over resources or religious extremism. These characterizations and the inter-relatedness of security strategies have important consequences for their trajectory—whether they are exacerbated or resolved.

Intra-state conflicts have far outweighed inter-state conflicts since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, some of the most intractable conflicts that exist at present are domestic conflicts such as the ones in the Basque country, Kashmir or Chechnya. States spend a large proportion of their resources in combating these internal disturbances even if they lack a coherent internal security strategy in responding to them. Changes in leadership-both of the state and the rebel movement, leads to changes in demands and changes over time influence policy responses, as do local and international contexts. Policy decision making is therefore a complex process that reflects the dominant state narrative on security and can offer useful insights into the identities of states.

I argue in this thesis that these decisions are not based on an objective, observed 'reality' of the conflict, but are the result of a complex and inter-related set of factors that inscribe the construction of insecurity, identity and interests within the broader social and political context in which these decisions are made. Even before conflict situations can be responded to, they require some assessment, some meaning assigned to them. What constitutes national interest? National security has come to encompass a host of challenges-external and domestic, related to military, political or economic issues that it faces. Are the actors involved misguided youth or terrorists? Who can be negotiated with, if at all? Are the demands of the local rebels' demands for secession or autonomy? Essentially, these are basic questions for determining the legitimacy or illegitimacy of issues from the perspective of the state, which have implications for policy practice.

The association of domestic strife with failed/weak states or newly emerging democracies has received a fair deal of attention.[1] A dominant analysis is that these states lack democratic institutions or have yet to establish stable and functioning regimes, in the absence of which domestic instability is inevitable. However, with regard to democracies and their internal challenges the literature is much weaker. How do these states deal with conflict within their borders? What do these states understand by security? Crucially, how are democracies able to use force against their own citizens and undermine democratic values?

Literature on democracy and conflict has tended to focus on international relations between states. Modern democratic peace theory holds that democracies are less likely to go to war with each other.[2] Two variants of this thesis-monadic and dyadic elaborate on the incidence of inter-state conflict. The monadic thesis states that democratic states have more peaceful relations with all states irrespective of regime type, while the dyadic version holds that democracies are more peaceful with other democracies (Doyle 1983a). It is held that democracies have liberal institutions that foster shared norms and cultures which encourage dialogue, negotiation and restraint over violence. The idea that societies would be unwilling to support their elected governments to engage in war arises from this notion of liberal values in democracies (Doyle 1983a). In his elaboration of the dyadic version of the democratic peace theory, Doyle (Doyle 1983b) recognises that liberal states' relations with non-liberal states is determined on the basis of its perception of other states and therefore, since the latter is inherently illiberal and undemocratic, there is less hesitation in using force by the former.

The theory of democratic peace has received considerably less examination in internal conflicts (Kinsella & Rousseau 2009). The role of democracy in political theories of internal conflict has highlighted that internal conflicts are less likely to occur under democratic regimes since these allow space for political dissent and rule of law. According to Krain and Myers (Krain & Myers 1997), the democratic peace thesis holds in intra state conflicts and they demonstrate empirically that the incidence of regime type affects internal war participation. The incidence of civil war is shown to be

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[1] See for example, (Fearon & Laitin 2003).

[2] Various scholars have written on the democratic peace theory. See for example, (Russett 1994) (Doyle, M. 1983).

higher for non-democratic regimes. Later research has distinguished between different types of democracies to understand whether this would have an effect on democratic peace theory. These studies have refined the theory to argue that the higher the level of democracy or higher the ranking of democratic indicators, the less likely is the use of force used by the state.[3]

Extending the dyadic argument, we may envision a similar process at work in the domestic sphere. The way the centre responds to insurgents, criminals or anti-state elements may have to do with how it represents these actors. Since not all such internal disturbances are treated the same, it is possible that the state considers certain types of activities more threatening than others. The decision to use force therefore may stem from how big a threat it considers the actors or their demands to be.

What requires deeper analysis is the role of democratic governments in intra-state conflicts, especially in the use of force. Davenport (2007) argues in his empirical study of democracy and domestic repression that while democracy does lead to reduced levels of suppression, when there emerges a situation of domestic conflict that poses a threat to the political system, or the magnitude of threat is seen to be beyond an acceptable level, there is a higher possibility of a consensus on the use of force (Davenport 2007), p.28) but even here it is more likely to curtail political and civil liberties rather than resort to lethal force. He contends that democratic leaders try to use those forms of repression that are less controversial or noticeable so as to avoid being detected (Davenport 2007, p.189).

An overview of some of the literature on domestic conflict and the democratic peace thesis seems to suggest that by and large democracies are less willing to engage in violent suppression of dissent. At the same time, the use of force in situations of what is known as emergency, or when these situations appear as threats to internal security, has been rampant across the world in countries like India, Turkey, Colombia and Spain

It is in this context of security, force and democracy that the study of India can provide a useful case for in-depth analyses to understand the responses to domestic conflicts in relatively strong states. India provides a ready canvas for studying a myriad of conflicts; since its independence it has faced conflicts across the length and breadth of

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[3] For example, (Reynal-Querol 2005; Davenport & Armstrong 2004)

its territory. While some have been resolved or managed, others have continued and new ones have arisen. It is this multiplicity of conflicts that gives India uniqueness unparalleled by the experience of any other state in the world. Demands for ethnic recognition, autonomy and separation have often resulted in violent conflicts directed at the state.

In spite of these internal conflicts, the Indian state has remained a viable and strong entity and has managed to keep international attention largely away from its domestic disturbances. Kashmir is an exception owing perhaps to the fact that it is considered in the international system as a bilateral conflict between two nuclear powers. Domestically too, these pockets of conflict have been restricted, such that these coexist with a robust political and economic life. As compared to other countries in the South Asian region also affected by internal upheavals-such as Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, and other countries fighting domestic insurgency such as Turkey and Spain, the Indian state has simultaneously been dealing with more than one insurgency and in spite of them, been able to prosper and emerge as a powerful global force in recent times. The government structure has continued to remain stable even if the makeup of ruling political parties has shown changes.

The literature on Indian exceptionalism explores democracy and federalism as important factors for India's success in maintaining stability in spite of the tensions between and within various ethnicities (see, for example, (Hardgrave 1993; Kohli 1997). Much of the literature on conflict in India has focused on ethnic conflicts and the relative success of India's federalism and democracy in accommodating ethnic and political grievances. Kohli (1997) argues that the institutional arrangements in India's federal polity allows for a greater willingness to negotiate and accommodate ethnic demands for self-determination. His analysis of self-determination movements is based on two variables, institutionalisation and leadership strategy, that play a key role in determining the trajectory of such movements. He uses self-determination movements to refer to demands for regional separateness based on ethnic criteria such as language or religion. The argument is that effective institutions and willingness of the leadership to accommodate demands through some form of power sharing can succeed in resolving conflict. This mechanism can be traced back to the early days of India's independence.

India's rich and varied experience in dealing with these conflicts can offer useful insights into conflict resolution processes. The decision making and policy implementation process that occurs during the course of conflict can have important implications for how it develops-whether it exacerbates violence or results in successful resolution.

To highlight the various conflicts that have challenged the state, the next section gives an overview of some of these contemporary conflicts in the wake of India's independence in 1947.

India's Internal Conflicts: An Overview

After independence, the Indian State faced a host of challenges stemming from its large and varied demography (Bhargava et al. 1999). An integral challenge stemmed from the need to create a coherent Indian identity in a land with a multiplicity of identities based on ethnicity, caste, class, region, religion and language. The newly independent state sought, therefore, to maintain an overarching Indian identity while allowing space for ethnic aspirations so as to avoid further territorial division from the experience of the creation of Pakistan (Mukarji & Arora 1992; Jalal 1995).

The reorganization of states on the basis of language in 1956, while meant to cater to the regional aspirations of the people, led to similar demands in other parts of India which had been left out of the process. In Punjab and the north east region, such demands evolved into conflicts for a variety of reasons-either their demands were neglected, received delayed response from the centre or policies were such that included some in the division process but excluded others, thus creating further pockets of dissent (Singh 1997).

One of the first conflicts after independence erupted in the southern part of the country. Protesting against a new language policy aimed at making Hindi the official language of the country with a subsequent requirement of including it as a compulsory language of study in the curricula of schools across the country, the non-Hindi speaking southern states threatened to secede if the policies were implemented (Barnett Ross 1976). The Centre's resolution of the language conflict through accommodation and repeal of the contentious policies ultimately created space for the linguistic rights of its citizens and gave autonomy to the state on matters such as education. Moreover, timely state

intervention in the conflict ensured that it did not escalate into violence (Dasgupta 1970; Kohli 2001).

In the north eastern part of the country, numerous conflicts have marred the region. States like Nagaland sought separation from the Indian state terming the terms of accession after independence as contentious and invalid. States like Tripura, Assam and Manipur were embroiled in conflict to preserve their ethnic or tribal identity from 'outsiders' who were either other ethnic or tribal groups or non-natives crossing into Indian territory from Bangladesh. Government apathy and a general political and economic neglect of the region have added to the intensity and intractability of the conflict (Nag 2002; Baruah 1997).

In Punjab, the demand for Sikh separation, which had been voiced at the time of independence but was subsequently marginalised, led to a violent conflict by the 1980s. Combining economic, political, linguistic and religious demands, the Sikh agitation escalated into demands for secession and followed a period of intense violence (Brass 1991; Singh 1997). The neglect of Sikh aspirations and suppression of regional politics by New Delhi during the 1970s were important triggers and the gravity and duration of the conflict ensured novel counter insurgency strategies, many of which were to be emulated in other conflict areas in the country.

Around the time the conflict in Punjab was experiencing heightened militancy in the early 1990s, the situation in Kashmir began to deteriorate. The Kashmir conflict, which is considered to be one of the most intractable conflicts in the world, has attracted international attention due to the added factor of it being a source of conflict between two nuclear rivals-India and Pakistan, and over which the two states have fought three wars. Tracing its origin to 1947, the year of India's independence and partition, this Muslim majority state which was then ruled by a Hindu king became a part of India after the ruler consented after much deliberation. Though the Indian constitution recognised Kashmir's special status and gave it autonomy in all matters except defence, foreign affairs and communication, the provisions were watered down or violated by successive governments in New Delhi such that the stifling of political aspirations coupled with human rights violations led to a growing alienation of the Kashmiri people with hardliners demanding secession from India (Wirsing 1994; Jalal 1995; Ganguly 1999). Militant groups, many of which were sponsored by Pakistan,

proliferated and intensified violence (Behera 2000) and led to the stationing of a large number of armed personnel, making Kashmir one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world.

The Naxalite or Maoist conflict traces its origins to a peasant rebellion in a village in the state of West Bengal against land distribution and taxation policies. The spread of the movement and its evolution into an armed conflict across several states in opposition to state development policies has in recent years become a greater challenge for the state as violence levels have increased (Mohanty 2006).

Common to each of these conflicts is their framing primarily as threats to the security of the state. In so doing, the state is able to justify the use of certain strategies as necessary and in fact the only option available. The space for alternative articulations and consequently different policy actions is thus inhibited and has an important effect on the way conflict proceeds. This raises important questions—how important are state mechanisms in mitigating conflict? How successful and inclusive has the negotiation process been? Are root causes of the conflict identified and worked upon? What is considered to be the most important issue in approaching conflict? Does this change over time?

Moreover, characterization of conflicts as, for example, secessionist or extremist, draws attention away from the political and historical grievances which trigger these conflicts. To explore this concept of framing conflict situations, critical security studies have generated novel ways of understanding security.[4] Making a departure from realist theories on security, which takes states as the prime referents of security and views threats to security as exogenously given and objectively identified, the securitization debate views security as essentially inter subjective. For the purpose of conflict studies, critical security studies have opened up a plethora of issues that have been neglected in traditional security studies. The former has generated rich literature on previously unexplored issues affecting state behaviour and the implications thereof. How security is defined by states affects their policy actions and the two are inter-related so that policy action constrains the way states behave. Inter-state relations have been an

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[4] See for example, (Krause & Williams 1997); (Booth 1997)

important theme in critical security studies.[5] These studies have shown how foreign policy considerations are determined by a complex set of factors that include conceptualizations of identity and interests and how they change with the broader historical and political context. The following section elucidates the theory further and discusses important contributions to the subject of study.

The securitization debate

Policies require representations of the issues they seek to address and these representations come from the wider context in which policy makers find themselves (Hansen 2006). The purpose of this study then is to explore the process of production and reproduction in discourses and continuity and transformation in policy practice. It is this interplay of security, identity and context, in understanding how and why policies are formed, that forms the purpose of this study. This also elucidates how some conflicts come to be solved while others remain intractable.

The concept of security is central to this thesis since it is a dominant theme in conflict and conflict resolution practices. Security and interests are closely intertwined; indeed it is the protection of interests that forms the basis of security. But neither security, nor interests, are objectively given and fixed. Identities and interests are not exogenously given, but are constituted through interaction. This leads to another central assumption in critical studies that agents and structures are mutually constituted.[6] The significance of this ontological premise is that it is futile to study which influences which, for each is simultaneously influenced by the other. Thus, security is better understood as a construction of threats and insecurity, a construction that can be discerned in the framing of issues in political discourses.

The concept of security has occupied a dominant place in the field of international relations. Critical security studies challenged the realist notion of security as an objectively given state-centric concept.[7] From the realist perspective, states were the

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[5] See for example, (Campbell 1992; Hansen 2006)

[6] For more on the agent structure debate, see, for example, (Wendt 1987; Klotz 2006)

[7] See for example, (Booth 1997), (Krause 1998)

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referents of security and insecurity arose from some exogenous disturbances that were directed at the state. Constructivist theories have sought to explore security as a construct; the role of ideas played a dominant role in explaining the concept of security as being constructed for some purpose. Thus constructivism focuses on the processes that construct the world as we know it.

Buzan and Waever's theory of securitization, which deems security to be a speech act, narrows the construction of the security problem to the agency of political actors, especially the elite in determining the moment of construction. The Copenhagen School, as this school of thought has come to be characterised, places on actors the potential of intentional and strategic action through the production of discourses of insecurity. Waever characterizes security discourse as 'dramatizing an issue as having absolute priority' and the act of labelling something a security issue enables an actor to deal with it in extraordinary measures, including 'breaking the normal political rules of the game' (Waever 1996) p.106).

The concept has been popular in critical security studies that studied the phenomena across a range of issues; the securitization of immigration, of crime and of sexuality are only some of the uses of the theory that seek to explain how these issues are constructed as threats to the security of the state. A large part of some of the recent literature on discourse and policy has at its focus the study of discourses on terrorism and American policy post 9/11 which tends to locate securitization primarily in the speeches of the political elite and in the policy texts that articulate official positions. Jackson (Jackson 2005) studies the language used in the war on terror and argues that it made certain forms of action seem rational and logical and others seem entirely absurd. As it translated into action, attacking states suspected of harbouring terrorists became an acceptable and logical policy, while any form of dialogue with the individuals and organizations labelled terrorist was unthinkable. Jackson pays close attention to language in speeches and texts of the political elite and shows how linking the events of September 11, 2001 with Pearl Harbour and World War II framed the incident in a historical narrative that suggested that the United States was being attacked for its virtues rather than its failings or foreign policy conduct.

Even though the contribution of the Copenhagen School to critical security studies has been important in drawing attention to language, the insufficient attention to context suggests rather erroneously that political actors are free to pronounce any situation a security problem by declaring it to be so. In later elaborations, (Buzan et al. 1998) Waever adds the role of audience and facilitating conditions to refine the securitization theory, but fails to make explicit the mechanism that links the audience with the actors and speech act. The omission of wider social processes suggests ironically that power and identity, two central concepts in the securitization theory, are momentarily produced and results in a somewhat static model of the application of meaning to events rather than to show how meanings are dynamically located in a process (McSweeney 1996; Stritzel 2007).

Weldes points out that conflicts and crises are not only situations that threaten states and their security, but at the same time, they are beneficial for states for they present an opportunity to enhance control of the population and to "refine and elaborate the relations of power within the state itself" (Weldes et al. 1999, p. 58). Power can be enacted directly, as in the form of directive speech acts or texts on legal or regulatory matters or indirectly, in the form of description or legitimization of powerful actors or their actions and ideologies' (Van Dijk 2008).

There is a growing body of literature on the interaction of identity, security and policy that provides the conceptual and methodological guidance of this thesis. In arguing that policy is a political practice that encompasses the constitution, production and maintenance of identity, Campbell (1992) deconstructs conventional political discourse of the United States during the Cold War. The constant revision of the national purpose and security objectives, encompassing cultural, political and geostrategic aspects, shows security to be articulated not just in terms of the Othering of the Soviet Union and its threat to the United States, but also in terms of the need to maintain order even in the absence of a Soviet threat and hence the justification of policies that served these objectives. The construction of threat and danger is thereby maintained and reproduced one way or the other. As Campbell argues, in this way, it did not really matter if one threat ended; the ending of the Cold War may have caused that particular representation to collapse, but if we understand it to be a struggle within and between identities, then threats are not just the result of a particular state or ideology; it is an on-going process. The mutual constitution of identities and policies brought out in the official texts is

evident in the way these inscribe policy with statements on moral codes, the protection of cultural and spiritual values and thereby scripted a particular American identity.

The temporary fixity of meaning, by aligning identity, interests and policy, is therefore open to challenge by competing discourses that destabilize and displace the dominant articulation. The replacement by a new dominant discourse once again takes place by the silencing or marginalizing of alternative discourses. The Israel-Palestine conflict presents an example of the process of silencing and delegitimization of Palestinian concerns in American official discourses during the Truman administration, a period that marked the beginning of the conflict. In focusing on Jewish claims to statehood, their victimization and rights find consistent mention, even as Palestinian rights and humanitarian issues affecting them from Jewish immigration are sought to be de-emphasized. Where the denial of a Jewish state does find mention in some sections of the official administration, the concern is centred on American strategic interests rather than on the concerns of Palestinians (Shinko 2004). Any debate on issues that Palestinians raised was not entertained by the American political leadership. The recognition by the Truman government of Israel, and the policy of partitioning the Palestinian land, framed as 'fair and equitable' despite the disproportional population-territorial area ratio, served ultimately to deny the Palestinians the authenticity to speak on behalf of their community. In other words, the rights of the Palestinians were delegitimised,

What the above discussion on security demonstrates is that states encompass a perception of themselves and the situation around them, and this can be discerned in the way they seek to define their security. This ties in with their interests and restricts the way these interests can be protected. As Campbell's (1992) and Shinko's (2004) studies show, states view other states through the prism of identity; the perceived identity of the latter affects the level of animosity or friendship between the two, and the resulting policy options before them. Campbell's crucial observation of the inherent need for states to maintain an illusion of threat underlies the framing process in situations of conflict. Even as conflicts change course, the concept of security and threats to it acquires different meaning. Moreover, this process is inherently unstable as meanings are ever changing and exist only temporarily in a given context. These meanings of security legitimise or delegitimise policy options facing the state,

In domestic conflict situations particularly, this process is even more challenging as democratic states attempt to define and respond to situations within their boundaries and to actors usually their own citizens. Security is no longer envisioned in terms of states and their external enemies; for millions of people across the world it is their own government and their policies that is the biggest security threat (Booth 1991). The careful delineation of 'us' or Self and 'them' or Other takes on added sensitivity and, more importantly, the range of options the state can use legitimately become that much more complicated. Many states lack a well-defined domestic security strategy and instead focus on each situation anew, though often using a set of legislations available to them. As the case of India shows below, the constant adaptation and revision of policies in line with their legitimacy points to a wider process of locating identity in changing contexts and the resulting implications for conflict trajectories.

India's Internal Security Strategies

The recurring theme in the literature on securitization suggests that legitimacy is the key factor that provides coherence to the mutually constitutive relationship between discourses on security, identity and policy practice. The interlinkages of dominant conflict representations with policy action as applicable in India's conflict settings are the focus of study of this thesis. India's own sense of security is reflected in the way it handles domestic strife. Influencing its understandings are not only historical experiences but also the contemporary context in which it finds itself-shaped by both domestic and international events.

Much of the literature on India's security policy deals with its foreign policy. Within this literature, important contributions have been made to understanding India's identity and interests and their links with policy outcome. Kumar argues that India's foreign policy considerations have shifted from state sovereignty to a more normative foreign policy in recent years as the country begins to identify itself as a rising power (Kumar 2008), p.26). Indian strategic thought is sometimes traced back to Kautilya and Ashoka, both historical figures in India's long history of political reign.[8] The former espoused realist thought, the latter, idealist ones and both have been cited as sources of India's

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[8] See for example (Tanham 1992), (Hilali 2001).

foreign policy strategy. However, as Mehta argues, "these invocations are a caricature of historical realities" (Mehta 2009) p.210). He argues that Indian foreign policy has been influenced, to a large extent, by the partition in 1947 and that India, and all of South Asia, has relied on a fear of the other to secure its identity. However, India's security concerns are not just confined to its immediate neighbours as the political elite seeks major power status and not merely a regional power (Hilali 2001). Hilali (2001) also argues that India's defensive strategic culture is responsible for its preference for bilateral over multilateral engagement. Yet others argue that India's nuclear capability has strengthened the confidence of the Indian leadership to pursue an active international diplomatic strategy (Perkovich 2003). India's foreign and security policy considerations are at a time and place where changes are necessary, as India's profile and stature have risen in the international system, but because foreign policy does not sway votes, political parties have not engaged with it seriously, resulting in ad hoc responses to various international crises (Pant 2008).

As it translates into domestic security policy, here too, decisions have been ad hoc, with lack of institutionalisation contributing to the lack of a cohesive security strategy. At the core of these responses is India's sense of identity and its relationship with others. To highlight the role of identity in securitization and policy formulation, Muppidi's study (Muppidi 1999) of India's foreign policy during the Cold War is a useful example. Muppidi argues that security in India is conceptualised in postcolonial terms and continues to dominate political discourse of the State. Through a constructivist methodology, she shows how Indo-US relations during the Cold War can be viewed through the lens of post colonialism whereby India's postcolonial identity was constantly expressed in the assertion of independence in the international system. The analysis shows how the self-understandings of the Indian state's relations with the United States differed from its relations with the Soviet Union, and how the concept of security functioned simultaneously as a field of meanings and as social power. As a field of meanings, security was understood as an 'organised set of interpretations for making sense of a complex international system' while as social power, the security imaginary worked to 'produce social relations of power through the production of distinctive social identities' (Muppidi 1999, pp. 123-24). The United States, then, in spite of sharing democracy, plurality and free market values with India, was looked upon as a 'colonizer' that failed to respect India's independence and nonalignment in

international affairs. The Soviet Union on the other hand by stressing a shared past of oppression and struggle sought to 'establish a relationship of identity through the postcolonial self-understanding of the Indian state' and thus presented a less hostile image to India.

Identity, then, can be said to mediate between the framing of conflict situations and locating the appropriate strategy; and changes over time are reflective of and are reflected in changes in the way security is conceptualised. Applying this in a domestic framework, internal conflicts in India have preoccupied the Indian state since its independence and long-standing conflicts such as Kashmir and Manipur continue to be major security challenges even if the concept itself has undergone changes over the years. Literature on India's internal security strategy is largely case-specific.[9] Moreover, much of the analysis has been carried out with an underlying focus on federalism and India's status as a federal polity and scholars of conflict resolution in India have often highlighted reorganization and federalism as exemplary models of resolving ethnic conflict (Bhattacharya 2005) (Chadda 2002).

Chadda's (2002) analysis of India's efforts at internal reorganization elucidates this further. She argues that the various phases of federal reorganization that India has witnessed have been part of the Indian State's strategy to accommodate ethnic aspirations. In the early years after independence, the main task for the leadership was to ensure a strong central government for the preservation of India's unity. The linguistic reorganization of states in 1956 was meant to simultaneously reiterate the Centre's importance but acknowledge the importance of diverse cultures and allow a degree of regional autonomy (Chadda 2002, p.50). The reorganization of the north eastern region in the 1970s was less successful, she argues, due to the centralizing tendencies of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Twin considerations of ethnic accommodation and security concerns led to the reorganization of this border region, but the era was marked by increasing populism of, and greater demands for autonomy

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[9] A number of studies exist on the conflicts in Punjab, Kashmir, the north-east conflicts, Naxalism. Fewer studies deal with an overall internal security strategy drawing comparative research. Exceptions include, Telford, H. 2001. Counter Insurgency in India: Observations from Punjab and Kashmir, *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, 21 (1); Tharu, S. 2007. Insurgency and the State in India: the Naxalite and Khalistan movements, *South Asian Survey*, 14 (83); Chenoy, A. and Kamal Mitra Chenoy. 2010. *Maoist and other Armed Conflicts*, Penguin, Delhi; Conflict Resolution: Learning lessons from dialogue processes in India. 2011. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva.

by the various caste and ethnic political parties that ruled the states across the country. The arbitrary use of emergency constitutional provisions by Gandhi to quell political dissent translated into an erosion of the democratic character of the Indian state. The late 1980s and early 1990s marked the end of Congress dominance and emergence of coalition politics in India. Chadda describes the conflicts in this period, barring Kashmir, as evidence of a new relation between the Centre and states wherein demands now began to be couched not in terms of autonomy from the centre but for exercising power over the centre. This analysis stems from the fact that coalition partners now had a stake in the functioning of the government. The creation of three new states in the 1990s is further testament to the devolution of power away from the Centre, she argues. Rather than analyse the effects of the policies in terms of simple dichotomises like centralization and decentralization, Chadda defends India's federal arrangement as successful even if centralization and state oppression during the 1970s and 1980s deserve to be criticized. Chadda argues that without a strong state there can be no democracy, and hence centralization has to precede decentralization.

Amongst the range of options that the state has, accommodation through reorganization of boundaries has perhaps been the most favoured strategy. The Centre is empowered to alter state boundaries by the Indian constitution. Reorganization of borders within the state, so as to create a separate area of relative autonomy based on the principle of federalism has been a dominant approach to resolving conflict. In ethnic conflicts, this strategy works to ensure that the group remains committed to the existing political process while at the same time carving out a niche for it to govern itself on matters particular to them.

Amongst the constitutional measures that the Indian state has before it, the Centre in New Delhi is disproportionately empowered over the state governments in situations of emergency. Three categories of what are known as situations of 'emergency'—war or external aggression or internal disturbance; failure of constitutional machinery in the country or in a state; and a threat to the financial security to the nation allow for a suspension of all fundamental rights (except the right to life and personal liberty) and the dissolution of federal principles. Invoking one of these, then, gives the state the authority to control democratic functioning. Moreover, the President can suspend a state government on the recommendation of the New Delhi appointed governor to the state, if the latter reports the inability of a state government to maintain law and order.

Direct rule from the Centre can be instituted for a period of six months, which can be extended based on approval from the parliament. At the very least, even without a state of emergency or President's Rule, the state can curb the right to assemble in public spaces and has used preventive detention in the name of 'maintenance of law and order'.

For Singh (1996), India functions as an ethnic democracy, by which he means that Indian nationalism is a disguise for Hindu revivalism, and points to policies in Punjab, and the denial of Sikh statehood as evidence of majoritarianism and 'hegemonic control' (Singh 1996). The use of anti-terrorist strategies in Punjab led to the establishment of what he terms a 'security state' that depended heavily on strong arm tactics. Further, he argues, in spite of the "success" of Punjab, core demands that were behind much of the crisis remained unresolved (Singh 1996, p.420). He notes a deliberate attempt to legitimize the apparent order in Punjab through the electoral process.

In a similar vein, Ganguly argues that the strategy of the state has some discernible trends and these follow from the "success" of Punjab (Ganguly et al. 2007) p.62). As a first step, he contends, force is used to tackle violence using both state police forces and specially trained paramilitary troops. The introduction of various laws to strengthen the powers of the security forces and the capacity of the judicial and political administration has often met with criticisms as these sought to curtail civil and political rights. A third dimension of the state's strategy has been to adopt peace agreements with chosen insurgents. These accords contain measures to address grievances and protect political, cultural or economic rights but, as Ganguly argues, these have failed to tackle root causes or have faced implementation issues (Ganguly 2007, p.63).

Writing on India's security policy in the north-east, Baruah (2005) argues that the counter insurgency methods employed by the state have led to the establishment of an authoritarian military regime due to the powers of the armed forces. In treating the region as a frontier region, the security thinking in New Delhi is dominated by the need to protect the borders so as to maintain territorial sovereignty and control infiltration from the east. He also argues that there is a lack of concerted effort at ending conflict, suggesting that the Indian state has managed disorder at a level that it can live with and

lacks political will to end the violence. The policy of creating exclusive homelands for particular ethnic groups has, moreover, led to exclusionary politics (Baruah 2003).

Both Baruah and Singh highlight the role of the state in accentuating the conflict—by extending support to certain factions, or by co-opting leadership. In Punjab, the tacit support of the central leadership to a Sikh extremist preacher in countering the popularity of the Sikh political party at the forefront of the movement led to a split in the movement and strengthened extremist forces. In the north east, the Assam Accord for instance co-opted the leaders of the movement for separation of Assam from India into a power sharing agreement, and left out extremist groups that continued to engage in a violent conflict against the state. Cohen considers this 'pressure and co-option' strategy to be successful owing to the sheer size and resources available to the state as well as to the fragmentation in dissident groups (Cohen 2001), p.113).

Navlakha (2004) argues that a militaristic approach dominates India's internal security strategy. He assesses that the state perceives its internal conflicts as imminent threats to itself and therefore the best way of fighting them is through force. This, he argues, is most evident in the way the Naxalite conflict has come to be perceived. This armed movement of the tribals and landless labourers now occupies the status of the most serious internal security threat to the state.[10] Financial allocations and military deployments suggest that though state leaders have identified the roots of the problem to be socio-economic, the thrust of its policy continues to be through counter-terrorism tactics that include the creation of new paramilitary forces, training of police and modernization of weapons. Efforts to establish the movement's foreign links with Nepal were also attempted which Navlakha argues is a deliberate strategy of the state to elevate a conflict to the status of a serious threat (Navlakha 2004), p.4239). The association of domestic problems with external actors stems from the continuation of its troubles with its neighbours in the region and has been an almost spontaneous tendency by the state to divert attention away from domestic roots. Winning external patrons has been an important strategy in India's internal conflict strategy (Sahadevan 2000). With its complicity in conflicts in Punjab, Kashmir and the north-east, the

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[10] This was stated by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in April 2006 at a meeting of the standing committee on Naxalism, www.pib.nic.in. Accessed on October 25, 2014..

Indian government has made consistent attempts at bilateral and international diplomatic pressure on Pakistan.

KPS Gill, who served as the police chief in Punjab during the crises and was later appointed to other conflict areas such as Kashmir and Maoist areas as well, considers the use of coercive force as the sole reason for the defeat of terrorism in Punjab and argues that force is a fundamental obligation of the state.[11] Gill asserts that dialogue with militants and political solutions in such situations have been failed strategies and are futile policies in violent conflicts. This strategic thinking, which dominates a section of the ruling elite, has been a consistent feature of domestic security policy, though it has often been supplemented with political and economic policies as well.

When does the state use force? For a democracy in particular this question weighs heavily. Democracies are assumed to be more resistant in using force to suppress dissent given that the ruling state elite is interested in maintaining power and that the use of violence against its own citizens is likely to be unpopular. Democracies are also assumed to have legal and constitutional constraints that prevent them from resorting to force. Paradoxically, evidence in India suggests otherwise. Across the conflicts in Punjab, Kashmir and the north eastern parts of the country, widespread use of the army, paramilitary and police forces has been a fairly acceptable way of dealing with domestic armed conflict, with limited resistance outside the impacted areas..

That the Indian State views autonomy and security as 'bipolar and zero-sum'(Miklian 2011) is lent some credence by this view and the response to internal conflicts and demands for greater autonomy is therefore spontaneously met with suppression. However, the concept of security is itself not addressed in these studies. A question that requires further research is whether security articulations and definitions display changes. This question is important in capturing domestic and international contexts as influencing the Indian state's notion of its security. As an example, the events of September 11, 2001 and its repercussions had a huge influence on domestic security situations of states across the world. A tendency of the Indian state to bring Kashmir under the ambit of the global war on terror was aimed at gaining international attention and pressuring Pakistan.

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[11] KPS Gill, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume1/Fault1-kpstext.htm Accessed on July 13, 2012.

Security perceptions-both in its foreign and domestic dimensions is shaped primarily by a small section of the political elite in India. Koithara argues that centralization of power has generally found support (Koithara 1999) p.37) and that in times of crises, as in Punjab, the state has been able to garner the support of the upper strata to use illiberal measures. He also contends that the discourse on internal security is state-centric, with a general unwillingness to engage in dialogue with disaffected sections of society (Koithara 1999, p.37). After the political resolution of the Tamil crisis by the late 1960s, there has not been a replication of such mechanisms to other internal crises. An expansion in the capability of state repression-by strengthening paramilitary and police forces and using the army for internal operations has meant that the state has evolved a militarised approach to internal security (Koithara 1999, p.104). He also asserts that the strategy has little to do with addressing root causes and can be deemed to be more as 'crisis invoked' and 'damage limiting'. Cohen (2001) argues that the roots of most of the political domestic conflicts in India can be traced to the state's neglect of democratic politics at an early stage of the crises.

Likewise, according to Ganguly (Ganguly & Fidler 2009) the counter insurgency strategy of the Indian state follows a pattern bereft of historical contexts and past experiences and hence shifts attention away from core issues. Using the same heavy handed responses in Kashmir as was followed in Punjab and the north east meant heavy human costs and resulted in the alienation of the population. Had the experiences of Punjab been taken into account, this would have demonstrated the failure of such policies. The state viewed the Kashmiri demand for greater state autonomy as a threat to national integrity, thereby providing legitimacy for the imposition of central rule (Ganguly & Bajpai 1994).

Hardgrave has identified increasing centralization by the Indian state as a source of conflict and notes that "in its attempts to quell endemic unrest and the challenge of terrorism, India has enacted a plethora of laws that have become instruments of repression; police and paramilitary abuses seem to get worse while all sorts of other violations of human rights are reported with numbing frequency" (Hardgrave 1993), p.68). In recent years, this centralisation has been checked to some extent by the active interventions by the Supreme Court on matters related to judicial reform, corruption

and human rights, but in situations of conflict, the law remains largely unchanged.[12] Moreover, these interventions have not always resulted in greater human rights protection. For instance, despite the Supreme Court's repeal of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in 2004, the provisions of this Act have remained in other legislations (Kalhan et al 2007).

Considering the above discussion on India's security strategies, two opposing sets of views emerge. On the one hand, India is referred to as a success, measured in terms of its model of federalism and the resulting political flexibility, while on the other, India appears as a security state. The former views public expenditure and economic packages towards conflict areas as an effort at promoting development for the common man, while the latter considers the thrust of military approaches and the neglect of political negotiations evidence of the state's failure to resolve the conflict even if it uses public expenditure as a superficial attempt at managing conflict.

This contradiction highlights the opposing views on India's internal security strategies. The challenge then arises from this division and throws open space for research on a comprehensive analysis of the Indian state's conflict policies. The existence of these two schools of thought suggests a complicated picture that co-opts both federalism as well as militaristic strategies. What needs further analysis is how these options are weighted and how this relates with conflict evaluation and representation.

Adding to the complexity is the issue of studying conflicts from an ethnic-nationalist understanding versus conflicts over different issues, such as land rights and development. Literature on internal conflict in India has largely been written from the standpoint of conflict as ethnic conflict or ethno-nationalist conflict. Kashmir, Punjab and the conflicts in the north-east are subsumed under these categories. These conflicts also share the commonality of being border regions where the security imperative takes on added importance militarily. However, from the point of view of conflict resolution, it becomes pertinent to consider whether the approach to "ethnic" conflicts is different from other conflicts such as the Maoist or Naxalite conflict. Also this raises questions

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[12] See for example, the following news articles on some of these interventions: http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/10/16/india-supreme-court-judicialreforms-idINKCN0SA12I20151016; http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Set-up-human-rights-court-in-each-district-SC/articleshow/48221185.cms.

on whether conflicts in border areas are more likely to attract force as the predominant counterinsurgency strategy?

Miklian's (Miklian 2011) analysis of the Naxalite conflict and state responses to it is based on its categorization as a revolutionary conflict. He argues that the Indian state finds itself at a loss in responding to the Maoist conflict as contemporary conflict resolution mechanisms such as carving out autonomous regions for the insurgents are rendered inappropriate. Without an explicit demand for territorial autonomy or the creation of a state of its own, the state has limited ways of evolving an appropriate strategy for resolution of the conflict. At best, a strategy of management or containment through force seems to have gained the upper hand. An emphasis on development as security in recent years has emerged as a favoured response, as the Centre pumps money into these 'backward regions' for development projects which may be difficult or even impossible to implement (Miklian 2011, p. 47).

A national response, however, took years to formulate, as the Centre considered the problem to be primarily a law and order problem to be entrusted to the concerned state. With each state unit implementing its own policies to deal with the Maoists within their jurisdiction, the conflict lacked a pan-Indian strategy. Its classification in recent years as a national security threat, and hence under the ambit of the Centre, has meant a renewed attempt at conflict management strategies. In some cases, centre and state policies have conflicted with each other, leading to strains in centre-state relations. Hoenig (2009) considers the Maoist conflict to be primarily an ideological one. Hoenig argues that such conflicts have in recent times become greater security threats in the eyes of the state than ethno-nationalist demands by border communities (Hoenig 2009) p.8).

For conflict analysis and conflict resolution studies, then, the Naxalite conflict appears in a distinct category. This raises an important and hitherto unexplored question—does the categorization of conflicts impact approaches to conflict resolution? How does the state perceive the Naxalite conflict? Does the lack of ethnicity or territorial concentration impact security policy? As a law and order problem, did the approaches to the Naxalite conflict differ from articulations of the problem as a socio-economic problem? What were the reasons behind this change in frames? Is federalism a fundamental principle of conflict resolution/management mechanisms in India?

According to Sahadevan, there is a preference in South Asia for unconventional pre-negotiations strategies to end conflict without seeking a negotiated settlement (Sahadevan 2000). In his study of internal ethnic conflicts and policy responses in South Asia, he argues that governments in this part of the world have demonstrated a tendency to use unconventional strategies unilaterally until they prove to be ineffective or until they reach a level that demands serious negotiations. He includes processes such as 'war for peace meaning military might to end the conflict; winning patrons; winning the hearts and minds of people and divide and rule' under 'unconventional tactics' (Sahadevan 2000, p.38). In South Asia, war for peace, i.e., military victory is preferred especially in the initial phases of conflict. In Punjab for instance, the Indian government justified its war efforts against the extremists as the only possible solution as the extremists' insistence on secession had foreclosed the possibility of a negotiated political settlement. Likewise, in Mizoram and in Nagaland in the north-east, the government's initial reaction was to quell the conflict militarily even though the leader of the Mizo movement had offered to talk with the government.

Amongst the successes in India's security strategies, Mizoram, a state in the north eastern region, is considered as a model. The movement began in 1966 and spiralled into violence demanding separation from the Indian Union. The conflict ended in 1986 with the creation of a separate state of Mizoram within the state of India. Goswami (Goswami 2009) analyses the strategies of the Indian state and argues that a combination of soft and hard approaches such as negotiation, reconciliation and coercion went towards the successful resolution of the conflict. Sahadevan (2000) argues that the Mizo conflict ended in a positive sum game as the government was able to use a war strategy to weaken the insurgents and reach a political settlement, while the Mizo insurgents voluntarily opted for a negotiated settlement without abjuring violence in order to gain political concessions such as full statehood and constitutional safeguards.

Dialogue and negotiation as part of state strategy at managing or resolving conflict have not always resulted in positive outcomes for ending conflict. Limited and conditional talks, or their use alongside force, have hampered efforts at ending violence. In Kashmir, for instance, the thrust of India's strategy in the early 1990s was to use force and engage in a war of attrition so that the insurgents were weakened and the ground prepared for political bargaining (Ganguly & Bajpai 1994; Koithara 1999).

Further, the tendency of dividing the moderates and extremists so as to politically isolate the latter has had mixed effects. In limiting the agenda for talks, and restricting the inclusiveness of dialogue processes, rarely has dialogue resulted in durable peace (Buchanan 2011). The Indian state's insistence on finding a solution "within the constitution" has been a stumbling block for avenues of conflict resolution, suggesting that the identity of the state continues to be reiterated through the lens of traditional sovereignty concepts. Accommodation forms a crucial part of India's strategy so long as the insurgents or extremists acknowledge the sovereignty and authority of the state (Cohen 2001).

An overview of the literature as shown above demonstrates critical gaps in conflict and conflict resolution studies on India undertaken thus far. While each conflict has in itself produced extensive literature, an emphasis on causes of these conflicts overshadows studies on conflict resolution policies. Where studies on state policies have taken place, there is greater attention to federalism as the lens for analysis. There is a lack of focus on how the state legitimizes its policies and the strategic thinking behind domestic security imperatives. What the above discussion on India's conflict resolution approaches also suggests is that the process of securitization and conflict framing underlies state strategy. Moreover, inherent in this framing process is a self-perception of the Indian state as it identifies itself in changing contexts. For instance, in recent years there seems to be a centrality on development as a core part of the identity of the state, which is reflected in the policies of the state in conflict areas (Samaddar 2010). The framing of anti-development movements such as the Naxalite movement as anti-national appears to be part of the process. Indeed, in Kashmir and in the Naxalite areas, the emphasis on youth employment and economic development packages gives credence to the argument.

This gap in the literature has arisen partially due to a tendency to analyse security policy through the lens of pre-coded conflicts. What this implies is that studies on ethnic conflicts have been dealt with as a separate category. A focus on India's domestic security strategy through the lens of conflict framing and policy responses lacks critical engagement. A dearth of comparative studies on different forms of violent conflict challenging the state opens up immense research potential. Of the many possible issues in domestic security strategizing, this study attempts to partially fill the gap by undertaking a comparative study of security policies in India in the

contemporary period. This study, by bringing in three varied conflicts-Kashmir, Punjab and the Naxalite conflict, attempts to undertake a comparative analysis of conflict resolution policies so as to elucidate the process of decision making and legitimacy. What determines the legitimacy of actors in conflict? Are some types of rebels less likely to be negotiated with? Is this consistent across cases? This study investigates whether conflict typologies determine the appropriateness of policies.

Considered thus, we may conceptualise a spectrum of typologies to characterize conflict, which may be based on demands and actors. An analysis of these characterizations and their appropriate responses can contribute to literature on conflict resolution by focusing on strategies of legitimization. Based on existing literature on typologies of conflict we may consider three key frames: *secessionist conflicts, political conflicts, economic or development conflicts*. These frames are not mutually exclusive; indeed there is significant overlap, but the purpose of these frames is to show the combination of frames and responses over time. What also makes the analyses interesting is the change in framing over time. Changes in characterization are reflective of conflict dynamics as well as of changes in the way the Indian state perceives its own sense of threat and security.

Significance of the Study

This thesis adds to the literature on conflict and peace studies by offering a novel way of analysing policy legitimization. By keeping its focus on state discourses, this study answers how conflicts are represented by the political elite and how these have repercussions for policy making. In considering the case of India, this study assumes greater significance as India provides a canvas for comparative study owing to the multiplicity and distinctiveness of internal conflicts. This enables us to understand the differences and similarities of the Indian state's internal security strategy across a wide range of conflicts-Punjab, Kashmir and the Naxal conflict.

Research Questions

To understand India's internal security policy and the process of legitimisation and delegitimization, the following research questions guide this thesis:

- How are internal conflicts represented by the Indian state in its formulation of an adequate response?

- What are the patterns of security and conflict resolution policies displayed across conflicts and across time?
- What are the forms of identities conferred upon various actors in domestic conflicts?
- Do the above change during conflict? Is there a deradicalisation of identities in conflict management and conflict resolution policies?
- How are formerly unthinkable solutions legitimized at later stages of the conflict?

It is in this context that the theme of understanding security and conflict resolution in India fits in. With legitimization as the crucial factor underlying the politics of representation, this study attempts to explore the mechanisms by which legitimacy is sought, contested and undermined in conflicts.

In this thesis, though, the concern is not so much as to *why* these conflicts are described one way or the other, but *how* they are made sense of. The relationship between discourse and policy is constitutive and relational rather than causal, the implication of which is that dominant representations inform policy making and vice versa. By exploring the discourses of the state and the rebel groups at key moments of the conflict, we can understand competing and converging claims to nationalism, security, conflict resolution and violence. What is included in the dominant discourses and what is excluded are important parts of this discovery.

In Chapter 2, I lay out the methodological framework of this thesis and the appropriateness of the chosen methodology in answering the research questions laid out above. In Chapter 3, a detailed discourse analysis of the Punjab conflict shows how the Indian state dealt with one of the earliest insurgencies affecting independent India. Chapter 4 looks at the political discourses in New Delhi on Kashmir and follows the trajectory until 2010. The Naxalite conflict is analysed in Chapter 5 with a focus on the contemporary period from 2000 to 2010. This thesis concludes with comparative analyses of the three conflicts and the broader implications for India's internal security policy and its legitimization. It also suggests implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction

How conflicts are represented, and how policies are legitimised are crucial for conflict resolution. As was discussed in the introductory chapter, there is an inherent process of constructing a heightened sense of insecurity in times of conflict so as to garner support for suppression and military tactics. In the case of internal conflicts, such a need may be greater or lesser, depending on how the state would like its domestic and international audience to react. The possibilities are, of course, bound by context, making a temporal study apt to discern changing processes.

If legitimacy and the processes accompanying policy making in conflict situations are determined largely by the state, one of the possible ways to analyse policy making is through a study of the state's discourses. These discourses, reflected in official texts, speeches, debates and actions, contain within them perceptions of the causes of the conflicts, the identities of actors involved and the best way to address these conflicts.

This chapter contains the methodological framework guiding this thesis. Drawing upon previous discussions of securitization, contextual framing and discourse analysis, this chapter outlines hegemony and legitimization as two central concepts emergent in policy making particularly in crises. From a post-structuralist ontology, an analysis through the lens of discourse theoretical analysis offers the best possible way of identifying these processes.

Beginning with the larger puzzle of democratic governments, dissent and violence, this chapter then moves on to the question of legitimacy as the key guiding factor in policy making. The process of legitimization, it is then argued, is a discursive contest where discourses compete for hegemony. The study of discourses is enabled through Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, which is further blended with practical applications of the methodology as it appears in other studies on conflict and policy. These studies are elucidated and the appropriate methodology for this thesis is then illustrated with regard to the study of India's internal security strategy in Punjab, Kashmir and the Naxalite conflict.

Violence, Sovereignty and the State

The relationship between violence and the state can be analysed through different lenses and theories. The puzzle in this thesis, of how and when states use violence against its own citizens has concerned many political theorists. In situations of internal conflict, dissent has the potential to turn into violence and if left unresolved, may lead to protracted violent conflicts. Closely linked to this concept of violence and the state is the idea of sovereignty. In much of the discourses in IR, sovereignty is "taken to be a political or legal fact within an already given and demarcated territory simultaneously signifying sovereignty over the same territory and everything that happens to be inside this portion of space" (Bartelson 1995).

The realist or traditional conception of the modern state in international political theory can be traced to the events surrounding the Treaty of Westphalia in Western Europe in 1648. It is widely believed in international relations that this treaty separated the powers of the state from the Church and thereby established the state as the legitimate authority within a particular territorially defined political unit. With this authority came the notion of indivisible sovereignty that essentially meant states had complete control internally and the internal sphere of sovereignty was distinct from the external (Walker 1993). Each sovereign state had monopoly and legitimacy over the use of violence within its boundaries, manifest in the institution of the police. However, recent research suggests that modern sovereignty was not the result of the Peace of Westphalia and it is nineteenth and twentieth century historiography, with its anachronistic account of the modern nation-state, which created the myth of Westphalia (Osiander 2001). Osiander's research indicates that there is no mention of sovereignty or division or balance of power in the peace treaties (Osiander 2001, p. 266). The estates within the empire had always had the right to conduct relations with foreign actors and were free to even leave it if they had so desired (Osiander 2001, p. 279) without the fear of threat. The widely believed account in International Relations of the birth of the sovereign state after the Peace of Westphalia has been therefore a misrepresentation and distortion of the history of seventeenth century Western Europe. In his historical account of the thirty years war, Osiander argues that the war itself was not the result of

the Habsburg Empire to increase its power, but because other actors wanted to reduce it (Osiander 2001, p. 260).

If it is indeed questionable that the modern nation-state began its tryst with sovereignty after 1648, it also problematizes the sole authority over the means of violence that the state exercises. The monopoly over the means of violence is an important resource through which states sustain their power (Giddens 1985) . It is this limitation of the use of violence to states, and the territorially defined entity of the state that are two of the most crucial characteristics associated with modern states.

It is this definition that is used almost uncontested in traditional political and international studies. There are additional factors that help states achieve internal pacification—these are legal sanctions, the police and transport and communications (Giddens 1985, p. 276) and restriction on the use of the military. In spite of these restrictions, the use of force by states in the face of dissent has not been uncommon. Internal conflicts-manifest across the world in the form of ethnic and political violence, have seen the use of police, paramilitary and even military force.

Critical theory has opened up the space for a critique of the various uncontested concepts used in political theory including state violence in ways that were traditionally not available before. Since then there has been a reconceptualization of the concepts of security, sovereignty and violence.[13] The emergence of international human rights and implementation through human rights watchdogs in international and local civil society has greatly aided the effort to minimize state sanctioned violence. At the very least, this has achieved rigorous academic study of political violence. Questioning the essentialization of sovereignty, Bartelson (1995) traces the genealogy of the term to argue that "sovereignty and knowledge implicate each other logically and produce each other historically" (Bartelson 1995, p.3). One way of considering this argument is to look at historiography as implicated in the production of the past as Osiander's study indicates. The givenness of sovereignty assumes an unchanging constancy in its scope (Bartelson 1995, p.29), however, the concept is contingent and unstable (Bartelson 1995, p.2). In other words, there is inconsistency in arguing for the logical connection between state sovereignty and violence. As Hannah Arendt puts it, "power is indeed the

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[13] See for instance (Walker 1990)

essence of all government but violence is not" (Arendt 1970) She implies that violence is instrumental, requiring constant justification and guidance; it is a means to an end.

In analysing violence, used both by the state as a policy response, as well as rebel groups against the state, this needs to be borne in mind and hence any study focussing on conflict policies and responses necessarily requires how justification is carried out.

Writing about the relationship between state, identity and violence, Behera (Behera 2000) argues that "the modern state's strong and determinate sense of self inevitably leads to intolerance of those outside its boundaries" and that a "dominant identity seeking subjugation, assimilation or submergence of other identities, and self-assertion of a non-dominant identity seeking a share in state power controlled by the former, is inherently imbued with the risk of violence" (Behera 2000, pp. 24-25).

For the purpose of conflict studies, particularly intra-state conflicts, the notion of identity, and the use of violence are fluid concepts, the meanings of which and the justification for which require contextual adjustments. In this thesis, state use of violence is analysed in terms of policy discourse; the policy practices of the political elite are legitimised through a construction of security in ways that marginalise alternative policy options. Below, the concept of legitimacy is explored in detail.

The concept of legitimacy and legitimization

The concept of legitimacy has been explored in political studies primarily in the functioning of the state (see for, example (Lipset 1959; Connolly 1984; Habermas 1988). The acceptance of something as valid, logical or natural lies at the core of the legitimacy concept. Legitimization is the process of constructing something as legitimate. The latter is grounded in a more constructivist theoretical basis and in the case of political studies is used to understand the construction of political legitimacy such as for example the legitimacy of policies. Political legitimacy may also be defined as "the quality of oughtness" that is perceived by the public to inhere in a political regime. That government is legitimate which is viewed as morally proper for a society" (Merelman 1966). Two points are noteworthy-one that it applies to the state and its political system, and two, its reception by an audience or public is important to complete the concept. In other words, there must be a notion of justice associated for it to be considered legitimate. In conflict studies, this concept has been used in the case

of failed/collapsed states and foreign intervention in the post-conflict stage that considers the establishment and restoration of political legitimacy to be a challenge.

My concern in this thesis is with the former articulation of political legitimacy as a process of legitimization, but situated in the context of internal conflicts in relatively stable democracies. In particular, it is the peculiar legitimacy of force in democracies that deserves greater scholarly attention.

Habermas was amongst the first to take a critical theory approach towards legitimacy. He argued that advanced capitalist societies eventually face legitimacy difficulties owing to the class structure in these societies and that "the rising level of demand is proportional to the growing need for legitimation" (Habermas 1988) p.73). He says that a "legitimation crisis can be predicted only if expectations that cannot be fulfilled either with the available quantity of value or generally with rewards conforming to the system are systematically produced. A legitimation crisis then must be based on a motivation crisis—that is, a discrepancy between the need for motives declared by the state, the educational system and the occupational system on the one hand and the motivation supplied by the socio-cultural system on the other" (Habermas 1988, pp. 74-75). What this implies is that there is a sense of dissatisfaction when the state and its institutions are unable to fulfil the expectations and motivations of the citizens or subjects. However, this leaves open the question of what such a discrepancy can imply.

Tying in the concept of democracy and moral justification, Buchanan provides a lucid definition of political legitimacy. Political legitimacy as defined by Buchanan (2002), could be said to exist when an entity is "morally justified in wielding political power where to wield political power is to attempt to exercise a monopoly, within a jurisdiction, in the making, application, and enforcement of laws" (Buchanan 2002), pp. 689-690). This moral justification stems from a democratically authorized political power, which means that people or subjects have authorized or allowed certain (elected) persons to wield political power by their consent and without discrimination (Buchanan 2002, p.698). Thus, political authority, which includes the right to be obeyed, entails political legitimacy but not vice versa (Buchanan 2002, p.695). There is a distinction between political authority and authoritativeness, easily understood by three vital differences-whereas the former is restricted to the political domain, the latter is not; authoritativeness does not imply that one is morally justified in imposing rules

on anyone; and, lastly, there is no obligation on the part of the subjects to obey an authoritative entity whereas a political authority has an obligation to be obeyed.

Merelman (Merelman 1966) examines legitimacy through the framework of psychological learning theory in which political legitimacy is understood as a largely top down process as it rests on the capacity or ability of political leaders/government to communicate new policies effectively to the population. The linking of these policies with payoffs, that is, governments attach sanctions or reinforcements with policies and the whole process is rationalised into an overall logic of legitimacy (Merelman 1966, p.549). While the association of symbols with legitimacy is useful, such explanations of policy making can be said to be more strategic/rational and driven entirely by the political elite; whereas this thesis takes the opinion of decisions as rooted in a context such that there is a more constitutive rather than causal relationship between power, policy decisions and legitimacy. Power and legitimacy are intertwined such that it is not a case of causality, but rather that "power and legitimacy are one and the same", say Laclau and Zac, and "to call a power illegitimate would presuppose another social order whose content would be the basis to judge the existing power. But if outside power were the chaos of the state of nature, then that basis would not exist. The only way in which power could become illegitimate would be if it were incapable of guaranteeing the life and security of the subjects." (Laclau 1994) p.20)

Essentially, the argument made by scholars of political legitimacy is that democracies in particular need legitimacy and effectiveness of their political systems in order to remain stable (Lipset, p.88 in (Connolly 1984). This notion of legitimacy he says is evaluative: "Groups regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to the way in which its values fit with theirs" (p.88). It was Lipset in fact who argued that economic development and political legitimacy were the two crucial requisites for a democracy (Lipset 1959). He considers the question of legitimacy to be the "degree to which institutions are valued for themselves, and considered right and proper" (Lipset 1959, p.71). Considered such, Lipset argues that it is a matter of belief or opinion that when existing institutions are believed to be appropriate or morally superior that renders institutions as legitimate (Connolly 1984) p.108). Maintaining that the modern state is currently embroiled in a crisis of legitimacy, he argues that this has been a function of modernity itself; as people challenge "the processes and powers which control their lives and who fear that their institutions and leaders have no answers"

(Connolly 1984, p.127). This detailed definition of legitimacy provides some insight into domestic conflicts targeted at the state, where groups seek to question the legitimacy of policies. If we look at Connolly's understanding of the concept, this becomes clearer.

Connolly (Connolly 1984) relocates the question of legitimacy in terms of its instability. Citing four possible reasons for destabilizing legitimacy, he argues that firstly, future generations may become disillusioned with the current order if they "misconstrue the range of possibilities inherent in the order". Second, if there emerges a disconnect between the commitment to constitutional principle of the political order and the role imperatives governing everyday life, then it may impair the state's ability to play its legitimate role. Third, the ends and purposes fostered by an order can themselves become objects of disaffection. Such a contradictory tendency embodies a historical dimension whereby abstract goals inspire a populace at one moment but decline in their ability to secure reflective allegiance once their actual content becomes clear through cumulative experience. And fourth, the identities of participants are bound up with the institutions in which they are implicated. The modern individual, possessing the capacity for self-consciousness, is never exhausted by any particular set of roles. But one's sense of dignity and self-identity is intimately linked to one's ability to endorse the way of life one actually lives (Connolly 1984, pp. 224-225). This disillusionment adversely affects the ability of the institutions to promote these ends by non-coercive means (Connolly 1984, p.227).

And herein lies the essential problem of force in democracies—in order to maintain power and legitimacy, states may eventually resort to force if the citizens feel disillusioned. However, studies on legitimacy, owing to the predominance of political legitimacy, have failed to examine the process of legitimization within the context of domestic conflicts. While there is always an inherent need for legitimization of policies, in the case of internal conflict situations this need is magnified as the state must face the test of legitimacy against its own people. How states delegitimize actors (rebels), their demands and whether this changes during the course of conflict and during negotiations requires greater scholarly attention. This thesis explores the process of legitimization occurring in conflicts by identifying the demands, identities and means of rebels from the perspective of the state and determines which of these at what points in time are legitimized or delegitimized. Since the topic resonates across

domestic and international conflicts, beyond the focus of India that this thesis is limited to, it is of wider interest to scholars interested in security, conflict and peace studies.

A look at some of the analyses of legitimacy and conflict policies shows how legitimizing practices inscribe identities and insecurities as discussed in the previous chapter. In analysing the discourses of American presidents justifying war, Oddo (Oddo 2011) studies the strategies of legitimation and concludes that these have a recurrent theme of 'Us' versus 'Them' resonating in the texts. "War is certainly one social practice that begs the question – why? Indeed – as a dangerous, deadly activity – war must be assigned *legitimacy* before it is undertaken. And this takes serious rhetorical work – work that is most often carried out by political leaders" (Oddo, 2011, p.289). The primacy of politics in the project of legitimization lies at the foundation of these studies.

In her study on the apparent indivisibility of territorial conflicts such as in Northern Ireland and Jerusalem, (Goddard 2009) argues that it is legitimation strategies that render territories and identities as indivisible. Her analysis is based on the analysis of legitimization strategies and their effects on Anglo-Irish politics between 1880 and 1921 when the civil war eventually broke out. She argues that the nineteenth century was a period of compromise as the Constitutional Nationalists engaged various parties including Republicans, Liberals and British Conservatives by strategically altering their legitimation of Home Rule according to each so that it appeared that the conflict was divisible and Home Rule was a viable solution (Goddard 2009, p 80). It was only in the twentieth century that this began to change. In other words, no concept or idea enjoys a privileged position of unchanging legitimacy, an idea particularly important for conflict resolution. Many once unthinkable solutions have been found to later gain acceptance, or legitimacy, in the course of conflict resolution.

Legitimization thus is a key concept in the study of policy making and for the purpose of this thesis, is used as an important conceptual framework in analysing policy discourses. How this process takes place is elucidated further in the section below.

Poststructuralist Discourse Theory

There are several approaches to studying policy discourses; notably content analysis, critical discourse analysis and poststructuralist discourse theory are used most

commonly in political research. The difference between these three approaches is in their definition of discourse and in the importance they assign to context. For the purpose of this thesis, the problem of official responses to internal conflicts in India is proposed to be examined through a study of discourses using post structuralist discourse theory. Poststructuralism stems from the belief that there can be no positivist or objective categories with which to analyse the social world; interpretation is necessary and inevitable in understanding it. Poststructuralist theorists argue that knowledge and power are intimately related, and it is this nexus between the two that produces dominant narratives to the exclusion of multiple others. The plurality of possible perspectives and the implication that no event or object lies outside of discourse or narrative are the bulwarks of poststructuralism. Moreover, many issues in politics and international relations are not just ontological and epistemological ones, but are issues of power politics and authority (Devetak 2013)

The development of post structuralist discourse theory can be attributed in large part to Laclau and Mouffe, who developed their theory by drawing upon the structuralist linguistics of Saussure (1974), deconstruction of Derrida (1978) and the idea of hegemony of Gramsci (1971). Their theory has also been informed by Foucault's theory of discourse (1972), and psychoanalytic theory of Lacan (1977). These theories are deconstructed in Laclau and Mouffe's analysis in order to reveal their inner contradictions and to propose a poststructuralist theory of discourse. A methodology of discourse analysis informed by poststructuralism has at its centre critical investigation into the way facts are produced, understood and used in discourses (political, media, academic etc). This does not mean that poststructuralism denies the existence of facts; however these are made sense of only in discourses. As Laclau and Mouffe put it,

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed is terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God', depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute

themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001) p.108

With its emphasis on the structures of discourse, discourse theory blurs the distinction between language or text and context; there is no separation of the discursive and non-discursive. It considers all social phenomena to be discourse. In other words, material and ideational factors as well as text constitute 'discourse' (Hansen 2006). Another way of defining discourse is to 'refer to systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects' ((Stavrakakis et al. 2000) p.3) This implies that any research on social phenomena, such as conflict and conflict resolution practices, must be carried out by treating these practices as discourses-or constructions that have become embedded and have foreclosed meaning, albeit temporarily. The most distinguishing feature of discourse theory is in its concept of the discursive, and in the fluidity of meaning. It is this definition of discourse that is used in this thesis. Considered such, its applicability in this thesis implies that the conflicts facing the state are not objective realities 'out there' but are represented and imbued with meaning by the dominant political elite based on certain perceptions of the causes of the conflict and/or on the actors or rebels driving the conflict.

Discourse theoretical research contains no single methodology for guidance. Instead of applying a given theory to a set of empirical objects, discourse theorists 'articulate their concepts in each particular enactment of concrete research' (Howarth and Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 5). They use a range and a combination of approaches including but not limited to Derrida's deconstruction, Foucault's archaeological and genealogical approach of discourse analysis and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory to critically investigate social reality. Discourse theory takes a relationalist, contextual and historicist view of identity formation to argue that identity is shaped within and through its relation to other meanings (Torfing 2005, p.14). Theoretically and ontologically, poststructuralism assumes that representations and policy are mutually constitutive and discursively linked (Hansen 2006, p.28). This implies that policies often articulate identities to achieve legitimacy or enable action, but identities are also produced and reproduced through policy discourses and are hence both the foundation and product of discourse (Hansen 2006, p.21). Identities, moreover, are not merely self-other binaries,

but involve degrees of otherness, as Hansen (2006) argues. Ontologically, identity or representations and policy are inseparable, though analysis may and often does distinguish between the two. This separation facilitates analysis of how policy discourses create (partial) stability (Hansen 2006, p.29).

Meanings inscribed through discourse are unstable; they exhibit temporary stability but meanings can change in competing discourses or with temporal and contextual changes. This implies that if there is an inconsistency in the constructed relationship between policy and identity there will be a process of adjustment whereby either the policy or the identity discourse is altered so as to achieve stability once again. All political activity is essentially concerned with the construction of links between identity and policy to make the two appear consistent with each other (Hansen 2006, p. 28). For example, American foreign policy that calls for military action against Iraq cannot be consistent if the identity of Iraq is constructed in terms of stability or sovereignty; there must instead be a construction of Iraq as a possible threat to world peace or as an evil dictatorship oppressing innocent civilians that requires outside help.

Competing discourses, which in a study of governmental policies, may include oppositional discourses, media discourses and critical discourses of civil society, are the ever present factors that constantly challenge dominant official discourses. It is also not as if a certain construction of identity will always lead to the same policy outcome nor vice versa (Hansen 2006 pp.30-31). However at a given moment in time, taking into account contextual constraints, this is made possible, or appears 'logical' due to a continuation of intertextual and interdiscursive links; i.e. due to a continuation or refinement of the same concepts used in similar ways in older texts. Therefore, one set of policy responses appear "common sense" while others are marginalised.

What this thesis aims to do is to apply discourse theory in situations of internal conflict and compare the way the Indian government handles different domestic issues. There is at present a gap in the literature on internal conflicts that use discourse analysis to study policy making. This study partially fills this gap by analysing domestic policy making with respect to internal conflicts and the policies for management/resolution in a comparative framework. By drawing in three different conflicts across different and overlapping time periods, the purpose is to locate discursive process within and

between cases. It therefore contributes to policy analysis and conflict and peace literature, as well as to the application of discourse theory.

Being fundamentally interpretive in nature, critics point to the lack of validity and reliability in such research. However, being interpretive does not imply an 'anything goes' approach nor does it imply lack of methodological rigour (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000, p.7; Hansen 2006). Analyses of discourses require precision in methodology and reading so as to establish the linkages between signs and how these signs link policy and identity constructions. If analysis fails to include important signs or misinterprets the stability of discourses or fails to identify the connections between policy and identity then it points to weak analysis (Hansen 2006, p.45). Having said that, discourse theoretical research does not claim to provide the 'correct' analysis of events since it is founded on the philosophy that there is no final or absolute truth waiting to be discovered, there is no singular reading that can exhaust all others. The same discourses can be subject to multiple research questions and multiple and complimentary readings (Hansen 2006, p. 45).

Application of Discourse Theory in existing literature

The use of discourse theory in the analysis of politics is a relatively recent approach to the study of politics but there are a few good examples of the study of discourses of conflict and conflict resolution in the international context (see for example (Hansen 2006) (Hayward & O'Donnell 2011) (Campbell 1992). These studies have challenged dominant narratives and have thrown light on new ways of understanding policy changes and policy considerations by governments. A number of studies in recent years on policy analysis have emerged and demonstrated the importance of discourse analysis.[14]

Campbell (1992) can be said to be amongst the pioneers in developing a post structuralist methodology suited to the study of foreign policy and security. His concern with representations as a form of delineating security from danger and how these representations lie at the heart of foreign policy decisions laid the groundwork for

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[14] (See for example, (Howarth, Torfing 2003), (Stavrakakis, Howarth et al. 2000).

future studies of policy making. In *Writing Security*, he provides a historical interpretative analysis of American foreign policy using an interpretative methodology concerned with the 'manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another' (Campbell 1992) p.4. Foreign policy, he argues, is a practice of establishing identities of states through the production of boundaries; practices that are exclusionary in nature and which create the notion of a secure identity on the "inside" and linked with a discourse of danger and threat on the "outside" (Campbell 1992, p. 68). The inside/outside demarcation of space is made possible by and simultaneously produces a moral superior/inferior dichotomy (Campbell 1992, p. 73).

In *Discourse Theory in European Politics* (Howarth and Torfing eds., 2003) the contributors examine various aspects of modern European politics, such as new nationalism, European security and environmental challenges through the framework of discourse theory. *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis* (Howarth, Norval and Stavrakakis eds., 2000) similarly uses discourse theory to understand social and political changes across contexts through the study of identity and hegemony. Nur Betul Celik's chapter on the Kemalist ideology in this volume for instance analyses the ideas articulated by Kemalist leaders in Turkey from the 1960s and 1990s. Using genealogy to trace the transformation of key political ideas, Celik's discourse theoretical methodology studies the speeches and documents of government and political leaders during the period-both Kemalist and others, to understand the interlinkages between modernism, secularism, democracy, Islam and Turkish politics and the changing meanings these ideas exhibit to unsettle hegemonic ideologies.

In conflict literature, discourse analysis has been deployed to study continuity and change in these situations, primarily from an analysis of official and media discourses. Transformation of policy practices in conflict settings reflects discursive changes that capture the inherent instability and transience of meanings. Israel's foreign policy change during the Oslo peace process in the early 1990s can be understood by this amalgamation of identity, interests and policy in the discourses of key leaders. Barnett's (Barnett 1999) study on the Oslo peace process locates the foreign policy change in the way it was linked with Israeli identity and interests by Yitzhak Rabin. The puzzle of why and how Israel was able to represent the issue of withdrawal from territories as legitimate and desirable is the key question of his study. This radical shift

in policy is made legitimate in the process of weaving identity, framing and narratives. Context is crucial to this framing, for, as Barnett elaborates, political actors 'strategize in an institutional setting' (Barnett 1999) p.6). So, for Israel, religion, nationalism, liberalism and the Holocaust are dominant themes that recur in identity and narrative construction and reproduction. At the same time, the appropriation of these concepts and the meanings assigned to them, are located in the key institutions in Israel-electoral, coalition and party politics. The articulations of the two key contenders in the prime ministerial elections in 1992 show the two opposing ways in which these ideational and institutional practices were represented and the eventual success of Rabin in altering the discourse on Israeli identity and interests. This would lay the foundation for the foreign policy change brought about during the Oslo process. Whereas his opponent Shamir emphasised the territories as being crucial to the identity of Israel, Rabin framed the issue to represent the territories as a drain on Israel's resources and peace prospects. Withdrawal, therefore, became linked with the identity of Israel as a liberal state that placed at its centre the security and prosperity of its citizens (Barnett 1999, pp.19-21). Shamir's predominantly ideological orientation was marginalized and the electoral success of Rabin paved the way for a sustained discourse on withdrawal as being in the interests of Israel. In opening direct negotiations with the PLO, broader contextual factors such as the Intifada and the end of the Cold War and Gulf War were pivotal as Rabin had previously been opposed to such a prospect.

Barnett's study is useful to understand how dominant discourses eventually lose meaning and develop into new discourses that enable previously impossible strategies and conceptualisations. Dominant articulations can and do give way to alternative discourses that are then able to assert hegemony and this process simultaneously changes policy directions.

The study of discourses in conflict and conflict resolution has been succinctly captured by Katy Hayward and Catherine O'Donnell (2011), whose edited volume *Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution: Debating Peace in Northern Ireland* analyses the discourses of various political actors in the Northern Ireland conflict, from historical origins to the 1998 peace agreement. While most of the contributors in this book focus on language, there is an unambiguous agreement on the importance of context in analysing discourses. At the heart of these studies is the acknowledgment of

legitimization as the key objective of discourses. They also show how discursive change may lead to socio-political change (Hayward & O'Donnell 2011).

The strength of discourse theoretical analysis lies in its ability to factor in context as part of the discursive process. The "internal stability of a policy-identity construction", argues Hansen (2006, p.29), "cannot be determined in isolation to the broader social and political context within which it is situated." For McDonald (McDonald 2008), security is constructed over time; an incremental process that encapsulates not just representation through speech, but also through the broader context that makes it possible for some actors to speak for security and marginalizes or delegitimizes alternative articulations of security. In this conceptualization of security, the historical and social contexts, which shape ideas and practices, need to be analysed simultaneously to understand intersubjectively constituted social factors such as identity. Even as the political elite do constitute dominant policy makers, obfuscating the context in which they construct security ignores the issue of why certain representations resonate with relevant constituencies (McDonald 2008). McDonald's insight is particularly useful as it insists on a process-based understanding of discourse with a constant reminder of the importance of context.

Context becomes even more significant in a temporal analysis that seeks to identify change in identity and policy constructions. Since discourse includes social practice, events and written and spoken text, the meanings of these discourses should be examined in a contextual framework. Representations can be explained as part of the wider discursive project that attempts to define reality in a certain way. If Campbell used historical and foreign policy texts to identify and analyze these representations on American identity vis-à-vis others, a study of political decision making may analyse similar discursive techniques in any sub-discipline and focus of study.

The research goal in this thesis is how meanings are established in the context of domestic conflicts and what patterns of change they display over time. Discourse theory offers a methodology that can be adapted for this purpose. In order to practically implement this methodology, there is a need to identify the dominant discourses in conflict situations and locate the nodal points around which these flourish. The next section lays out the research methodology used by Lene Hansen in her seminal work on the Bosnian conflict. This methodology has been adapted for use in this thesis.

Hansen's use of discourse theory in identity constructions and policy responses

An important contribution to the application of discourse theory has been made by Lene Hansen in her study of the Bosnian conflict. Hansen (2006) reads the foreign policy considerations of Western powers in the Bosnian war against a discourse theoretical framework to show how their representations of the conflict focused on identity issues and had implications for policy action. Her understanding of identities as discursive and relational leads to two simultaneous processes occurring through discourse-the process of linking and the process of differentiating. The former entails a network of attributes used positively in relation to a particular construct, while the latter is more a negative connotation in relation to a superior, more positive one. This creates a difference between 'Self' and 'Other' exemplified by gender as a social construct. To think of 'woman' as caring, nurturing and emotional is to simultaneously position it vis-à-vis 'man' as rational and practical. However, there is not a singular Self-Other dichotomy, but a series of juxtapositions that is situated in a spatial (geographically different), temporal (vis-à-vis its own past) and ethical (superior/inferior) context (Hansen 2006, p.37). The Self can therefore take on any number of Others to define itself relationally.

In her research design, the western debate on the Bosnian war is studied between 1992 and 1995 by dividing the time period into 7 phases. Though there is a clear self cast in terms of the 'west', this itself contained a number of 'selves' and Hansen chooses to focus on American and British official discourses. Official and oppositional discourses within American and British policymakers, as well as media and academic discourses (including key texts from journalism, travel writing and memoir) form the body from which discourses are selected for her study. The multiplicity of sources allows the identification of intertextuality and highlights the importance of media for foreign policy debate.

Texts are selected based on certain criteria; for political official discourses, these would be primary texts of political actors with a clear articulation of identities and policies, widely read and attended to, and have the authority to define a political position (p.85). When conducting analyses over a period of time, the texts are chosen after compiling a timeline of main events/periods of heightened political and media activity (p.87).

Hansen relies on what she calls 'basic discourses' to identify identity constructions of Self and Other. The basic discourses are identified after a reading of a large number of texts so as to identify two or three basic discourses that contain explicit articulations of identity representations. These basic discourses are important analytically since they provide a lens through which varied representations and policies are systematically connected and point to the relationships between discourses in terms of contestation and convergence (Hansen 2006, p. 52). Identifying these and reading subsequent texts in light of these discourses can point to how discourses evolve over time and how they develop in response to facts and contradictions. Discourses are deconstructed to locate identity and degrees of differentiation, as well as to identify the patterns of linking and differentiation.

In analysing political, media and popular culture representations of the conflict, she locates two basic discourses that were crucial to understanding how the foreign policy decisions were made—the Balkan discourse and the Genocide discourse. The earlier 'Balkan discourse', for instance, centred on representations of the Balkans as violent, backward, uncivilized; a case of the Other formed through the dialectical relationship with the Western Self. In light of this, therefore, there was little that the West could do, since it was a dangerous area, and the conflict had ancient roots that rendered futile any intervention by the West to civilize and bring stability to the region. The situation was therefore considered to be beyond repair and Western inaction legitimized. Much of these ideas shaping the Balkan discourse show continuity with earlier depictions, particularly with the period coinciding with the Balkan wars and breakup of the Ottoman Empire. However, as the conflict and violence escalated, the existing discourse interacted with growing concerns over ethnic cleansing. The transformation of the Western debate over time through the lens of a 'genocide discourse' shows an increasing focus on the ethicality of intervention as the policy debate took on considerations of the West's 'strategic interests'. The change in policy, signified in terms of responsibility, merged with this strategic interests consideration as Western intervention would prevent the spread of conflict to neighbouring states. This shift was also evident in the reconstruction of identity from one of the homogenous, barbaric Balkans, to one where Bosnia and Serbia were separated discursively so as to represent the former with common values of multiculturalism and tolerance shared with the West, and the latter as the perpetrator of genocide.

The contribution of Hansen's study is in locating changes in discourse on the Bosnian conflict and the interlinked changes in the policy responses that emanated in the West. These discourses, displaying identity constructions of Self and Other and containing ways of responding to the crisis, essentially can provide clues as to how policy decisions were formulated, continued and changed and how these different stages were justified.

Towards a novel approach of discourse methodology

The methodology in this thesis is adapted from the works of, one, Lene Hansen (2006), two, Barnett (1999), and three, McDonald (2008) discussed above. In particular, this thesis makes use of the application of discourse analysis as appears in the works of Hansen and McDonald who study identity and policy in contextually bound frameworks to establish a comprehensive analysis of meaning making. With conflict and security as the underlying themes of this thesis, the above discussion on hegemony and discourse highlights the broader framework for analysis. Hegemony, defined by Laclau and Mouffe as the (temporary) stabilization of systems of meaning around certain nodal points, is a political project implicitly underlying all political practices. Hegemony is understood as the production and reproduction of power relations through dominant discourses through the (temporary) settlement of meaning that privileges certain ideas and concepts above others. Discourses as analysed in this thesis refer to the forms of text, talk and practice in situations of conflict and conflict management. While text and talk are reflected in the speeches, debates and policy papers of officials and in speeches and texts of rebel groups, practice is a non-textual form of discourse, which, combined with text, together make up the meanings ascribed to identity and security. In conflict situations, for example, security, nationalism and sovereignty can be considered to be some of the nodal points that establish state supremacy in ensuring security and towards whom all nationalist feelings may be drawn. Such a system of meaning, common to the idea of nation states, marginalises alternative ideas of nationalism and challenges to territorial sovereignty.

Just as Hansen locates discursive changes with policy changes, this thesis identifies the changes in the way the Sikh, Kashmiri and Naxalite conflicts have been portrayed in official discourses and how government policies addressed these conflicts at different stages. What commonalities and differences are played up by the self of the Indian state

vis-à-vis the Sikh, Kashmiri or Naxalite other. What are the hegemonic practices in conflict discourses and do competing articulations succeed in destabilizing prevalent discourses? How do conflicts go from being securitized and militarized to being negotiable? In other words, how are policy practices transformed? Given the number of years it took for the Indian government to 'succeed' in ending the Punjab conflict, and the durability of the Kashmiri and Naxalite conflicts, a study of the *process* of transformation becomes pertinent.

The studies on discourse and policy by Hansen and Barnett show two of many possible ways of studying discursive changes in policy. What is common to both is the location of discourses within their contexts and the mutually constitutive relationship between the two. In the former, political, cultural and social discourses come together in an analysis of American foreign policy changes towards the Balkan crisis while in the latter, political manifestos and speeches of the two Israeli political leaders are analysed so as to identify the different frames through which identity and policy are interlinked. McDonald binds the discussion by arguing that essentially all security discourses are contextual and evolve as processes. This implies a study of security policy over time, and analysed in relation with the changes and continuities taking place in them. Since discourse is an all-encompassing concept, the analyses of this thesis take into consideration discourse in the form of text and talk as well as the policy practices in the three conflicts under study. Crucial to this analysis is for the researcher to include contextual change as a simultaneous variable within discourse. In other words, discourses evolve in a context; a relationship formed not causally but constitutively by which is meant that while analysing discourses in conflict (through official policies, text and speeches and legal, economic, political and military policy practices), there must be a simultaneous analyses of local, national and international contexts.

With a focus on power and the production and reproduction of hegemonic power relations, discourse theory provides a rich theoretical and methodological toolkit with which to analyse state discourses and counter discourses on conflict and peace in domestic conflicts in contemporary India. A comparative perspective allows for observing similarities and differences and feeds into the broader assertion of this thesis that policy analyses is greatly enriched when studied over time and across contexts so as to locate the dominant and recurring practices of the state.

This study is further enhanced through analytic narratives, a form of storytelling by piecing together various events in order to trace the process or evolution of concepts, policies and the trajectories of such phenomena. Analytical narratives can open up the so-called black box of social and political phenomena as it pays "close attention to stories, accounts and context. It is analytic in that it extracts explicit and formal lines of reasoning, which facilitate both exposition and explanation" (Bates 1998). This methodology is problem-driven, and focuses on cases rather than on theories. In this thesis, analytic narratives will be employed within selected key events of each of the three conflicts.

Domestic conflict and security policy in India: A discourse theoretical and analytical approach

Though much of the literature on discourse and security has so far concentrated on international politics and the realm of international security and foreign relations, the concept of security remains the same in an internal framework as well. In fact, the Self-Other dichotomy becomes an even more confounding issue as the Other necessarily exhibits characteristics of the Self, owing to a commonality of an overarching national identity or citizenship.

Faced with a number of internal challenges, India makes for an apt case study for comparative analyses. The importance of such a study lays in its consideration of a single Self and its relations vis-à-vis several Others with a broad objective of identifying the construction of a domestic security policy. Since this study has both in-depth case analyses (single Indian state) and comparative analyses (more than one domestic conflict) it makes an important contribution to the study of conflict and security. It also adds to the current methodological literature. By bringing in the concept of hegemony to discourse theoretical research, and by supplementing this with analytic narrative, it contributes to the field of discourse theory methodology and its application.

As laid out in Chapter one, three domestic conflicts have been selected for study. India's advantage in hosting a plurality of internal conflicts and the strength of comparative analysis from three cases-Punjab, Kashmir and the Naxalite conflict are the main study of analysis. The purpose of three conflicts is to widen the type of conflicts that the Indian state has faced. While Punjab is considered resolved, the

Kashmiri conflict has an added international dimension with Pakistan, and the Naxalite conflict, sometimes branded a revolution, receives attention due to the severity and intensity in the last decade. A large volume of scholarly work exists on each conflict; what lacks is an analytical study of domestic security policy through comparison of these conflicts.

The focus of this thesis is on the hegemonic discourses of the state in responding to these conflicts, the changes exhibited in official discourse over time, and the range of actions and policies legitimized as the two discourses-official and rebel, interact. The purpose of this approach is to throw light on India's domestic security policy, the discussion of which is severely limited in existing conflict and security literature. It is to a brief overview of these policies and state actions that we now turn our attention. A detailed historical background of the conflicts will be provided in subsequent chapters dealing with each conflict area separately.

In Punjab, the Centre's initial response was to quell any dissent by dismissing elected state governments and replacing them with direct rule from New Delhi. The imposition of Presidents Rule and the closing of all political outlets created space for hardliners and the movement escalated into violence. Towards the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Punjab crisis began to bifurcate into moderates and extremists. The latter began to voice demands for secession in the garb of protecting the rights and aspirations of Sikhs. Voices in New Delhi articulated the role of Pakistan in funding the Sikh extremists. Army action against the extremists led to a wave of anger against the central government. The undermining of democracy under the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, through heavy government repression and centralization further exacerbated the situation (Singh 1996; Singh 1997). It was not until the signing of the Punjab Accord in 1985 under a new central leadership that the political impasse was brought to an end even though intermittent negotiations between New Delhi and movement leaders had marked previous years as well. The Accord, which encompassed political, cultural and economic aspects, was, however, unable to end the violence and non-implementation of a number of clauses became a source of political discontent. Considering the text of the Punjab Accord, the use of language appears to be deliberately ambiguous and its content side-lined the core political demands while conceding cultural demands (Kohli 1990). Heavy handed police action in the early 1990s ultimately led to the end of violence and political discontent arising from non-

implementation was gradually replaced with compliance and co-option into the political system.

Punjab provides a reference point for other conflicts and is crucial to this study since it is considered by New Delhi as a model of successful resolution and had important ramifications for the way subsequent violent situations were responded to. Punjab presented for the Indian State a challenge cast varyingly and not always exclusively in undemocratic, secessionist, and religious extremist and terrorist terms. The 'successful' counter-insurgency strategy developed in the early 1990s for the problem in Punjab was thereafter adopted in Kashmir, but with less success (Telford 2001)

In Kashmir, the militant turn of the simmering conflict in the early 1990s was met with a brutal crackdown as the dominant government narrative focused on the abetment and direct sponsorship of the violence by Pakistan. Pakistan became the lens through which the situation in Kashmir was analysed, and an acknowledgement of possible Indian government policy failures in Kashmir as driving Kashmiri discontent has only been made in the twenty first century.

Though the roots of the conflict can be traced to 1947 when the partition of India took place, the conflict had not yet turned violent. Even as the special status of Kashmir, as guaranteed by the Indian constitution, was gradually but steadily diluted by the central leadership in New Delhi, it was not until the late 1980s that the movement took a violent turn. The government strategy of using suppression, its role in rigging state elections and the infringement of civil and political liberties, led to further alienation of the people and militarization of the conflict (Kohli 1997). The eruption of armed conflict in the 1990s ushered in an era of militancy, much of which was believed to be 'Pakistan sponsored'. Policy practice included expansion of the army in Kashmir, arrest and/or killing of militant leaders, crackdowns, raids and torture of civilians and suspects (Bose 2007). The testing of nuclear weapons by India in 1998 and the Kargil war of 1999 further escalated the conflict as relations with Pakistan soured. Meanwhile, the central government maintained a policy of refusing to negotiate with 'terrorists' until 2000 following US President Bill Clinton's visit. The decade of the 2000s provides a rich landscape of changing discourses and policies by the Centre as it has sought to enlarge the agenda for talks. Over the last couple of years there has also been an increasing attention to Kashmiri youth in the form of economic packages and

employment expansion schemes as part of an official discourse suggesting that the conflict and the alienation of the people is primarily an economic issue.

The strategy against the Naxalites has been two-fold, and in recent years a characterization of the conflict as the gravest internal security threat has been accompanied by an increasing use of force.[15] While it has remained largely a state issue since its origins in the 1960s (under the purview of respective state governments), it is only in the last decade or so that the attention has commanded a heightened sense of urgency at the Centre. Navlakha (Navlakha 2006) argues that the policies of the Centre, including increasing paramilitary and special forces in these regions and increasing financial allocations for police training and 'modernization' reflect war as the dominant mode of responding to the Naxalite problem.

Whereas Sikh-dominated Punjab and Muslim majority Kashmir could be clubbed as the Other of the Hindu Self and dismissed for their secessionist claims, neither of the two arguments could be made against the Maoists. Attempts to highlight links with China and with the Maoists in Nepal have been in existence but not captured the dominant theme in state discourses. This brings us to the understanding that agents are not free to construct reality as they please, but they are bound by their social and historical contexts. However, in spite of the apparent unacceptability of the Indian political elite of the use of armed force against the Maoists, the purpose of using a constructivist approach is to see how then the State continues to place heavy reliance on the use of force and the steady increase in the numbers of security forces acceptable (Navlakha 2004). One way of considering the changing identities of actors and changing meanings is to deconstruct the term security as it has been used by the Indian state. Fierke (Fierke 2007) points out that there is a political aspect of defining security in militaristic terms. Viewed in this light, then, the notion of security as applied to the Maoists can be interpreted as security necessary for sustained development of the nation and to remove all obstacles to its progress.

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[15] This was stated by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in April 2006 at a meeting of the standing committee on Naxalism, www.pib.nic.in. Accessed on October 25, 2014..

From the above discussion we can discern a range of possible strategies that have been used in domestic conflicts with similarities in spite of differing challenges. Comparing the strategies of the state in Punjab and Naxalite areas, (Tharu 2007) p.96 enlists the following similarities—the rejection of force by insurgent groups by the state, accompanied usually by branding them as extremists or terrorists; the undermining of the character and social location of the insurgents so as to silence genuine grievances; an encouragement of groups with similar aims so as to factionalise and undermine the conflict; arming civilians to create local vigilante groups; and a deliberate attempt at exposing links with a 'foreign hand' to represent the conflicts as external security threats.

Tharu (2007, p.98) claims that there is no significant difference between the securitising discourses of the Indian states across contexts/conflicts and that existential threats do not form part of the discourse. All threats-insurgencies, revolutions, seditions are responded to in a similar fashion of constructing non-military threats as military ones. His article refutes Waever's conception of securitisation to argue that in liberal democracies, such as India which is his case study, emergency legislation is woven into everyday normal legal precedent and that there is no need for constructing an existential threat so as to exercise emergency laws (Tharu 2007, p.86-87). What Tharu's analysis shows is that various repressive legislation has been enacted in India even before the breakout of insurgency movements in the country. The period immediately after independence maintained some of the colonial laws dealing with national security and defence and subsequent decades saw the enactment of emergency provisions over issues such as Naxal violence (in 1970 in West Bengal) and during India-Pakistan hostilities (in 1971 country wide). The Punjab conflict triggered a host of new laws as was the case with Assam and these insurgencies paved the way for various national security legislations. The larger point of his study is to show that states do not need to justify their acts; there is no need for securitization since the state controls various institutions making any contention independent of the state difficult. He argues that the state has become 'self-legitimating' (Tharu 2007, p.98) and opposition to policies is no longer possible.

While Tharu's argument of the ready existence of emergency provisions may be credible, his contention that states need no longer legitimize and securitize, and face little or no credible opposition that would require these is problematic. One, if that be

the case, there would be an ahistorical, non-contextual use and authorization of the emergency provisions. This also wouldn't be able to explain changes in government discourses. Secondly, there would be an indication of unopposed acceptance, which is not the case. As will be shown in this thesis, contextual changes and challenges to government discourses are part of the process, making a study of legitimization indeed important.

Parliamentary debates, speeches of opposition members and discourses of civil society highlight voices of dissent; moreover, debates in the Indian Parliament are reflective of a range of oppositions. To take the Naxal conflict for example, the federal character of the Indian polity plays a vital role in creating dissent as state governments, under whose purview the issue is considered to be, challenge, contest or agree with New Delhi. In the case of Kashmir, too, the course of the conflict suggests that different identities and different concerns have emerged in state discourses.

There is less focus in the existing literature on the processes of legitimization and delegitimization that arise within conflict settings. A dearth of critical analysis of the way policies are made and their implications for conflict resolution requires a study of how states articulate their security concerns-in political debates, speeches, public statements and policy documents. This thesis analyses national security imperatives and strategic thinking in a domestic context. Decision making in different aspects-political, economic, social and military, is a process in which the identity of the Indian state is constantly being negotiated as it emerges from a post-colonial state to one with an increasing role in the international context as it combines its regional significance with nuclear and economic power.

In light of the above discussion, the following research questions may be considered to be the guiding questions for this thesis:

How are internal conflicts represented by the Indian state in its formulation of an adequate response?
What are the patterns of security and conflict resolution policies displayed across conflicts and across time?
What are the forms of identities conferred upon various actors in domestic conflicts?

> Do the above change during conflict? Is there a deradicalisation of identities in conflict management and conflict resolution policies?

> How are formerly unthinkable solutions legitimized at later stages of the conflict?

Selection of texts

Using secondary sources on each of the three conflicts, the key periods of escalation, conflict intensity, state response and de-escalation (where appropriate) were identified. Focusing on these shorter periods in an intensive way allows the analysis to explore periods where discourse is strengthened and challenged, where legitimacy is built or lost and where possible contradictions between text and speech and policy response can be explored.

In each case, the analysis focuses on key official statements by the Indian government, parliamentarians and security actors. These discourses have been collected from parliamentary debates, government reports such as committee reports and annual home ministry reports, and statements and interviews of prominent government officials that appeared in the media. For the purpose of convenience, discourses in the media were identified in leading English dailies and news websites and one magazine.[16] These have been read in the original language (Hindi or English). In a small number of cases, translations of documents in other languages have been used and this is clearly indicated in the footnotes.

The discourses were categorized according to whether they referred to representations of the conflict's issues/demands, representations of identity or policy discourses. This enabled a comprehensive analysis of the framing of security threats and its comparative significance. Considering demands or issues in conflicts, we may conceptualise a spectrum of typologies to characterize conflict, which may be based on demands and actors. An analysis of these characterizations and their appropriate responses can contribute to literature on conflict resolution by focusing on strategies of legitimization. Based on a preliminary reading of the discourses, three key frames appear in the

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[16] The main newspapers are *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India*, *Indian Express* and *The Hindu*. The magazine referred to is *India Today*.

framing of conflict: *secessionist conflicts, political conflicts and economic or development conflicts*. These frames are not mutually exclusive; indeed several of them overlap, but the purpose of these frames is to show the combination of frames and responses over time. Changes in characterization are reflective of conflict dynamics as well as of changes in the way the Indian state perceives its own sense of threat and security.

Having accumulated the key documents reflecting official discourse, these were grouped/coded to identify dominant/hegemonic articulations under each of the nodes of discussion (secessionist/political/developmental) and any counter-hegemonic views also identified. The changes and continuities of official discourse in each node are thus traced through the key political and security events for each case.

While Walker, Campbell and others have examined the issue of securitization through a 'radical Othering' of the external enemy, Hansen considers the Other to be framed along a spectrum of otherness, what she calls degrees of differentiation. This thesis takes a combined approach by arguing that the Indian state categorises its internal enemies along a spectrum of radical others. Each of these others allows a construction of threat that makes force a necessary and appropriate policy option. There is no common internal enemy; at different points of time and with varying degrees of threat perception, Sikhs, Kashmiris and Maoists have assumed the role of the 'Other' to the national, Indian self. This Other has been varyingly represented as terrorist, anti-national, extremist, misguided youth and exploited poor masses.

The time period under review varies with each conflict, but together forms a period spanning more than thirty years. For Punjab, discourses were selected from 1980 to 1993, the year that terrorism was declared by the then police chief to have been defeated; the conflict in Kashmir is traced from 1989, widely accepted in the literature as the beginning of the insurgency, to 2010, a summer of discontent in contemporary Kashmir. Analysis of the Naxal conflict is focused on the contemporary period from 2000 to 2010. In terms of studying discourses, this study looks at the central governments perspective and hence the discourses in New Delhi. In all, 37 debates were read on Punjab, 30 on Kashmir and 21 on the Naxal conflict. Discourses that have been quoted in this thesis pertain to important speeches within these debates that were either made by prominent parliamentarians, or which made important references to the

issues of causes, identities and policies. Analytical attention to words and meanings embedded in power relations that make certain actions, certain ways of thinking 'common sense' or 'logical' and the antagonisms from competing discourses that ultimately make way for alternative articulations.

The next chapter focuses on the conflict in Punjab, and uses the techniques elucidated above to understand the Indian state's framing of the conflict and its security policy to deal with the issue.

Chapter 3: A discourse theoretical analyses of the Punjab conflict

Amongst the conflicts that have confronted the Indian government, the Punjab conflict was not only the first to have erupted at the level of violence that it did, but it is also considered to be one of the few conflicts to have been resolved by the Indian government.

An analysis of state discourses during the period from 1980 to 1993, the most significant period of conflict in Punjab, suggests that the conflict was framed primarily as a secessionist, fundamentalist conflict. Moreover, the identities of key actors in the conflict was continually changing and points to the flexibility of the state in dealing with its enemies. Literature on the Punjab conflict elucidates the use of brute force and the human rights violations by the State in Punjab.[17] There is also ample evidence in the literature bringing out the role of the Congress government in interfering in Punjab and the particular role of then PM Indira Gandhi in exacerbating and perhaps even triggering the violent conflict.[18] The contribution of this chapter to the existing body of literature is an understanding of how the identities and demands of the conflict changed over time and the policies that were instituted that ultimately led to a "resolution" of the conflict. The dearth of discourse analysis is a glaring gap in understanding the concerns of the Indian government at the time. Crucially, this chapter will identify the positions of the government on the key demands, actors and the policies required. Going back to the key questions that this thesis seeks to address:

How was the Punjab conflict represented by the Indian state and did this change over time?

How were the identities of the actors/rebels framed?

Were there alternative representations and policy suggestions?

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[17] See for example. (Singh 1996), (Singh 1997), (Kumar 2003)

[18] For example, Gurharpal Singh's Ethnic conflict in India: A case study of Punjab, in (McGarry, O'leary 2013)

What was the security strategy of the Indian State in Punjab and how was this legitimised?

Immediate background of conflict

The state of Punjab was formed in 1966 by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The 1956 reorganisation of states on the basis of language had left out the then province of Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). All through the 1950s, the Akali Dal had been agitating for a Punjabi-speaking state for the Sikhs but then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru thought that such a demand was communal as it would lead to a Sikh majority state of Punjab.[19] The decision to reorganise the state and create Punjab was a symbolic gesture by Indira Gandhi to thank the Akalis for their support during the Indo-Pak war in 1965 during which the Akalis suspended their agitation. The Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966 created the states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and made Chandigarh the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. The river waters of Punjab were put in the control of the Centre to distribute amongst the three states. It is important to note that the period coincided with rising powers of regional parties all over India and the growing strength of the Akali party which in March 1967 came to power in the Punjab Assembly elections in a coalition with the Jan Sangha (later known as the Bhartiya Janta Party or BJP) and Communist parties. This was the first time that the Congress was defeated in the Punjab elections and the threat of rising regional powers across India led to Congress-backed manoeuvres against non-Congress state governments. In November 1967, the eight-month old Akali Dal led United Front government was ousted by Congress-supported defections in the Akali Dal. In elections in 1969, the Akali party once again formed the government with the Jan Sangha. In the same year, there was a demand for Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas to be transferred to Punjab; Darshan Singh Pheruman a prominent Sikh political leader who had been active in the Punjabi Suba agitation, had gone on a hunger strike and died during it. Increased interdependence after 1971 of central and state politics and the necessity for the Congress to control most of the states in the Indian Union, especially

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[19] Nehru, in a statement to the Lok Sabha in August 1961, justified his opposition to the creation of a Punjabi state as follows: "*The demand for a Punjabi Suba, this can only be considered as a 'communal demand', even though it is given a linguistic base. It seemed to us that the acceptance of the proposal, which basically was communal, would be wrong in regard to the formation of a state.*"

in north India, meant a shift in the centre-state relations. At the same time, Indira Gandhi had developed a highly personalized and centralized type of control system over Indian politics through increasing interference in provincial matters.

The Akali government was brought down through Congress manoeuvres and President's Rule was imposed on June 15, 1971. It was in October 1973 when the Shiromani Akali Dal brought out the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.[20] The Resolution demanded an autonomous region as an integral part of the Union of India for the Sikhs where "Sikh interests are constitutionally recognized as the fundamental State policy" and be "entitled to frame its own internal constitutions on the basis of having all powers to and for itself except foreign relations, defence, currency and general communications which will remain subjects within the jurisdiction of the Federal Indian Government." It included demands for provincial autonomy, the transfer of Chandigarh, land reforms, removal of illiteracy and casteism, protection of Sikh interests. The central government termed the ASR 'secessionist'.

In 1975, Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency Rule in the country, the first and only time that democracy was suspended in India. The move was aimed at silencing the Opposition and curbing the mounting unrest in the country from inflation and other unstable economic conditions. In Punjab, Akali leaders were jailed. The Emergency lasted until 1977 when a Janata government came to power at the Centre. In March 1977, an Akali-Janata Party government came to power with Prakash Singh Badal as the Chief Minister of the state. It was at this time that the Congress decided to prop up a Sikh religious leader to challenge and embarrass the Akali government and Bhindranwale[21] was chosen for his religious preaching and austerity.[22] By 1978, the rivalry between Bhindranwale's followers and the Nirankari Sikhs had reached a point of violence and retaliatory killings as both groups vied for power and as Bhindranwale grew increasingly violent. Many educated, unemployed youth were drawn to

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[20] Full text of the document can be found in (Nayar, Singh 1984) Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh, 1984, *Tragedy of Punjab: Operation Bluestar and After*, Vision Books, Delhi

[21] Bhindranwale was a Sikh preacher who led a religious organisation called Damdami Taksal in Punjab and preached the return of the Sikh youth to a "pure" Sikhism that shunned alcohol consumption and drugs. He was also a vocal advocate of the distinction of Sikhism from Hinduism.

[22] Sanjay Gandhi is said to have suggested to ousted CM Zail Singh that some "sant" Sikh leader be put up against the Akalis, Kuldip Nayyar and Khushwant Singh, 1984, *Tragedy of Punjab*, p. 31.

Bhindranwale and his anti-landlord rhetoric also won him support from the subordinate non-agricultural castes. Meanwhile, in 1978, the Akalis launched an agitation to fulfil the demands of the ASR and added new demands such as the redistribution of river waters in favour of Punjab, an international airport at Amritsar and a broadcasting station at the Golden Temple.

By 1980, the socio-economic scene in Punjab was such that the prosperous Sikh families who had been able to send their children to college had returned with the desire for non-agricultural professional jobs and grew frustrated at the lack of opportunity. The Sikh intelligentsia was culturally strongly linked to traditional religion and became easily attracted to the religious revival which had been going on in the various centres of Sikh learning in the Punjab countryside. These centres had started receiving large donations from the prosperous farmers and could intensify the revival of religious identity which rapid modernization seemed to threaten.[23] It was also in 1980 that Indira Gandhi returned to power at the Centre and it is from this time that the analysis begins. The year marks the beginning of a long simmering conflict as one that became openly hostile and violent.

Towards a Discourse Analysis of the management of the Punjab crisis

The above background shows how there had been a history of grievances that were simmering in Punjab since Independence. The broader context of the wavering strength of the Congress party and the rise of regional parties across India had led to a climate of repressive control by Indira Gandhi, and when she returned to power in 1980, one of the first acts was to dismiss the elected state government and hence also foreclose their petition to the Supreme Court challenging previous legislation on issues pertaining to Punjab.

An analysis of the discourse of the Indian State points to the dominant articulations on the causes of the conflict and the identities of actors involved. It also shows the marginalisation of alternative policy options. Considered over time, this analysis is useful for understanding India's broader security policy. In the case of Punjab, this analysis is carried out at three phases of the conflict, each phase coinciding with certain key events of the conflict as identified by secondary literature on Punjab. These key

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[23] (Ahmed 1998), p. 127

events reflect changes in Punjab or at the Centre and are considered to be those that sparked off animated debate amongst the political elite. These events are in turn grouped into three broad phases for the purpose of analysis. In each phase, discourses have been organised around three themes-causes of the conflict, identities of the actors involved, and policy suggestions and decisions. The analysis is grouped under three phases of the conflict-1980-1985, 1985-1987 and 1987-1993.

Phase 1: 1980-1985: Active agitations and New Delhi's interferences

Key events

1980	Akali-led government dismissed by the Centre, and President's Rule imposed, followed by a Congress-led state government under Darbara Singh
September 1981	Negotiations between Centre and Akalis after latter presented their charter of grievances
August 1982	Akali Dal and Bhindranwale joined hands and launched the Dharam Yudh Morcha; Akalis also launched a movement to stop work on the SYL canal which was diverting water from Punjab to Haryana
October 1982	Talks between Akali Dal and Centre
1983	Increasing violence, clashes between Sikh sects as well as targeting of Hindus
October 1983	State government led by Congress' Darbara Singh dismissed and President's Rule imposed
Feb 1984	Talks between Akalis, Government and

	Opposition in New Delhi
March 1984	Akali leader Longowal charged with sedition, and Punjab declared 'deeply disturbed'
May 1984	PM appoints senior Congress leader Narasimha Rao to hold talks with the Sikhs
June 1984	Operation Blue Star followed by Operation Wood Rose
October 1984	Indira Gandhi assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, widespread rioting against Sikhs in the country, especially in New Delhi

Causes

The dismissal of the state government in Punjab in 1980 led to an increasing confrontation between the Akalis and the Centre. Between 1981 and 1984 there were a series of negotiations between the Centre and the Akalis. Even as the ruling party sought to defend its role in negotiations, it blamed the Akalis for any failure. One Congress MP said that the religious demands of the Akalis had been accepted but the Akalis were taking advantage and adding to their demands. The hesitation of accepting some of these demands stemmed from a deep rooted fear of religious groups gaining power. RL Bhatia of the Congress told the Lok Sabha that the Akalis were asking for three hours of broadcast over the radio service rather than one, and said that this could have a snowball effect if the "Muslim League and Harijans and others too started asking for air time for their religions".[24] Bhatia also said that meetings had been held on the political issues as well but the Akalis were "indecisive and divided" and were not

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[24] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India

able to come to an agreement. He said that the issues that remained were inter-state issues and hence the delay.

During this stage, it came to be widely perceived by the ruling party that the Akalis were to blame for the mayhem in Punjab. There was a recognition that the demands of the Akalis were of two kinds-religious and political.[25] But while the religious demands were considered to be largely fundamentalist, the political demands were couched in the category of secessionist or those arising from the "frustration" of the Akalis.[26] For instance, Congress MP RL Bhatia was of the view that the Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India Marxist (CPI (M)) and Janata Party had entered the political game in Punjab as they allied with the Akali party and this pushed people further away from the Akalis. This he said had led to frustration and isolation which in turn bred extremism. The Akali demands were considered to be "secessionist" and Opposition parties were blamed for "encouraging these separatist tendencies."[27]

Home Minister PC Sethi said that in a recent letter circulated by Akali leader Longowal, "He has raised a separate nation theory, a multi-nation theory for India." Also, the home minister stated that:

> India may be multi-lingual, India may be multi-racial and India may be multicultural but India is one nation and the Indian people have sacrificed for keeping India as one nation and we shall continue to make all sacrifices to keep India as one nation.[28]

These dominant discourses marginalised alternative explanations of the conflict. Opposition members asserted that the demands of the Akalis were justified and that:

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[25] R.L. Bhatia, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983., Monsoon Session, Government of India

[26] Ibid.

[27] Congress MP Chiranji Lal Sharma, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[28] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

The Punjab problem hinges around three or four basic issues-territorial issues, sharing of river waters, Centre-state relations and religious demands of the Sikh community…these issues contain democratic contents.[29]

The Congress accused the Akali party of supporting and protecting Bhindranwale.[30] The home minister Buta Singh said that "there is a political revolution in Punjab led by the demands of the Akali party but they are taking their strength from Bhindranwale, they are supporting him."[31] The annual report of 1982-83 of the home ministry noted that the situation in Punjab "arising out of the agitation of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the activities of extremist elements has been causing serious concern."

In 1984, following the events of Operation Blue Star[32], the government published a white paper on the situation in Punjab. This document laid bare the dominant interpretations of the causes of the conflict in Punjab at the time. The Paper described the movement as "stridently communal and extremist" and one that "degenerated into open advocacy of violence". It further elaborated that the movement sanctioned "the most heinous crimes against innocent and hapless citizens and against the State". It also blamed the Akalis for the movement and highlighted that certain factors "combined to produce a complex web of violence and terror that threatened to undermine social, political and economic stability not only of Punjab but the whole country." The White Paper also mentioned that "secessionist and anti-national activities with the declared objective of establishing an independent state for the Sikhs with external support" and "the involvement of criminals, smugglers, other anti-social elements and Naxalites who took advantage of the situation for their own ends" as being responsible for the situation in Punjab along with the Akalis and the communal elements.[33] The absence of

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[29] Chitta Basu, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[30] See for example statement of home minister Buta Singh in the Lok Sabha on December 2, 1983.

[31] Lok Sabha, December 2, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India, Translated from Hindi.

[32] Operation Blue Star was the name given to an Army-led operation against Sikh militants who were lodged in the Golden Temple-the holiest shrine of the Sikhs in Amritsar in Punjab. The operation lasted from June 3-8 1984 and was approved by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to flush out the militants, including Bhindranwale. This infamous operation not only demolished the holiest shrine, but also led to the killing of innocent civilians who were in the premises at the time.

[33] *White Paper on the Punjab Agitation*, 1984, Government of India.

any acknowledgment of a political dimension is striking; the conflict was now elevated to the level of a secessionist conflict that had also harboured criminals and lumpen elements.

Moreover, the conflict was now considered to be primarily "fundamentalist" in nature. Indrajit Gupta said "the main thing that is worrying everybody is that every day of delay communalism is gaining the upper hand in Punjab. The thing of which we were always the proudest in Punjab was the unity of Hindus and Sikhs."[34] Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told the Lok Sabha "today, communalism has a new dimension and this is called fundamentalism"[35] she also said,

> What is happening in Punjab was not simply a story of cruelty or merciless violence against innocent people. It was a concerted attempt by a combination of internal and external forces to encourage divisive forces and if possible, to divide the country. The Sikhs feel alienated for some reason. Other people feel alienated not because of religion but because of economies…there are all kinds of alienation…a movement for unity has to be created just as during the freedom struggle…[36]

Hinting at foreign intervention, she said, "Can we ignore the remarkable coincidence of troubles in Punjab with the re-arming of our neighbour? Can we ignore the strong revival of secessionist forces in Jammu and Kashmir and those in Tripura and the north-east border?" she also said that the Akalis had brought up the water and territorial demands much later and had initially begun with only religious demands which she had agreed to. There was thus contempt for the political demands which were viewed as a potent mix of religion and politics and which, Indira Gandhi felt, would threaten her power at the Centre and would lose her precious Hindi-speaking electorate. Moreover, the reluctance, indeed indifference of the grievances, which she attributes vaguely to "some reason",[37] suggests a general ineptitude at dealing with the issue.

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[34] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[35] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[36] PM Indira Gandhi, Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[37] Ibid.

When Rajiv Gandhi came to power in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination, he too considered the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR) to be "secessionist" in some parts and also said that the problem in Punjab was largely "a law and order problem."[38]

Thus, during this phase, causes ranged from the political frustration of the Akali party to extremism and communalism and the demands of the Akalis were framed as being secessionist. There was a slight tension in the internal external dichotomy-there was an acknowledgment of external sources fuelling the conflict. The general indifference of the government to act stemmed from this failure to recognize genuine grievances of the Sikh community.

Identity

During this period, the government viewed the Akalis and other chief actors in Punjab as extremists who had destabilised the situation in Punjab. The Akalis were portrayed as anti-nationals who were colluding with the Sikh religious fundamentalists to pressure the government into accepting their demands. The annual report of the ministry of home affairs in 1980-81 pointed to a "series of violent incidents by Sikh extremists who also hijacked an IAC aircraft to Lahore on 29 September 1981." There was also a mention of how "some extremist groups in Punjab" were "alleging discrimination against Sikhs by the Government" and they were responsible for these violent activities. Regarding the identities of those involved, the report of 1982-83 stated that "two extremist organisations namely the Dal Khalsa and the National Council of Khalistan whose objective was the establishment of an autonomous Khalsa state" were indulging in "secessionist activities" and were therefore declared "unlawful associations" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In 1983, in a debate on the situation in Punjab, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution came up for discussion and Akali leader Tohra was accused of a "wild and irresponsible" statement in which he said that Sikhs were a separate community.[39] This move of the Akalis to recognise Sikhs as separate from Hindus drew condemnation in the Parliament and many members harked back to the days of close Hindu-Sikh relations

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[38] *India Today*, February 15, 1985.

[39] Charan Singh, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India (translated from Hindi).

when religious identity did not matter in the context of the Sikhs. For instance, Charan Singh on July 26, 1983 drew attention to the fact that Punjab had been a Hindu majority state and most Sikhs had converted and were still known as Jat Sikhs. He said that Hindu families had had a tradition of making their eldest son a Sikh and that the two religions had always had close ties. BJP Opposition leader Vajpayee also asked the Akalis to reconsider whether they wanted to be defined separately from Hindus and have their own personal law as he said that it might break a family given the high degree of Hindu-Sikh relations through marriage or through making one son a Sikh.[40]

The ruling party distanced itself from any role in mentoring Bhindranwale in previous years and called him a "fundamentalist" who was using religion as a tool.[41] It was argued that the earlier rivalry of Bhindranwale and the Akalis had now turned into a bond between the two and the Akali party was termed as "communal" and aligned only with the big land owners in Punjab and represented only the Jats, not the poor harijans or the city dwellers of the state.[42]

Simultaneously, the Opposition was quick to draw distinctions between the Akalis and extremists. Opposition leader Atal Behari Vajpayee for example said that the Akalis were separate from the handful of those supporting Khalistan.[43] There was also a discussion over the use of the term 'qaum' by the Akalis which Vajpayee defended as a word for 'community' rather than 'nation/nationality' in English. PM Indira Gandhi said that India was one country and one nation and was not a land of many "nations" and insisted that the word communities be used instead. "Let me make this quite clear…the Akali leadership was using the word 'qaum' as nationality…I used the word qaum to mean community. There is no question of there being different nationalities in India. We are all one nation."[44]

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[40] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[41] RL Bhatia, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[44] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

Others such as Congress MP Sparrow cautioned that "foreign-controlled, foreign-aided agencies aid, and abet and exploit the money-hungry extremists".[45] The identification of extremist Sikhs abroad was a prominent discursive attempt by the ruling party to avert attention from domestic roots of extremism. Consider Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's question "where did this cry for separatism rise? It did not rise in India. It rose far from our shores from people who are affluent."[46] There was also an attempt to link Kashmir and Punjab and draw comparisons. Ram Vilas Paswan called the two states "our sensitive border states".[47] The fact that Punjab bordered with Pakistan was indeed a pressing issue and points to a well-established nodal point in statist discourses of the Pakistan link in India's internal disturbances.

The widespread arrest of Sikhs in Punjab was a concern for Opposition members. In response to a question on the arrested persons and whether they were terrorists or extremists, home minister PC Sethi replied that "most of them are anti-social elements and those who are engaging in smuggling. But they are responsible for many crimes and therefore it is very difficult to distinguish between the two."[48] This blurring of the categories of the 'terrorists' and 'criminals' legitimized the use of force and allowed the government to get away with such policies in Punjab.

Meanwhile, each party tried to argue that the problem was not with the Sikhs as such, but with certain extremist elements within them. For instance, Subramaniam Swamy, an MP of the Opposition, termed the Akali Dal led by Longowal to be a "moderate" group and said that "the Sikhs are an emotional people...they are prosperous by their hard work…they have this feeling 'we are only 3% but we produce 75% of the procurement of wheat'…"[49] On the other hand, ruling party MPs such as Sparrow blamed the Akalis for tarnishing the image of the Sikhs and said, "the Akali Dal and

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[45] Lok Sabha, November 15, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

[46] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[47] Lok Sabha, November 15, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India (Translated from Hindi).

[48] Lok Sabha, November 16, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

[49] Lok Sabha, December 5, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

their satellites have brought down the image of the Sikh…the Sikh is a wonderful man; everybody used to be proud about a Sikh…"[50]

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi stated in February 1985 that the Akalis were not representative of the people, "When the Akalis say that this is a Sikh problem, we must understand that they are talking about a group within Punjab which is not representative of Punjab. The Akalis are not even representative of the Sikhs; they represent some Sikhs in Punjab…"[51]

The discourses on identity signal an overemphasis on the religious identity of the Akalis. Indeed, the idea of the Sikhs being separate from the Hindus did not go down well either with the ruling party or Opposition members. The identification moreover, of extremists and criminals and the blurring of their distinction was also an indication of the need for extraordinary measures to address the issue. Attempts were also made by the ruling elite to differentiate the Akalis from the rest of the Sikhs, thereby delegitimising their claims to be representatives of Sikhs. Essentially, the identity discourses reflect various levels of Otherness; as extremists they were on the extreme end of the spectrum, whereas the attempt to deny a separate Sikh identity was an attempt to co-opt the Sikh into the broader Hindu Self.

Policy

The above discussion on the prominent discourses of the state on matters related to the causes of the conflict and identities of the key players involved relate to the policies that were implemented by New Delhi in Punjab. While the causes were considered to be anti-national and largely unjustified, the State identified the Akalis as a group of disgruntled Sikhs who had joined hands with the extremists and who were responsible for the situation in Punjab.

The dismissal of the Akali-led state government in February 1980 was followed by elections in which a Congress party led government under Darbara Singh came to power in Punjab in June 1980. In December 1980, the home minister Zail Singh introduced a Bill in Parliament to allow for preventive detention, called the National

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[50] Lok Sabha, February 28, 1984, Budget Session, Government of India.

[51] In an interview to *India Today*, February 15, 1985.

Security Bill. Even as the Opposition criticised the government, the Home minister defended it and said,

> This bill will open India to progress, it will protect the country's freedom and will guarantee India's unity…this bill is for India's defence and protection of democracy… the state of India today is such that criminals and miscreants are breaking India's efficiency and everywhere are trying to instigate tensions between caste and class.[52]

By 1982-83, the coming together of Akali Dal and Bhindranwale, and the subsequent agitations that followed also ushered in a series of talks between the Centre and Akalis. The home ministry's report of 1982-83 mentioned that:

> Several rounds of discussion were held during the year with the Akali Dal leaders. The political leaders of the States of Haryana, Rajasthan and Punjab were also invited to the discussions. Some areas of agreement have been identified. Government has announced acceptance of certain demands which are religious in nature. It is hoped that an agreed solution can be found in respect of other matters as well.

However, the failure of the talks to make any head way was made apparent in the state's discourses:

> It is the government's endeavour to find a peaceful solution to the problems in Punjab. Honourable members had also expressed the view that negotiations with the Shiromani Akali Dal leadership should be resumed in respect of the sharing of waters of Ravi-Beas and the territorial disputes between Punjab and Haryana. In pursuance of this, I invited the Akali leaders to resume discussions but unfortunately they have not responded favourably to my invitation…Despite the government's clear offer to refer the two pending issues to tribunals, the SAD leaders have not reacted in a positive manner so far.[53]

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[52] Home minister Zail Singh, Lok Sabha, December 4, 1980, Winter Session, Government of India (translated from Hindi).

[53] MoS in the Ministry of Home Affairs, P. Venkatasubbaiah, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Budget Session, Government of India.

That talks were becoming ineffective, due to the Akalis, was a way for the government to absolve itself from any responsibility. It also justified its policy of suspending rail transport in Punjab as a means to ensure the "safety and security of the passengers and public property from the large scale violence by Akali workers during the 'rasta roko[54]' agitation." This agitation of the Akalis, in which they forcibly took to disrupting rail traffic as a means of protest was thus delegitimized and the discourse focused on the violence caused as a result of the protest to do so:

> Despite the fact that SAD leadership called off the rail *roko* agitation, agitators indulged in disruptive activities including squatting on railway tracks, cutting off signals telephone/telegraph wires, removal of fish plates…this caused loss of public property and inconvenience to the travelling public.[55]

The government also said that it had taken up the issue of misuse of Sikh shrines by "criminals and anti-nationals" and that "It was suggested that a 5 member committee of Sikhs may be set up jointly by the state government and SAD to screen the persons now living in shrines. It is unfortunate that the SAD leadership is not prepared to discuss the question of misuse of holy shrines." The Akalis continued to be blamed for the violence in the state:

> Government has repeatedly appealed to the leadership of SAD to unequivocally condemn violent activities and not to say or do anything which may aggravate the situation. But unfortunately there have still been provocative and threatening speeches by some of the leaders. We have to be careful that continuing agitation does not spark off incidents of a communal nature.[56]

Once again, the mention of communalism in state discourses shows how the preoccupation of the state's conflict management policy was aimed at preventing communal clashes as being more serious and pressing than the political agitation of the Sikhs.

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[54] Translated as 'stop the traffic/movement'

[55] MoS in the Ministry of Home Affairs, P. Venkatasubbiah, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[56] Ibid.

The government also wasted no opportunity to drive home the point that while it was serious about resolving the issue through talks, the Akalis had been time and again insincere in this endeavour. Home minister, PC Sethi, stated in the Lok Sabha that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had invited them for talks to New Delhi and they were progressing well, "but before the talks could be finalised, the Akali Dal had made up their mind that they would boycott the talks and they would not disclose it to the press."[57] He said that despite this the PM was keen to keep the talks going but they were reluctant to come to Delhi so the government went to Chandigarh, their chosen venue, but the talks were "inconclusive". They were invited to Delhi to resume the process of dialogue but the Akali Dal was "reluctant". He also said that the Opposition members were made party to the talks and this tripartite dialogue continued. However, he said, the recent attitude of the Opposition had changed and they were not committing to any one stance. Both the Akalis and the Opposition were thus blamed for the failure of the dialogue process. This in turn became reason to doubt the efficacy of dialogue as a policy, "Charan Singh was right when he said that we should not be soft on the Akalis and we should deal with them firmly."

At this stage, the government also fielded questions as to whether it would consider going into the Golden Temple to arrest all those extremists taking shelter there. Most members agreed that such a step should not be taken and the government too seemed unanimous on this. [58] In response to entering the precincts of the gurudwara PM Indira Gandhi said in February 1984, "no place should be made a sanctuary for those who are wanted in any crime. But in taking any action we have to calculate the repercussions...that is why at every step we have to go slowly."[59]

Another important nodal point in the state's discourses was the tendency to mention that since the political demands of the Akalis were related to territorial and water issues, it was something that affected other states as well and therefore the Centre was unable to act on it. For instance, a ruling party member said that the "Prime Minister has conceded the religious demands of the Akali Dal...but the political demands cannot

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[57] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[58] See for example statement of CM Stephen in the Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[59] Lok Sabha, February 28, 1984, Budget Session, Government of India.

be easily accepted because the rights of neighbouring states are involved."[60] Home Minister PC Sethi said that position of the government on talks was that:

> We made it clear that we cannot resolve this problem without consulting the people of Rajasthan and Haryana. Thereby we want that the ruling party of Rajasthan and Haryana and the Opposition leaders of Rajasthan and Haryana be consulted. The Akalis refused to sit with them.[61]

The Centre dismissed the Congress led state government in Punjab in October 1983 and imposed President's Rule. The home minister PC Sethi justified the imposition of President's Rule in Punjab as the Chief Minister had tendered his resignation and had suggested to the Governor to keep Punjab under temporary Presidents Rule. He also said that it had had some positive results which he declared to be "4470 undesirable persons have been arrested and a total of 282 weapons, 1153 cartridges 1 hand grenade have been recovered".[62] He said that President's Rule had become necessary He also said that talks had been initiated by the Centre at various times with the Akalis and while the PM had made announcements regarding their religious demands in November 1982, the Centre-state issues had been referred to the Sarkaria Commission. He also said that in June he himself had made a public announcement that only two issues remained to be resolved—"the sharing of the Ravi Beas river waters and the territorial dispute between Punjab and Haryana". He said that the Centre had offered to refer these issues to tribunals but "the Akalis have still not responded in a favourable manner." Further he said,

> I may add that the Government has not complicated the issues at any time or prevented a peaceful solution from being arrived at. On the other hand, the Akali Dal have changed their demands from time to time. It has hampered the progress of a negotiated settlement. It is for the leadership of the Akali Dal to now come forward to help in the restoration of normalcies and to resume discussions.[63]

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[60] Soundarajan, Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[61] Lok Sabha, July 26, 1983, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[62] Lok Sabha, November 16, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

[63] Lok Sabha, November 16, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

He also said that training camps had been identified where "certain sectarian and secessionist views have been propagated" including in Jammu and Kashmir and that the Centre had told these states to "take appropriate action against those indulging in illegal activities." This was the beginning of the Centre's alluding to Pakistani involvement in the Punjab crisis, and one that would gain greater prominence in subsequent years.

In November 1983, the home minister said that:

> As far as the territorial dispute is concerned, we are prepared to hand over Chandigarh…but then Abohar and Fazilka has to go to Haryana. Whatever decision we take has to be with the consent of all parties and the concerned states. We cannot take unilateral decisions in this matter.[64]

This discourse would become more prominent after 1985, when the lack of implementation of the Accord would be blamed on this inter-state factor.

On 15 November 1983, the government moved a Bill to give the armed forces special powers in Punjab and Chandigarh. Members such as George Fernandes[65] opposed the law as it "opposed articles of fundamental rights of citizens and were a violation of human rights." The reasons for this, as given by Home minister PC Sethi were that:

> The atmosphere of public order in Punjab has been vitiated on account of illegal activities of the extremist, terrorist and secessionist elements in the state. A number of violent incidents have been perpetrated with a view to creating scare amongst the peaceful people, and to vitiate the communal atmosphere in the state.[66]

He also told the House that in a letter written by the Chief Minister of Punjab in October, he mentioned that "the situation called for the intervention of the Centre for a temporary period to meet the requirements of national security and integrity." He then justified the Governor's decision to call for President's Rule in the state and the state legislature placed under suspended animation.

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[64] PC Sethi, Lok Sabha, December 5, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

[65] Prominent member of the Janata Dal party in opposition at the time.

[66] Lok Sabha, November 15, 1983, Winter Session, Government of India.

By 1984, there was increasing concern in Parliament over violence in Punjab and Haryana. The annual home ministry report for 1983-1984 noted the "intensification of the agitation" in Feb 1984 and emphasised that the "overall situation in Punjab was further aggravated by a series of acts of violence and killings by extremist elements." The report of the home ministry also noted that the Akali Dal had left the tripartite talks mid-way in Feb 1984 and noted that "while on the one hand certain acts of extremist violence continued to take place, the leadership of the Akali Dal decided to burn and deface copies of the Constitution to demand an amendment to Article 25.[71] This act of the Akali Dal has been condemned in all quarters." It also emphasised that the government had "expressed its readiness for a settlement of the problem through negotiations." [72] In the Lok Sabha, Atal Behari Vajpayee stated that "terrorists" were killing people and those who were being killed included Sikhs too.[73] He also said that the PM resumed and called off talks with the Akalis at whim and this was going on for the last three years.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi refuted this and said that certain elements within the Akalis did not want a settlement. She also said that over the previous two years the situation kept changing:

> Somebody asked who was against an agreement. Obviously it is those who are more extreme. These extremists have always been there. They may not be the same extremists who are now shooting people. But once the extremists asserted themselves, it was not possible for the moderates to come to an agreement. This was my assessment after talking with the Akalis that even though some were in favour of an agreement, there would be pressure on them…We told the Akali leadership that if they could get together with the Haryana people, with the Opposition parties there and with our party and sort out the matter, we would agree.[74]

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[71] According to Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism are components of the Hindu religion.

[72] Annual Report 1983-84, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

[73] Lok Sabha, February 28, 1984, Budget Session, Government of India.

[74] February 28, 1984, Budget Session, Government of India.

However, by June 1984, the failure of the Centre to settle the conflict amicably reached its pinnacle in Operation Blue Star. The storming of the holiest shrine of the Sikhs by the Indian Army on the orders of Indira Gandhi was to become one of the most criticised policies of the Indian State and had huge ramifications for the resolution of the Punjab crises. It was succeeded by the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguards in November and widespread rioting against Sikhs in the months to follow. In the aftermath of the Operation Blue Star, the government brought out a White Paper detailing reasons for the policy. In a debate on the White Paper in the Parliament, opposition members blamed the government for hiding and distorting facts and for delaying negotiations. The ruling party defended its decision to use the Army in the face of backlash in the Parliament by Opposition members. A Congress MP said that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution had been a "great danger signal" and "however difficult things were, the action taken by the Army has broken the back of terrorism in Punjab."[75] Atal Behari Vajpayee said that the Army was primarily constituted to deal with external enemies and that to use it against its own people should have been avoided. He also said that sending in the Army into the precincts of the Golden Temple should be a reminder to never follow such an example again.[76]

That Operation Blue Star had gotten rid of extremists like Bhindranwale but had not in any way solved the Punjab issue was evident. The reason for this was pinned to the Akali party's inflexibility. PM Indira Gandhi said that she was in favour of Chandigarh going to Punjab but only so long as Haryana got something too and that the Akalis "were not willing to talk to the Haryana people."[77] She also said that the Akalis were not willing to give up their stance on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and were "not willing to accept that there was terrorism from Golden Temple. They were not willing to accept that there were arms in the Golden Temple…it was only when we came to a dead end that Army action had to be taken." Regarding army action, "I was deeply pained in taking this action… but I felt the step had to be taken for national interest."[78]

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[75] Yeshwant Rao Chavan, Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[76] Lok Sabha July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India (translated from Hindi).

[77] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[78] Lok Sabha, July 25, 1984, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

Thus, 'national interest' had become a reason for storming the Golden Temple even as the government was nowhere closer to resolving the conflict.

The report of 1984-85 mentioned that extremist violence had showed an upward trend during 1984. It also stated that the police was an important factor in countering the violence in Punjab and mentioned that:

> As a result of the action taken by security forces and various measures including strengthening and streamlining of the general administration and police and increased vigil on the border, the situation in the state has shown considerable improvement. A number of extremists have been arrested and several criminal cases involving these elements have been investigated.

Moreover, the report mentioned that it had been necessary for the Parliament to amend Article 356 of the Constitution so as to continue President's Rule in Punjab beyond the period of one year up to a maximum of two years if necessary.

The above discourses on policy debates at the time suggest that while the government was not averse to talks, it had framed certain demands of the Akalis as essentially undemocratic and foreclosed any possibility for negotiation. The dismissal of state governments, imposition of President's Rule and use of the armed forces all signal a policy aimed primarily at using force to control and manage the conflict and the justification of such measures as taken for "national interest".

The above discussion on causes, identity representations and policy debates indicates that during this phase of the conflict, the government was wary of the Akali Dal and considered it not only hand in glove with the extremists but also uninterested in resolving the conflict. The framing of the conflict at this stage ranged from being one driven by the frustration of the Akalis, to law and order problems, to extremist action. The identity of the Akali party was framed as anti-national and secessionist, and their demands for a separate Sikh identity termed communal. Despite this representation of their demands, the government held a series of talks with the Akalis but each time they failed, the Akalis were blamed. Punjab continued to be placed under President's Rule during the period and key political demands of the Akalis were obfuscated and turned into inter-state issues that were therefore beyond the control of the State. The identification of the Akalis as extremists, or anti-nationals was in part responsible for

the distrust between the ruling Congress party and the Akali Dal. There were moments when the Government seemed to be in favour of doing away with talks as it blamed the Akalis for their insincerity in the dialogue process. Indira Gandhi's interpretation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution as essentially a secessionist document due to its position on the Sikhs constituting a separate nation was a major stumbling block in negotiations as she never failed to mention that the Akalis were continuing their pursuance of the Resolution. Crucially, Operation Blue Star as a policy of defeating terrorism not only failed to curb violence in the state, but also pushed common people further away from the government. This alienation would form cornerstone in the discourses of the state in the next phases.

Phase 2: 1985-1987: Post accord period

Key events

March 1985	PM Rajiv Gandhi appoints Arjun Singh as governor of Punjab. He advised the Centre to release certain Akali leaders, such as Longowal, for talks.
July 1985	Punjab Accord signed between the Centre and the Akalis led by Longowal. The Accord left out other sections of the Akalis as well as the Haryana government.
August 1985	Longowal assassinated
September 1985	State Assembly elections bringing moderate Akali leader Surjit Singh Barnala to power
January 1986	Sikh extremists launch agitation for Khalistan
March 1986	Appointment of J. Ribeiro as police chief in Punjab

May 1987	Dismissal of Akali government and imposition of Presidents Rule
1988	Operation Black Thunder in May under the charge of the Punjab police, NSG and paramilitary forces

Causes

If the earlier phase pinned the causes of the conflict to the agitations of the Akali Dal and its aligning with extremist forces under Bhindranwale, by 1985, there was a willingness by the government under the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi that there had to be a resolution of the crises affecting Assam and Punjab, both of which he inherited from his mother's tenure.

There was a change in the attitude of the government as it now began to consider the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, once considered to be a secessionist document under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. There was also a tendency to associate the demands of Punjab as indicative of a broader all-India issue rather than one restricted to Punjab, thereby making the situation "normal". Home minister SB Chavan said that most of the issues were common to other states, "it is not peculiar to Punjab that they are asking for more autonomous powers. There are rest of the state governments who have been asking for the same…if there is the slightest doubt about secessionism I would be the first to oppose it…"[79]

Janata Party member Jaipal Reddy said that

> I welcome the change in attitude of the Prime Minister towards the question of Punjab. At one time he was not prepared to touch the Anandpur Sahib Resolution with a barge pole but I was happy to know that he recently gave an indication that he did not find everything wrong with the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and only some parts were objectionable.[80]

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[79] Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[80] Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

The concern over Pakistan's involvement was felt too as the proximity of Amritsar to Pakistan was a source of concern for the political elite. CPI leader Indrajit Gupta, for example, stated that

> We are talking everyday about the threat which is coming from across the border particularly because of the tremendous accumulation of offensive weapons in Pakistan in the hands of the military regime. Amritsar for example is situated 20 miles from the border of Pakistan. Can we afford to let a border state which has always been in the past the primary bulwark of our defence whenever there has been aggression or attack, can we allow a state like that to remain in this condition? This is not something that concerns just Punjab or the Sikhs. It is a matter of the security and defence of the entire country.[81]

The moderation in the government's position was followed by the Rajiv-Longowal Accord on July 24, 1985.[82] The Accord came about in much secrecy and excluded two prominent Akali leaders, Tohra and Badal, from the negotiations; Longowal was chosen as the chief point of contact of the Akalis. The Accord recognised the political identity of the Sikhs and awarded Chandigarh to Punjab-two important demands of the Sikhs which had earlier been only half-heartedly acknowledged. The Accord also addressed issues of sharing of river waters, rehabilitation of Army deserters, compensation for those killed, enquiry into the riots of November 1984 amongst others. If these issues were considered to be the main causes of the conflict, it was also the case that the Accord was vague on matters of actual transfer of territory and sharing of river water, and failed to include the Haryana government-a key actor for enabling implementation of the Accord, in negotiations.

However, even though the demands of the Akalis had finally been met, the conflict was far from over. In August 1985, Longowal was assassinated. Elections brought a new Akali-led government to power in Punjab. By 1986, violence in Punjab had once again reached high levels even as the new government in Punjab under chief minister Barnala struggled to keep things in control. The proclamation of Khalistan in 1986 led to a deep

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[81] Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[82] Full text of the document can be found at http://www.sikhtimes.com/doc_072485a.html Accessed on July 3, 2014

condemnation in the Indian Parliament. Now, the causes of the conflict were described as a "foreign conspiracy". According to Congress MP RS Sparrow,

> The enemy's grand plan all along has been to destabilise the sensitively positioned border state of India-Punjab, and contiguous to it, also Jammu and Kashmir…the first phase of this that has been put into play is to aid, abet, bribe and train mostly the Sikh youth…after that, to make use of holy shrines for whipping up communal hatred…then the shrines have been used and still are being used for harbouring extremists and also for stockpiling weaponry and hatching plans of attack on innocent people…then comes the phase of civil strife which leads to revolt or revolution of a type…[83]

Clearly, at this stage, the fear of secession as the prime mover of the conflict was far from over. There was also a decidedly religious extremist hue given to the causes for the conflict.

> The place from which the declaration has been made, the Golden Temple, is not only the highest seat of worship of the Sikh people but also a place which is revered by people of all communities. Secondly, one cannot ignore the background of the uncertainties in Punjab for the last five years…an appeal of this nature may appeal to the youth who tend to accept it in their adventurist spirit. We felt that this discussion should also be taken up because there is a possibility that international media may play it up…also because of the fact that these five persons are not isolated, there are countries which are prepared to help them.[84]

Meanwhile, the ruling Congress party blamed the Barnala government for the situation, "Our youth, especially in Punjab, is prone to becoming tools in the hands of our enemies...it is basically the fault of the Akali Dal in Punjab…the basic question is that politics and religion should be separated and the present situation in Punjab which is conducive to creating terrorists should be eliminated. That is the responsibility of the Barnala government."[85] Likewise, the home minister Buta Singh said, "the fact is that

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[83] Lok Sabha, April 30, 1986, Budget Session, Government of India.

[84] Dinesh Goswami, Lok Sabha, April 30, 1986, Budget Session, Government of India.

[85] Lok Sabha, July 29, 1986, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

some of the elements in the Akali Party have been unfortunately managed by anti-India forces. They are willingly or unwillingly acting as agents of the enemies of the country."[86] The representation of the conflict as one that was being sponsored from outside went hand in hand with ascribing terrorism as the root of the problem. In this context, secularism also appeared as a nodal point. For instance, "I feel that this is not a secular government…this is a government which appeals to the terrorists and are trying to appease the terrorists all the time."[87]

On the other end, for the Opposition parties such as the Communist Party, the reasons for the conflict were to be found in the failure of the government to implement the Accord. Some blamed the Centre for the situation:

> As far as the Centre is concerned, on the question of implementation of the Accord, the Centre has bungled on the question of transfer of territory. Of course the Punjab and Haryana governments have played their own role in it, but these successive commissions have only complicated and confused the issue much more.[88]

But the Accord, for the government, was not related to the conflict. As PM Rajiv Gandhi put it:

> Let me also add at this stage that our discussion at this moment which is really about violence and terrorism, I do not think is going to be effective at this stage by the accord being implemented or being slower or faster. Let us not mix the two things up.[89]

The cause for violence was ultimately pinned on the failure of the Barnala government in Punjab to curb terrorism, and it was in 1987 when the government was dismissed by New Delhi and President's Rule imposed.

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[86] Congress member PJ Kurien, Lok Sabha, July 29, 1986, Government of India.

[87] Vir Sen, Lok Sabha, December 2, 1986, Winter Session, Government of India.

[88] Indrajit Gupta, Lok Sabha, July 28, 1986, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[89] Lok Sabha, December 1, 1986, Winter Session, Government of India.

The dominant discourse on causes of the conflict during this phase were articulated around the idea that the conflict was being fuelled from 'outside'; it was represented as a foreign conspiracy to destabilise India and internally driven by 'religious extremists'. Terrorism became a key nodal point around which the conflict was represented and was given as the reason for the dismissal of the state government.

Identity

The distinction between moderate Akalis and extremist Akalis by the Centre served to widen the gulf between political leaders in Punjab as the Centre thought it prudent to negotiate with the moderate elements including Longowal while keeping others such as Tohra and Badal away. That the talks were therefore not inclusive complicated the situation in Punjab as there was lack of unity on the Accord.

On March 26, 1985, the situation in Punjab came up in a discussion on amending the National Security Act in Punjab so as to enable the extension of the Act beyond 3 months. Speaking in favour of the amendment, a Congress MP stated that

> I think the situation merits that this should be extended not only for six months but even further until a sound philosophy of being a part of the Constitution and part of the Indian nationality dawns upon the minds of these Akali people…a few years ago they said that they were Hindus. But now they say that they are a separate race. They want a separate flag and they claim a separate nationality. How on earth can one tolerate such a situation?[90]

This intolerance of the assertion of a separate religious identity of the Sikhs was one fraught with much consternation among the parliamentarians. Others tried to blur the religious identity while calling on the Akalis to declare their 'Indianness':

> Once upon a time we believed that if the religious demands were fulfilled, things would improve. The religious demands have been conceded but nothing has happened…the Sikhs must come forward with a commitment that they are Indians and Punjab is a part of India and no secessionist activity will be

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[90] Raj Mangal Pande, Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

tolerated…India is surrounded by countries which do not believe in secularism…[91]

By this stage, the political discourse in Parliament also focused on the identification of Akalis as extremists. Further, there was a concern that most Sikhs had begun to sympathise with "extremists": "It is regrettable that perhaps the majority of Sikhs, the psychology at least, has become not very different from that of the extremists."[92] Others lamented that the Akali Dal had crossed over, "earlier it used to be said that in the Akali Dal there are moderates such as Longowal and Prakash Singh Badal and there are extremists who are closer to Bhindranwale. Today it appears that there are no moderates and all have become extremists."[93]

For Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi: "Although the Akali leadership have been positive in certain aspects, they have also during the recent past said and done things which have encouraged extremists and terrorists…I would like our friends in the Opposition who know them well to talk to them and convince them that if we have to fight these terrorists and extremists, we must all fight them together." [94]

The release of Longowal and other leaders of the Akali Dal in March, and the appointment of Arjun Singh as Punjab's governor made the issue of negotiations more urgent and this section of Akalis was identified as being "moderate" enough to talk to. By July 1985, the representation of this section of Akalis was more favourable. As one member put it, "a political organisation representing a good section of Sikhs now has come to isolate themselves from the terrorism of extremists."[95] Moreover, the allegiance of these leaders to the Constitution was reiterated as proof of their worthiness: "…The Akali Dal has declared, particularly Mr Longowal, their adherence to non-violence, their opposition to Khalistan, their adherence to the Constitution…"[96]

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[91] Brajamohan Mohanty, Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[92] Indrajit Gupta, Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[93] Zainul Basher, Lok Sabha, March 26, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[94] PM Rajiv Gandhi, Lok Sabha, May 13, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[95] N.Tombi Singh, Lok Sabha, July 24, 1985, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[96] Indrajit Gupta, Lok Sabha, July 24, 1985, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

In July, the Government signed the Punjab accord with Akali leader Longowal who was chosen as the moderate leader worth negotiating with even as others such as Badal and Tohra were left out. In the Lok Sabha, PM Rajiv Gandhi said, "I have signed a memorandum of settlement. This will bring to an end a very difficult period through which the country has passed. It will be the beginning of a new phase of working together to build the country, to build unity and integrity in our country."[97]

The assassination of Longowal in August 1985 was followed by state assembly elections in Punjab, bringing to power an elected government under the Chief Ministership of Surjit Singh Barnala. However, violence continued to rock the state and militant groups continued to flourish. The factionalism of the Akalis was stressed upon in political discourse, but at this stage there was a concerted attempt to distinguish those who were extremists and the others,

> The vast majority, except for this little sliver of a few extremists are against Khalistan…Akali Dal is split into various factions but the preponderant majority is against Khalistan…About the perpetrators, I have one word to say. They must stop the militant way of life at the behest of India's foreign ill-wishers. This is their own Mother India and one's mother should not be hurt…how can we let her get vivisected?[98]

Police chief J.F. Ribeiro, appointed by the Barnala government, unleashed a 'bullet for bullet' policy to wipe out terrorism. He viewed the extremists as "very confident that they will ultimately get Khalistan. People who have trained them in the camps in Pakistan have spent a great deal of time in their indoctrination."[99] The leaders of the movement were identified as "the committee of five men based inside the Golden Temple…the fresh batches of extremists trained in Pakistan often make the Golden Temple their first hideout…"

By the end of December 1986, the focus of the government once again turned to the extremists and terrorists in Punjab, with references to countries like the US and

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[97] Lok Sabha, July 24, 1985, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[98] Congress MP Sparrow, Lok Sabha, April 30, 1986, Budget Session, Government of India.

[99] In an interview to *India Today*, April 30, 1986.

Pakistan in aiding them. RS Sparrow in December 1986, "We are at war in Punjab against militant cum fundamentalist anti-nationals, both internal and external. This is a new type of war with the use of modern sophisticated weapons, aided and abetted with funds, weapons, methods of training according to well-worked out plans."[100] Home Minister Buta Singh said that the state government had arrested certain political leaders including Prakash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra as it had realised that "terrorist activities derive sustenance from the opportunism of certain political elements".[101]

Hence, the framing of identities during this period began with the recognition of there being moderate elements within the Akali party with whom to negotiate with, but within a couple of months of the Accord being signed, this distinction was erased. The discourses were now organised around the nodal points of 'fundamentalists', 'external agents' and 'terrorists'.

Policy

If 1985 started out with continuation of the policies from previous years, the appointment of a new Governor, Arjun Singh, in March, suggested a shift in policy as he worked to get the Centre to release certain Akali leaders from jail and begin negotiations. There was also an underlying theme of terrorism in Punjab being the most pressing issue; and some political leaders were of the opinion that, "We should not encourage terrorism for solving our problems, nor are we to hold talks with terrorists. Talks should continue with others…"[102] On the other hand, the government made it clear that while it was taking all measures to control violence, it was open to negotiations:

> Various measures have been taken to contain terrorist activities. These include police protection to known targets of extremists, identification of sensitive areas, intensive police patrolling, recover of illicit arms and ammunition by organising special raids and combing operations, extensive checks in vulnerable

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[100] Lok Sabha, December 2, 1986, Winter Session, Government of India.

[101] Lok Sabha, December 2, 1986, Winter Session, Government of India.

[102] Brahma Dutt, Lok Sabha, May 13, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

areas, strengthening of police machinery and streamlining of the intelligence set up. The situation in the state is under constant watch and is being regularly reviewed at the highest level…terrorist activities have no place in a democracy and issues must be resolved through discussions only…[103]

In April, the government announced an inquiry into the November riots in Delhi, released some of the Sikh youth who had been lodged in jail and lifted the ban on the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF).

Making his statement in the Lok Sabha on May 13, 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said,

> What we really have to fight is not the political aspect. That is where we must adjust and accommodate always, within the constraints of a united and integral India; that is where we must be flexible. But at the same time we must be very rigid where there is any question of using violence towards those ends, where there is any question of using terrorism towards those ends, where there is any question of threat to the national unity and integrity and where there is a question of a fraction breaking away.

The home minister, SB Chavan said,

> Terrorist activity or extremist activity in any form is going to be dealt with very seriously and for this, whatever organisational structure is necessary, either in intelligence or in police or in paramilitary force, we are going to create whatever structure is necessary for handling a situation of this nature.[104]

While being publicly vocal in condemning violence and extremism, negotiations with Longowal continued under the stewardship of Governor Arjun Singh since April-May and on July 24, 1985, the Government of India signed a memorandum of settlement with the Akali Dal. The Punjab Accord of 1985 was hailed by the Centre as a resolution of the Punjab crisis. The Accord laid out compensation to innocent people killed in Punjab, rehabilitation of Army deserters, enquiry into November anti-Sikh riots, lifting

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[103] Minister of Home Affairs, S.B. Chavan, Lok Sabha, April 22, 1985, Budget Session, Government of India.

[104] Lok Sabha, May 13, 1985, Budget session, Government of India.

of most charges, all India Gurudwara Act, transfer of territories, Centre-state relations and sharing of river waters along with promotion of Punjabi language. The issues of territory transfer while relegating to Commissions, was set for January 26, 1986. The Centre-state relations issue was also relegated to a Commission and sharing of river waters issues transferred to a Tribunal. In essence, the Centre had now come to agree to many of the demands that had been part of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973.

In August 1985, elections for Punjab were announced. Speaking in the Parliament, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said that:

> In the context of recent events in Punjab, the electoral process has acquired a new national significance…will we allow the exercise of free will of the people to be obstructed, frustrated and subverted by the forces of extremism and terrorism…what matters is that the lamp of democracy is not extinguished, what matters is that India wins…A democratic election is the people's answer to the brute force employed by a small section to impose their will on the masses. We shall not allow divisive forces to prevail.[105]

The secrecy in which the talks were held was apparently a deliberate attempt at ensuring its progress. According to Governor Arjun Singh, "That secrecy was the key to success. If we had failed there the accord would never have come about."[106] A number of Sikh organisations and offshoots of the Akali Dal denounced the Accord.

For the BJP Opposition, the government had conceded to the Akalis:

> They have given them so much, what have they gained in return? They should have at least asked them to condemn extremism and declare that they will not allow their shrines to become arsenals and sanctuaries of extremists…The Government did not involve states like Haryana and Rajasthan whose interests were intimately connected with the accord.[107]

The home ministry report of 1985-86 hailed the Punjab Accord as a "landmark" event "in the direction of finding satisfactory solution" to the situation. While it lay out that

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[105] Lok Sabha, August 23, 1985, Winter Session, Government of India.

[106] Arjun Singh quoted in Punjab Breakthrough, *India Today*, August 15, 1985.

[107] Atal Behari Vajpayee, Punjab Breakthrough, India Today, August 15, 1985

most of the issues had been implemented, it mentioned that "the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab will take place simultaneously with the transfer of areas in lieu of Chandigarh to Haryana."

For the Centre, even as it failed to meet the January deadline for transferring Chandigarh to Punjab, the violence in Punjab was now a matter for the state government to resolve. Rajiv Gandhi in July 1986 spoke in the aftermath of a spate of violence and killings in Delhi, "the challenge in Punjab is very squarely a challenge for the state government to rise up to."[108] He also said that:

> We are willing to talk to anyone. But, there are certain buts, that discussion can only be with those who are willing to operate within the framework of our Constitution…we will not categorically talk to anyone who is in our view acting against national interests, who is acting against India's unity and integrity and who in our eyes is not behaving as an Indian should behave. The issue of a separatist state is not negotiable. We will not allow it under any circumstances.

Hence, the policy of the government was to conduct talks only if the Constitution allowed, making redundant any demands that challenged existing constitutional arrangements.

The appointment of J.F. Ribeiro as Punjab's police chief by the new Barnala government was an attempt to overhaul the police force and to motivate them. His 'bullet for bullet' policy was meant to reignite the morale of the forces and give them sweeping powers to counter violence. He was also not against entering the Golden Temple albeit he said, "in certain situations it can be counterproductive as in the case of Operation Blue Star. At the same time, unless you act there will be no way of stopping the terrorists. We have to decide on that very carefully…"[109]

By mid-1986, even as politically the government felt that the state government was in charge, the Centre was beefing up its security apparatus in the state. This included the

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[108] Lok Sabha, July 28, 1986, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[109] In an interview to *India Today*, April 30, 1986.

creation of an elite anti-terrorist unit called the National Security Guards (NSG). According to Ghulam Nabi Azad, minister of state in the Department of states,

> None of the paramilitary forces that we have is trained to deal with terrorists. We are making use of the CRPF at the moment in different parts of the country, particularly in Punjab, but the CRPF is not specially trained to combat terrorists. That is why it was felt necessary that we should have a specially trained force which can be used against terrorists…organised terrorism has been introduced in the border state of Punjab and this conspiracy has global ramifications. We also know that the forces of violence and destabilisation are not only abetted but also aided by alien forces who are hostile to India.[110]

In December 1986, a debate took place on the situation in Punjab following a spate of killings in the state. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statement in the face of accusations that the Centre was not taking any action,

> The Centre does not get direct powers to act on law and order situation in a State…the only time the Centre gets authority is when there is President's Rule…therefore there is no way that the Centre can directly intervene. We can send forces, we can help. But we come under the authority of the local executive which is the State government…Every route is not open. The Constitution gives us certain paths under which we can act…[111]

Amidst accusations that the Centre had failed to implement the Accord, PM Rajiv Gandhi on December 1, 1986 said,

> There has been no deviation on the accord on our part and we would like to complete the Accord now. We will complete it the first chance we get. At the moment you be aware we are stuck on the Chandigarh aspect because the Punjab government was not willing to do certain things that the Commission said should be done. We are stuck on the canal because the Punjab government is not constructing the canal.

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[110] Lok Sabha, August 20, 1986, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[111] Lok Sabha, December 1, 1986, Winter Session, Government of India.

The government expressed alarm at the "continued terrorist activities" in Punjab in its report in 1986-87. The government reconstituted a National Integration Council in 1986 and the report mentioned that in its first meeting it adopted a resolution "calling upon the people of Punjab, Haryana and the adjoining areas to dissociate from those who preached violence and secession." The Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Special Powers Act 1983 continued in certain areas in the state

> To enable the armed forces to take effective action to check terrorist activities. Special anti-terrorist squads have been set up and raids are being conducted at the hideouts of extremists, their harbourers and supporters. During the year a number of terrorists have been arrested and some major terrorist gangs have been busted. Some terrorists have also been killed in encounters with the police. A substantial quantity of arms and ammunition has been recovered.[112]

There was also now a widespread belief that the country was facing a secessionist conflict by a small group of fundamentalists. Regarding the territorial dispute and transfer of areas, the government had appointed another commission under Justice Venkataramiah in April 1986 and while it asked the state governments of Punjab and Haryana to mutually decide the matter, no agreement could be reached and the Centre referred the issue to Justice Desai with the consequence that the matter remained unresolved as an amendment was made that did away with the time limit for submitting his recommendations to the Government.

The period 1985-1987 was in many ways a crucial period of the conflict. A change in policy of the government and the representation of a section of Akalis as "moderates" with whom to negotiate shifted the dynamics and resulted in an agreement called the Punjab Accord. With this Accord came an acknowledgment of the demands of the Akalis which had been presented to the Centre since 1973 when they came out with the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The same demands which had been termed "secessionist" by Indira Gandhi were now ceded. However, the manner in which the Centre conducted the negotiations in such secrecy, while marginalising those it considered to be "extremist" Akalis left an incomplete 'resolution' of the conflict. Crucially, negotiations on the Accord also failed to include representatives of the Haryana

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[112] Annual Report of the Ministry of Home Affairs, 1986-87, Government of India.

government, a key actor for any successful resolution of the conflict. The conduct of state assembly elections in Punjab in September 1985 was considered by New Delhi to be a mandate of the people's acceptance of the democratic process but the accompanying violence that continued and indeed intensified in the state, meant that the conflict was far from over. The Indian state also now sought to blame the mayhem in Punjab on the incompetence of the Akali government. Moreover, the lack of implementation of the Accord on key issues of transfer of territory and water sharing was beginning to be blamed on the unwillingness of the state governments of Punjab and Haryana to cooperate on the matter. By the end of 1986, the discourses of the state once again became dominated by references to the "terrorists" and "secessionists" who were driven by masterminds from outside the country. Security apparatus in the state was strengthened; police training was intensified and a new police chief appointed. Special paramilitary forces were sent in to help the state in flushing out extremists, and in 1987, faced with ever increasing numbers of killings, the state government headed by Barnala was dismissed.

Phase 3: 1987-1993: Anti-terrorism thrust

Key events

1987	Barnala govt dismissed and Punjab placed under President's Rule
May 1988	Operation Black Thunder led by police chief KPS Gill against militants taking refuge in the Golden Temple
1989	Demand for Khalistan raised by a group of militants in Punjab
December 1989	New non-Congress government at the Centre led by Prime Minister VP Singh
1990	Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, Talks between Centre and extremists
November 1991	Army reinducted in Punjab

February 1992	Punjab Legislative Assembly elections, boycotted by all Akali factions
1993	KPS Gill announces end of terrorism in Punjab

Causes

In May 1987, the home minister discussed the situation in Punjab and elevated it to an "unprecedented" level, "the past two months has been an unprecedented period in the history of Punjab so far as the killings by terrorists is concerned."[113] Further, "what made matters worse was the deep involvement of some of the state ministers and their relations with the terrorists and the unwanted attempted interference with the functioning of the police by them some of the leaders of the ruling party."

The conflict was at this stage considered to be entirely secessionist and extremist in nature. For home minister Buta Singh, "it is not a law and order situation. We are trying to fight against those forces which are out to destroy the country, which are out to fragment the country."[114] The 1987-88 annual home ministry report mentioned how 1987 "witnessed escalation in violent and secessionist activities and emergence of a fundamentalist movement" which led to the imposition of President's Rule in May 1987.

The conflict was framed as Pakistan-sponsored:

> Operation Black Thunder gave a severe jolt to the nucleus of terrorist activities in Pakistan…While the role of Pakistan in aiding and abetting terrorism in Punjab is the most prominent one, it is part of a widespread international conspiracy to destabilise India, for example, pro-Khalistan elements

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[113] Buta Singh, Lok Sabha, May 12, 1987, Budget Session, Government of India.

[114] Lok Sabha, November 9, 1987, Winter Session, Government of India.

demonstrated in front of Indian missions abroad to register their protest against Operation Black Thunder…[115]

By 1989, the perception of the causes suggests a shift from a secessionist one to one now driven by pure criminal activity. On May 8 1989, even as the government sought to extend President's Rule in Punjab, the home minister said that the situation had changed and that:

> The governor has reported that while it is true that the number of killings is still large, it has to be noted that most of the killings are today not for achieving any separatist or fundamentalist ideology but for mainly anti-social and criminal reasons such as robbery, kidnapping, land grabbing, looting, extortion etc. In other words, a number of dangerous criminals armed with sophisticated weapons and arms are continuing their efforts to take advantage of the situation…Khalistani posters or slogans are not generally seen or heard these days…[116]

The home minister said that earlier the reform movement of the Sikhs had taken on an extremist hue and pitted religious communities against each other but the situation had improved such that the issue now was "the continuing battle between groups of terrorists and law enforcing agency. It has to be met with very a heavy hand and with full determination."[117]

By July 1989, the government was also vehemently against any reorganisation of federal arrangements as per the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR). Further, the discourse at this time was dominated by references to external powers aiding the conflict. Speaking in the Parliament, Minister of State in the Home Affairs ministry P Chidambaram said,

> It is these two powerful factors-one internal, political, giving legitimacy to extremists and their movement, and the other external, perhaps international

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[115] MoS in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Santosh Mohan Dev, Lok Sabha, August 2, 1988, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[116] Lok Sabha, May 9, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

[117] Lok Sabha, May 9, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

which gives arms, money and support to the terrorists which has made for this combustible mixture in Punjab…the situation is a very difficult situation….[118]

He also said that the Sarkaria Commission had given its report on the ASR and observed that the ASR demand to restrict the Union's powers to defence, foreign affairs, currency and general communications only meant that "under such arrangements the country cannot survive as one integrated nation." Further, he said,

> If this Resolution is accepted it will mean that the survival of India as an integrated country is in peril. Therefore we reject the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. It is the support to the ASR that has given legitimacy to extremists. It has given respect to the Khalistan demand…This is the problem of Punjab and unless you come to grips with this problem, unless you understand the game played by the factions of the Akali Dal, unless you understand the legitimacy and respect which the Akali Dal is giving to extremism, terrorists and militants-I am not saying you are extremists but you are giving legitimacy and respect to the terrorists and extremists in Punjab-you cannot deal with this.

For a brief period between December 1989 and 1991, the National Front government at the Centre tried to make amends for previous Congress government failures in Punjab but lack of a cohesive policy and all round confusion prevailed. Prime Minister VP Singh visited the Golden Temple and spoke of the need of a "healing touch" for the people of Punjab. The new government however continued to espouse external factors as the main source of the causes of the conflict. Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Syed said, "Every time there has been a rise in terrorist activity, the source of guidance and motivation appears to have come from outside our borders."[119]

The government also sought to draw Pakistan into the discourse on causes and home minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed said, "it is obvious that they (Pakistan) are making every effort to communalise the situation in Punjab and Kashmir…"[120]

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[118] Lok Sabha, July 18, 1989, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[119] Lok Sabha, March 22, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

[120] Lok Sabha, May 2, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

By November 1991, a new Congress government was at the Centre under the Prime Ministership of Narasimha Rao. In the same year, the Army was reinducted in Punjab and a new impetus given to the Centre's counter-terrorism strategy. KPS Gill was transferred back to Punjab to lead the police force. The selection of KPS Gill as police chief was also symbolic, for as a Sikh officer known for his hard-line views on using force against militants, the government hoped to achieve some measure of legitimacy in Punjab.

In August 1992, a minister in the home ministry gave a report saying that violent incidents had decreased and said, "with the killings of some of the top terrorists and faced with depletion of their ranks, the Pakistan backed terrorist outfits have become panicky…the security forces have taken note of the challenge and have initiated various operational steps so as to combat terrorists threat and ensure protection to the families of the policemen."[121] The report of 1990-91 put Punjab and Kashmir together and mentioned "terrorist and subversive activities continued unabated" with aid and abetment from across the border.

The state assembly elections in February 1992 installed a new Congress government under the Chief Ministership of Beant Singh, the onus of counter terrorism fell to the state government. The causes of the conflict were no longer thought to be any real political grievance, but reduced entirely to criminality, terrorism and fundamentalism till such time that each of the extremist outfits were not driven underground or obsolete.

Identity

The identification of "terrorists" and "secessionists" during this phase went hand in hand with their representation as foreign-aided extremist's intent on dividing the country. Home minister Buta Singh said, "Today the Sikhs are being converted into fundamentalists and terrorists…Sikhs are being converted into neo-Sikhism. Hence it is essential to understand the Sikh psyche in Punjab today."[122] He also said that most of these people were not Indians but nationals of western countries. Further, "whatever resolutions they have passed till date, they have supported the division of the country.

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[121] MM Jacob, Lok Sabha, August 18, 1992, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[122] Lok Sabha, November 9, 1987, Winter Session, Government of India.

They do not want to hold talks with the Central government short of Khalistan.."[123] He also said that these extremists, including the Panthic Committee[124], was behind killings and anti-national activities and had not abjured violence. "Who brought this Panthic Committee inside the Golden Temple? Was it not Mr Tohra? Was he not responsible for handing over the whole complex?" There was a clear reference to Akali leaders as being hand in glove with the extremists.

In the aftermath of Operation Black Thunder in May 1988, the government stated in Parliament that

> The disclosures of the material recovered from the Golden Temple complex after Operation Black Thunder show the close connection between Pakistan and the terrorist groups…after Operation Black Thunder a number of Sikh terrorist leaders based in Pakistan took stock of the situation. The Panthic Committee and the Babbar Khalsa sent out instructions to their members in India to step up violence…[125]

In May 1988, the home minister said that the Governor of Punjab had submitted his report to the President and in it he had mentioned that

> Increase in the killings of civilians by terrorist activities are mainly due to a new factor being added to the Punjab problem by the illegal intrusion of trained terrorists and smugglers with sophisticated arms and ammunition into Punjab from Pakistan with the avowed object of disintegrating and destabilising the State…the Governor is of the view that Pakistan is behind the encounters which have taken place near our border areas. He has further mentioned that a number of centres have been set up by Pakistan in their territory for the purpose of training infiltrators into India.

He also said that he had recommended extension of President's Rule in light of the "firmness required" and to maintain the morale of the security forces. There was also a

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[123] Lok Sabha, November 9, 1987, Winter Session, Government of India.

[124] Panthic Committee refers to an underground group of insurgents formed in 1986 which claimed to represent the extremists and issued statements from the Golden Temple. (Crenshaw 2010), p. 395.

[125] MoS in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Lok Sabha, Santosh Mohan Dev, August 2, 1988, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

reference made to the links of Sikh extremists with the Mujahideen groups in Afghanistan. The minister of state in the Home Ministry, P Chidambaram said,

> We are aware that there have been some contracts between the extremists who are operating in Punjab, not the terrorists themselves but their mentors abroad, and the Afghan Mujahideen. Government has information that in 1985 some Sikh extremists came into contact with Afghan Mujahideen in the United Kingdom…obviously there is some contact between the two groups in the matter of purchase of arms.[126]

On the other hand, there was a parallel discourse of the need to address ordinary Sikhs including the youth, for which there was a call for development and employment oriented policies. In a discussion on the budget for Punjab in September 1990, the government defended its policies in the state and said,

> What is needed is not merely irrigation projects, what is needed is not merely the employment problem, they are necessary to remove the discontent of Punjab, but the whole psyche of Sikhs is also to be looked after….let us try to see that the disturbed psyche of friends, brothers and sisters is healed.[127]

He also said that various financial programmes had been started in Punjab with regards to development works. He said, "I fully agree with members that we have to tackle this problem in a federal spirit". When asked about avenues for employment for youth and lack of industries. He said, "if youth remain unemployed and they do not get opportunities, terrorists utilise them…they play as stooges in the hands of the corrupt. They play in the hands of the Pakistanis..."

On October 5, 1990, PM VP Singh once again reiterated that though they were in favour of elections, the atmosphere was not conducive. He said that the threat from across the border continued to be present, "Pakistan is also busy in its activities across the border and there is no abatement." Also, "the present government and supporting parties had created an atmosphere that every Sikh is not looked at with suspicion…We

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[126] Lok Sabha, April 6, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

[127] Minister of Finance, Madhu Dandavate, Lok Sabha, September 5, 1990, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

do not suspect Sikh brethren, we trust them. They have sacrificed themselves for this country. They have contributed in the making and upliftment of this country." By 1992-93, the discourses on identity of the actors had succeeded in demarcating extremists from ordinary Sikhs. The boycott by the Akalis of the state legislative elections in 1992 resulting from the dictates issued by extremist groups was termed unfortunate.

Policy

With the identification of causes and identities being dominated by references to the extremist nature of the conflict, the policy during this phase was largely one of counter-terrorism led by police and paramilitary action. Any references to human rights violations were acknowledged but considered peripheral to the task at hand. In the Parliament, Home minister Buta Singh defended the actions of the Police chief Ribeiro, known for his bullet for bullet policy, as follows, "the whole country knows at what personal risks the Director General of Police in Punjab has been discharging his duties…wild allegations including that of fostering communalism were falsely made against him…"[128] He also said that the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that made it impossible for the state government to control despite the best intentions of Chief Minister Barnala. Therefore he said, the state assembly was placed under suspended animation and President's Rule imposed in May 1987. Buta Singh said that elections had been held in the hope that a democratic government would be able to solve the situation but,

> In these 21 months our hopes remain unfulfilled and the democratically elected government was not able to tackle the situation fully…the political people who were expected to tackle the complicated problems were busy in seeking positions and those who were not given any position deserted the party….the state government did not cooperate in implementing Article 249[129] and the people had to undergo enormous hardship for 21 months.[130]

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[128] Lok Sabha, May 12, 1987, Budget Session, Government of India.

[129] Article 249 of the Indian Constitution gives the Parliament power to legislate on matters in the State List in what is termed as the 'national interest'.

[130] Lok Sabha, May 12, 1987, Budget Session, Government of India.

He also said that Chandigarh had to be transferred only simultaneously with the transfer of territories to Haryana as it was a condition stipulated in the Accord.

In November 1987, in a discussion on extending President's Rule in Punjab, home minister Buta Singh said that

> The Governor of Punjab's assessment is that when President's Rule was promulgated in Punjab the state administration had to deal with two dangerous trends-fundamentalist terrorism in all its destructive and anti-national manifestation and ordinary terrorism that was both dangerous and anti-national in character...the Governor is of the view that if a popular government is installed now the present firmness will go and the people thrown into a state of nervousness and disarray. Moreover there is no party that can lead any government effectively in the present condition of the state with any firmness or determination. "[131]

Hence, elections were at this stage delegitimised due to the fear that the structures of force required to deal with terrorism would collapse. Extraordinary measures and their amendments were made legitimate owing to the securitised framing of the situation in Punjab. That these policies were proving to be successful counter-terrorism measures was highlighted in official discourses:

> The paramilitary forces have been deployed in greater strength and given legal powers to so as to enable them to deal with any terrorist effectively…over a dozen notorious terrorists have been killed in encounters or apprehended. Their leaders who had links not only inside the country but also outside have been eliminated. The Dal Khalsa and National Council of Khalistan have been banned; patrolling of police and paramilitary forces has been intensified… Through President's Rule we will endeavour to root out extremism and separatism from Punjab at the earliest possible."[132]

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[131] Lok Sabha, November 6, 1987, Winter Session, Government of India.

[132] Home minister Buta Singh, Lok Sabha, November 9, 1987, Winter session, Government of India.

The 1987-88 report of the home ministry noted that "anti-terrorist" measures had been intensified and "a large number of suspected terrorists" been killed or apprehended. In November 1987, President's Rule was extended for another six months.

If, on the one hand, these security-centric policies were being instituted and carried on from previous phases, now, there was also a parallel policy targeting societal cohesion which suggests that the government was moving towards a normalisation in Punjab by co-opting and directing civil society organisations. These token peace committees coexisted with armed village defence committees. The rationale behind these groups was to instil in the state "*lok shakti*", or people's power:

> The Governor of Punjab has formed more than 2000 peace and development committees which are represented by all parties…their job is to solve the local problems of every village and to check the growing influence of terrorism through persuasion and mass contact. There are cases where villagers armed with lathis have killed terrorists armed with stenguns. Such confidence has been created… It is being considered that a village force should be organised so that they may be supplied arms to combat terrorism…these committees are proving quite successful and a lot of information is being received through them. We should channelize our efforts to mobilise 'Lok Shakti' i.e. the power of the people so that Punjab may come out of the mire of terrorism and may regain its high position of being a progressive state."[133]

With Operation Black Thunder in 1988, a number of extremists sheltering in the Golden Temple were flushed out in a joint police-army operation led by KPS Gill. Unlike the infamous Operation Blue Star, this time the operation was conducted with minimal damage and targeted only the militants. In May 1989, the home minister justified the government's policies of force and highlighted their success as proof of continuing President's Rule:

> The entrenchment of the Khalistani terrorists in the sacred precincts of the Golden Temple has been dismantled…Punjab has progressed considerably in the economic sphere. The Governor is of the view that we must not waver or falter or dilute in any way our determination to fight the forces of anti-national

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[133] Home minister Buta Singh, Lok Sabha, November 9, 1987, Winter Session, Government of India.

terrorism…for this a strong and committed administration which can in present circumstances be only under President's Rule with the Central and State governments working in total cohesion, cooperation and coordination under a determined and unified control… the Governor has assessed that any elections held for the Assembly in the present disturbed and uncertain situation are likely to result in further confusion and chaos.[134]

Moreover, the ruling party continued to insist that talks were still part of the policy of the government but the Akalis had not reciprocated. RL Bhatia of the Congress said,

There was an allegation that the Congress Party is not talking to the political parties and consulting them…Our position is very clear. We want to talk to everyone…Even now our door is open. The Akali party has not come forward to cooperate in this negotiation and they have put certain conditions…if you are really sincere about solving the Punjab tangle then there should be no condition…the responsibility of the present Punjab situation lies on the Akali Party, not on the Congress Party which is prepared to talk.[135]

By 1989, implementation of the Punjab Accord had also fallen into disarray and the government continued to distance itself from it. According to the home minister Buta Singh,

The very nature of the Accord is such that the government of India can do nothing on its own. We can only assist the state governments namely the governments of Punjab and Haryana. The issues are bilateral and they have to be implemented together. Unfortunately it has not taken off…in the process, Haryana got a new government…[136]

The relationship of the centre with the Akali factions too continued to be hostile. A number of Akali leaders were detained in 1989 for protesting against fake encounters and police brutalities. For the government, these protests were undemocratic:

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[134] Lok Sabha, May 8, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

[135] Lok Sabha, May 9, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

[136] Lok Sabha, May 9, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

Now is that the way to bring normalcy to Punjab? They are contributing to the situation which is already very tense. Therefore my submission is that nobody is pleased to keep the representatives of the people behind bars but with a heavy heart, in the interests of the nation, one has to take that step. It was in this context that the step was taken and they were again taken into custody.[137]

Moreover, it was reiterated that "We were always prepared to hold talks with any person provided he is willing to do so within the framework of the Constitution and take a pledge to abjure violence and preserve the unity and integrity of the country."[138] The government continued to delegitimise elections and democracy in Punjab. MoS Chidambaram said, "As long as the Akali party is so fragmented and fractured and is unwilling to take a resolute position against terrorism, it is very difficult to hold elections and usher in a democratic government…not one Sikh leader of eminence in their parties has condemned terrorism…"[139]

A change in leadership at the Centre in December 1989 could have resulted in a departure from Congress policies but the short tenure coupled with the inability to break with old policies meant that little changed. The new National Front government[140] tried to centre its policies on a 'healing touch'. Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Syed said that the National Front government was interested in giving a "healing touch" to the "wounded sentiments" of the people of Punjab. [141] However, lack of a cohesive policy and reliance on previous policies of force continued as the main thrust in Punjab. Talks were held between the Centre and Akalis but the government continued to make violence and terrorism the main issue to be tackled. Home minister Mufti Mohammed Syed said,

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[137] Lok Sabha, May 9, 1989, Budget Session, Government of India.

[138] Home Minister Buta Singh, Lok Sabha, July 18, 1989, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[139] Lok Sabha, October 12, 1989, Government of India.

[140] The National Front government was formed in 1989 and referred to a coalition of non-Congress parties led by the Janata Dal that had previously been in the Opposition. VP Singh became Prime Minister of this government.

[141] Lok Sabha, March 22, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

The PM has talked to Punjab MPs and the leaders of the Akali Dal, the issue of holding elections has been discussed in great detail…the people of Punjab are prepared to take part in elections. The foremost priority is to curb and contain terrorism then conduct elections in Punjab. It is not advisable to hold elections in Punjab without bringing violence under control.[142]

The same was reiterated by Prime Minister VP Singh: "If elections are announced there will be terror and exodus of Hindu brethren and there will be reaction in the entire country. Then the people will participate in elections on gunpoint and there may be a proposal to secede from the country, after that this problem will be internationalised."[143] By this time, there was also a growing focus on the need for development packages for the state so that the youth could "choose a right path instead of treading on a wrong one… the problem of Punjab can be solved only by tackling the problems of the youth of Punjab and by taking them into confidence."

This shift in discourse on policy by focusing on the youth and development measures also meant that political grievances of the past were being gradually de-emphasised. By 1989-90, security forces were still the dominant state apparatus in Punjab and "continued to mount pressure on the terrorists" and raids were being conducted on their hideouts for apprehending them. In 1990, the home minister stated that the "our common objective is to mobilise public opinion and to educate people of Punjab against terrorism and secessionism."[144] He also said that with regards to talks, they would be held only "within the constitutional framework."

The Congress party came back in power at the Centre in 1991. In the same year, the Army was reinducted in Punjab and a massive anti-terrorism mandate given to police and armed forces to crush terrorists. The years 1991, 1992 saw a massive operation against militants and gross human rights violations took place by both militant groups and security forces. Much of these militant attacks were termed acts of terrorism and the terror discourse made justifiable the brutal force used by security forces. By 1992-

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[142] Mufti Mohamed Sayeed, Lok Sabha, October 1, 1990, Government of India.

[143] Lok Sabha, October 5, 1990, Government of India.

[144] Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed in the Lok Sabha, May 2, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

93, events in Kashmir and terror attacks in Bombay had created a wider discourse of terrorism affecting the country.

Elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly were held in February 1992 amidst a voter turnout of about 25% in which terrorists call to boycott the elections ensured the Akalis stayed out of contesting the elections. The state Congress government under Chief Minister Beant Singh gave KPS Gill as the police chief widespread powers to arrest and detain militants and the result of this crackdown was a huge decrease in civilian casualties by 1993, when KPS declared that terrorism had been defeated.

The policies in Punjab between 1987-1993 reflect an emphasis on the counter-terror approach that relied on police and paramilitary forces to eliminate the 'terrorists'. The continuation of President's Rule and its justification by the state in terms of counter-insurgency effectiveness dashed any real democratic policy response in Punjab. The arrest of Akali members for their protest against human rights violations also feeds into this discourse. Simultaneous with this security-centric approach, peace and development committees were instituted to address the needs of civil society and youth-centred policies relating to development measures also signal a move towards establishing democracy. Elections to the state assembly were held only 1992 and despite the low voter turnout and Akali boycott, the government viewed this, and the crushing of terrorism by force, as signs of the end of the conflict in Punjab.

Between 1987 and 1993, Punjab witnessed ever increasing levels of violence as a number of extremist militant groups wreaked havoc in the state. Successive police and paramilitary operations ensured that the period saw high rates of militant and police casualties. Discourses of the state on matters related to causes, identities and policies suggest an exclusive focus on counter-terrorism as the best way of curbing violence. The dismissal of the state government in 1987 was followed by five years of direct rule from New Delhi. The governments in New Delhi during this period were unanimous in the continuance of President's Rule so as to check terrorism, thereby delegitimizing elections. There was a concerted attempt in the public discourses to link extremism in Punjab with terror groups operating from outside the border. This was especially so from 1989 onwards when events in Kashmir and Afghanistan began to gain national and international attention. The government continued to view the Akalis as being subservient to the extremist groups with the effect that in 1992 when elections were

held, the Akalis, in deference to the call for boycott form these groups, did indeed stay away from the electoral process. When a state government was elected in 1992, headed by the Congress, the conflict in Punjab was thrust entirely on it to resolve. The Chief Minister appointed KPS Gill as police chief and under him, an aggressive counter-terrorism strategy was enforced which ultimately saw violence to have reduced to an all-time low in 1993. It was now believed, that with low levels of violence, and with an elected state government in place, that the conflict in Punjab was finally over. Unimplemented issues of the Punjab Accord, such as transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, were relegated to the backburner as the Centre chose to distance itself from it, blaming governments in Punjab and Haryana for any lack of coordination on these issues. Moreover, the attention of the Centre had by now shifted to Kashmir, which was becoming yet another tinderbox ready to erupt.

Conclusion

As one of the first and most deadly conflicts to have challenged the Indian state after its independence in 1947, Punjab left a legacy that has since ensured that any violent conflict needs to be approached from a counter-terror perspective of using brute force to defeat terrorism and violence. That Punjab was a "success" gives further credibility to this policy. While literature on the Punjab conflict is exhaustive and detailed, this chapter provided a unique analysis of the discourses at the time that reflect broader security strategies of the State and the legitimization of these policies in a way that previous research has failed to do.

The causes of the conflict ranged from Akali political frustration, to extremism and fundamentalism, to foreign or Pakistani influence. Towards the end, terrorism became the most dominant discourse on causes of the conflict. Political grievances were acknowledged until 1985 when the Punjab Accord was signed, but subsequent failures at implementation, and ever increasing levels of violence signalled to the government the futility of political negotiations. Moreover, the insistence of holding talks "within the framework of the constitution" often proved a stumbling block for fruitful negotiations. PM Indira Gandhi's assessment in the early stages that the Sikhs felt alienated "for some reason" shows the indifference and indeed callousness in approaching the conflict with seriousness at this early stage of the conflict. By 1985, even as a new state government came to power under the Akalis, causes for the crisis

were blamed on this state government for failing to protect law and order. By the end of the 1980s, the conflict in Punjab was largely represented as a terrorist issue, with backing from foreign sources and Pakistan.

The Akalis were held responsible for the chaos in Punjab and their identification as anti-nationals and hand in glove with extremists and foreign forces only widened the distrust between the two. Discourses on identity also made frequent references to the valour of the Sikhs during India's independence and the close relations between Sikhs and Hindus as a way of negating the Akali's demands for recognition of a Sikh identity as distinct from the Hindus. The idea of any religious community calling itself a 'nation' was problematic for the Indian State and served to delegitimise their demands as being secessionist, for, in the words of the Indira Gandhi, "we are all one nation." The framing of the prime movers of the conflict as Pakistan-sponsored or originating outside India also denied local agency and attempted to fix the causes and identities as foreign or disconnected with the internal situation in Punjab. Moreover, by highlighting the religious identity, the government's discourses tended to focus on secularism and communalism as the main concern for the government.

In terms of policy responses, one of the earliest actions of the government was to dismiss the Akali government in Punjab in 1980 and install President's Rule. The government also introduced a National Security Bill in 1980 to provide for extraordinary measures of arrest and detention and used these measures in Punjab. The discourses on the causes of the conflict had already pinned much of the blame on the Akalis and their identification as anti-nationals only made more justifiable the denial of political voice to them. Despite the negative framing of the Akalis and their demands, the government held talks with them but these talks made little progress. The coming together of the Akali party and Bhindranwale alarmed the Indian government and in 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi approved Operation Blue Star to eliminate all 'terrorists' and 'extremists' who had taken refuge in the Golden Temple. This army-led operation was legitimised as necessary for 'national interest' as the plan of the extremists was framed as 'secession' and violence. Indeed, the discourses of the government in the aftermath of the operation highlighted the success of the policy based on the killings of some of the extremist leaders such as Bhindranwale.

In terms of policies, there was a change in emphasis once Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister after Indira Gandhi's assassination. The anti-Sikh riots of 1984 also changed the representation of demands of the Akalis as justice and rehabilitation of victims were added to the list. Under Rajiv Gandhi, an initiative was taken to negotiate with chosen 'moderate' Akali leaders and an agreement was signed between the government and Akali leader Longowal in July 1985. If this agreement acknowledged various demands of the Akalis that had hitherto been termed secessionist, the failure to include key stakeholders-such as the Haryana government, and the division of the Akali party ensured that the Accord was not going to be easy to implement. While the government tried to install some measure of democracy in Punjab by holding state elections, the new government under Akali leader Barnala struggled to cope with increasing violence and lack of commitment by the Centre. Moreover, the Centre's discourses now ascribed all blame for the situation in Punjab to the fledgling state government. On matters of implementation of the Accord, there was now a tendency by the Centre to wash its hands off the matter by laying the blame on the Akali party for failing to negotiate with the Haryana government. These discourses then made possible the dismissal of the state government in 1987 and the reinstatement of President's Rule.

By the end of the 1980s, the government represented the situation in Punjab as a purely terrorist and criminal conflict and police and paramilitary operations were stepped up to deal with the violence. Acknowledgement of political causes and lack of implementation on the Accord were barely mentioned and the focus was entirely on 'terrorism' in the state. Policies towards the 1990s were oriented to manage violence in the state through strengthening of the police and paramilitary forces. By this time, opposition discourses pressuring the Centre to establish democracy in Punjab through elections were side-lined as the government insisted that the 'time was not right' as it would interfere with the anti-terrorism operations being conducted in the state. It was only in 1993 that state assembly elections were finally held in Punjab and despite an Akali boycott and abysmal voter turnout, a new Congress-led government won power in Punjab after six years of President's Rule. It was also in 1993 that police chief KPS Gill declared that 'terrorism' had been 'defeated' in Punjab. The end of large scale violence was, for the Indian government, a sign of the end of the conflict in Punjab.

The pattern of security policy in Punjab then suggests that the Indian state's reluctance to take the situation seriously in its early stages was in part responsible for the

downward spiral thereon. By framing the conflict in terms of 'secessionist', 'extremist' or 'foreign' discourses, the government ignored key political grievances and considered the Akali party as 'anti-nationals' who were acting out of frustration. At the same time, even though it chose to hold talks with the Akalis, these discourses served to widen the distrust between the two, and the insistence on negotiating only within the framework of the Constitution precluded any fruitful outcome. That the discourses chose to ignore the reforms it had promised shows how in the end, the policy discourses transformed the original demands. The discursive representation of the causes and identities of the actors worked to uphold a securitised notion of the threat in Punjab. This is also maintained the power structures within the Indian state where the Centre is more powerful than the state. In essence, the policies were legitimised through the hegemonic discourses of locating the conflict as primarily a terrorist conflict that needed to be approached through the use of violent force.

Chapter 4: A discourse theoretical analysis of the Kashmir conflict

Kashmir, with its international fame, has been India's most protracted internal conflict. Its intractability allows us to analyse those key moments at which the Indian state came closer to resolution or where there were opportunities lost. An analysis of discourses elucidates the ways in which the main issues in the conflict were discussed and debated which in itself throws light on the types of policies which were legitimised or made more likely by this discourse.

Using this methodology, this chapter sets out the main discourses of the Indian state on Kashmir as was being debated by policymakers in India. Conceptually, the analysis links representation of the conflict with the issues of causes, identity and practice which form the nodal points around which meanings are constituted and discourses are organised. The conflict in Kashmir can be considered along two intersecting/interlinking dimensions—the bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan on the one hand, and the conflict between India and Kashmir on the other hand. The peculiar status of Kashmir lends itself to these dichotomies. In this thesis, the focus will be on this latter relationship since it is concerned with domestic security policy strategies of the Indian state.

Drawing on the conceptual questions that this thesis seeks to explore, three broad categories are analysed in detail-cause of the conflict, identity of the actors, and policy suggestions. These answer the crucial question in conflict situations and the central question in this thesis:

How is the conflict in Kashmir understood by the Indian state and does this change over time? How are policy options evaluated and legitimized and were there alternative discourses?

Background of the conflict

Before 1947, Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state in the colonial empire of a united India. The last viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten, gave the princely states two options at the time of independence and lapse of British rule—they could join either

India or Pakistan but independence was not a choice. Even as the subcontinent was partitioned into India and Pakistan, the maharaja of Kashmir sought to remain independent for over two months after August 15, 1947. The deteriorating law and order situation in Kashmir led to a tiff between the maharaja and the government of Pakistan. India, on the other hand, made promises to the maharaja of material support in the hope that he would accede. It was the invasion of armed tribesmen from the North West Frontier of Pakistan that made Hari Singh finally beseech India for military help and give up any hope for independence.[145]

Much controversy surrounds the details of events between October 24, 1947 and October 27 when Indian troops arrived in Kashmir. India maintained that the instrument of accession was signed on October 26 making Kashmir a part of Indian territory. Pakistan however protested; it maintained that the situation in Kashmir was the result of a popular uprising of the Kashmiris against the maharaja and in favour of joining Pakistan. Pakistan believed the accession of the maharaja was based on fraud and violence and considers it illegal.

Prolonged fighting between Indian troops and Pakistani troops continued well into 1948. Deadlocked talks between the leaders of the two states led to the involvement of the United Nations. A UN mediated ceasefire in 1949 followed resolutions urging both India and Pakistan to resolve the matter impartially and both urged to reduce and withdraw armed forces. India was called upon to hold a plebiscite as soon as conditions were made favourable. The ceasefire line divided the state of J&K into two—Kashmir Valley, Ladakh and bulk of the Jammu region remained in India, while Mirpur-Muzaffarabad belt in Jammu became known as Azad Pakistan and along with the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan (renamed Northern Areas), came under Pakistan control. The UN resolutions could not be implemented and its involvement had by the late 1950s ceased to be viable. India and Pakistan could not come to common terms in matters regarding implementation of the resolutions.

The terms of Kashmir's accession guaranteed it a special status in India not given to any other state. Legally, India's jurisdiction was limited to foreign affairs, defence and communications. In the years to come, however, India sought to integrate more

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[145] See for example, (Schofield 2010), (Behera 2000)

comprehensively the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian framework. In 1952, under the Delhi Agreement, the special status of Kashmir was included under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

By 1953, relations between Abdullah, leader of the main Kashmiri nationalist party and Prime Minister Nehru soured; for the former, India's secularism was increasingly showing communal tendencies, for the latter, Abdullah's commitment to India was under suspicion. In August 1953, Abdullah was dismissed as prime minister of Kashmir and put under house arrest. The following year, the Constituent Assembly formally ratified the accession of J&K and effectively ended discussions of a plebiscite. In 1965, a new order was passed that enabled the President of India to govern the state of J&K. The Shimla Agreement signed between India and Pakistan after Bangladesh's war for independence in 1971 stipulated that the ceasefire line would be converted into a Line of Control and neither side would try to alter it unilaterally. Further India insisted that a solution to the Kashmir issue in future would be settled bilaterally and not involve any international party including the UN. Elections in J&K in 1972 were held virtually without opposition since the Indian government had banned the Plebiscite Front (an umbrella forum for a number of parties in favour of a plebiscite) and externed Abdullah. The ban was soon lifted though and once again Abdullah began speaking about the right of Kashmiris to participate in talks which had been going on between India and Pakistan. Noteworthy is his changed discourse during this period. Rather than talking about the promised plebiscite, he now began pressing for greater autonomy within the Indian Union. Indira Gandhi took advantage of his changed stance and it was in 1975 that the two signed an accord after a year of negotiations. The six-point accord reaffirmed Kashmir's special status but added that Kashmir was 'a constituent unit of the Union of India'. The Indian government would be allowed to make laws on matters disturbing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. The titles used for the top two ministers of Kashmir, sadar-i-riyasat and prime minister, were to be discontinued and were to become governor and chief minister as in the rest of the states of India. There was to be no return to the pre-1953 status which Abdullah had been demanding. The accord was looked upon by many in Kashmir and Pakistan as a sell-out (Schofield 2010).

The death of Abdullah in 1982 was followed by a period of renewed religious assertion. His son Farooq Abdullah, who became the leader of the National Conference (NC),

refused an alliance with the Congress in the 1983 elections, causing friction between him and Indira Gandhi who had returned to power in 1980. He chose instead to ally with a religious leader Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, and won the elections. The elections were marked by religious mobilization by all political parties who sought electoral majorities (Behera 2000). Abdullah immediately set upon busying himself not only within Kashmir, but also at the national level when he hosted a conclave of state leaders from different regional parties from across the country.

Thirteen members of legislative assembly withdrew support from Abdullah's government and New Delhi, taking advantage and blamed by Abdullah for hatching the plan, ousted him from power. Farooq's dismissal unleashed a wave of protests as it confirmed New Delhi's intention of denying Kashmir its special status and ruling by puppet governments. Ordinary Kashmiris lost faith in the electoral process and further alienated them from New Delhi.

Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 and succession by son Rajiv Gandhi saw a renewed alliance between the Congress and NC which brought Farooq Abdullah back to power in November 1986 through direct appointment. By the end of 1987, the situation in Kashmir had changed. As the narrative above demonstrates, though political discontent had been a constant feature of Kashmir's history, now, the struggle assumed a violent turn. Hitherto unpopular groups, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front or JKLF (a pro-independence organisation started by Kashmiri exiles in Azad Kashmir in 1965 which proclaimed armed struggle for the liberation of Kashmir) and Harkat ul Mujahideen, with pro-Pakistan leanings, became attractive alternatives for frustrated Kashmiris. These organisations sent recruits to Pakistan for training and weaponry who returned to wage a protracted armed struggle against the Indian state (Ganguly & Bajpai 1994). Another change during the period was the gradual decline of the Congress as the single most influential national party. The rise of the BJP and other regional parties meant that India entered a new era of coalition politics in the early 1990s.

The victory of the NC-Congress alliance in the state elections of 1987 came amidst widespread allegations of rigging. The closure of political avenues and the breakdown of the democratic electoral process are considered to be an important factor in turning Kashmiri youth towards the path of violence. By 1988, anti-India feelings had

developed to such an extent that the anniversary of India's airlift into Kashmir in 1947 marking the state's accession was termed a day of Indian occupation and 1989 marked the real beginning of insurgency in Kashmir (Schofield 2010).

Towards a discourse analysis of the management of the Kashmir conflict

Discourses of the political elite in New Delhi were collected around critical junctures of the conflict in Kashmir and these key events were selected after an analysis of the secondary literature on the conflict. These events are not necessarily single events but may also refer to phases in the conflict and therefore may be a grouping of years. The analysis of discourses around these events suggests a pattern of legitimizing the policy practices that accompanied these events in a way that delegitimizes all other options even if they were suggested.

Based on the literature on the Kashmir conflict , five phases were identified; these are 1989-1992, 1993-1995, 1996-1999, 2000-2007, and 2008-2010. The first phase coincides with the eruption of violence and the beginning of the conflict as the violence escalated, by 1993, the Indian government had gained the upper hand in quashing violence while at the same time the issue was garnering widespread international attention. The 1996-1999 period reflects a period when an elected state government ended direct rule from New Delhi while 2000-2007 was a period that saw a transformation of the relation between Kashmir and the Centre as the latter sought to 'normalise' relations. The last phase saw an eruption of violent protests against the Centre's policies.

Each phase reflects a certain pattern and commonality in the framing of Kashmir at the time. Discursive consistency forms the basis of this grouping of phases and inter-phase discursive distinction can be observed in the analysis.

1989-1992: Confusion prevails

Key Events

| December 1989 | Daughter of home minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed kidnapped by JKLF |
| December 1989 | Coalition government headed by VP |

	Singh of Janata Dal party replaced Congress government in New Delhi
January 1990	Government appoints Jagmohan as governor to Kashmir
1991	Return of Congress government at the Centre under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao

Causes

As violence erupted on an unprecedented scale in the Valley, there was in New Delhi a sense of confusion as parties grappled with the best approach to tackle the situation. Debates in December 1989, in the aftermath of the kidnapping of the home minister's daughter in Kashmir, reflect an inter-party blame game to pin the causes of the crisis on mismanagement on each other. The Congress blamed the newly appointed VP Singh government for the lack of any policy coherence. For the BJP, the Congress government had been responsible for the crisis while the newly appointed Janata Dal government in power at the time blamed previous administrative failures. Where the parties were unanimous was at the assigning of Pakistan as the most important cause for the outbreak of the conflict and this discourse dominated subsequent discussions on Kashmir. In his speech on January 11, 1991 in the Lok Sabha, external affairs minister IK Gujral cautioned against blaming one another and urged instead that the focus should be on Pakistan's foreign policies in Kashmir and Punjab and their intent to interfere in these two conflict areas.

The Congress' Rajiv Gandhi claimed that the reason for the people's dissatisfaction was the confusion over Article 370 since different parties had different positions. According to him, if the policy was clear, that would bring about peace.[146]

According to home minister Sayeed, there was "concrete evidence and information regarding large number of training camps being run on the other side of the border to

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[146] Rajiv Gandhi's statement in the Lok Sabha on December 28, 1989, Government of India (translated from Hindi).

train the militants" and "its (Pakistan's) further attempt to internationalise the issue has added a new dimension to the situation". Stressing that the issue was an "internal matter of this country", the minister sought to exclude Pakistan as well as any third party from any legitimate stake in the resolution of the conflict.[147]

Even where political mistakes were admitted, these were in relation to how Pakistan took advantage of the situation to create unrest. Sayeed recognised that the situation in Kashmir was the result of "inadequate political and administrative response to a series of developments in the valley which spurred public disenchantment" and these "provided a fertile ground to the fundamentalist, subversive and anti-national forces to re-group themselves with the aid and assistance of forces operating from across the border".[148]

Essentially, the discourses on causes during this early phase of the conflict sought to minimise genuine political grievances against the Indian state and played up the role of Pakistan in creating unrest. The conflict was represented as driven by an external enemy, Pakistan, and this was attributed to being the primary cause.

Identity

An analysis of the discourses suggests two broad identities as understood by the political elite in New Delhi—one, the 'fundamentalists' who engaged in 'terrorist' activities against the State, and two, the 'misguided youth' who had been left out of the development process.[149] The 'terrorists', on the other hand, were largely considered to be passive actors without agency and acting merely on the orders of Pakistan as the following statement of the home minister shows:

> Under compulsion, a large number of people are dragged from the state, taken across the border, given training; given weaponry and at gun-point they are

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[147] Home minister Sayeed's statement in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

[148] Home minister Sayeed speaking on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1990, Government of India.

[149] See for example home minister Sayeed's speech in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1990.

asked to go and hit a particular target. We could get this information that Pakistan is fully involved in this from some people who have been caught.[150]

The Annual report of the Home Ministry for 1989-1990 also mentioned the activities of 'subversive and fundamentalist elements with active aid and support from across the border.'[151] This is reiterated in the 1990-91 report where the 'secessionist and fundamentalist' elements are once again mentioned in relation to their abetment by Pakistan.

The categorisation of these actors as 'terrorists' legitimized the use of force and narrowed the space for alternative engagement. The annual report for 1990-91 of the home ministry stated that the government had announced a new initiative of holding talks with any group as long as it was within the framework of the Constitution. It stated that overall there had been an increase in 'lawless activities' in the state and that the government was willing to talk with local people provided they 'shun violence and declare their allegiance to the integrity and sovereignty of the country'.[152] This signifies that militants are not just defined by violence; they must also necessarily respect Indian sovereignty. This was reiterated by Opposition parties as well. The BJP, through its leader Advani, warned the government not to involve those groups in Kashmir in the 'political mainstream' who did not give full recognition to the Indian constitution. [153]

The identification of a Kashmiri militant, in the imagination of the State, was therefore one who resorted to violence *and* opposed the Indian constitution. This emerged whenever an offer of talks was made by the Centre. No longer was giving up arms a prerequisite for talks as loyalty to the state was equally important in proving worthy of dialogue. The argument resonates across other conflicts such as the issue of Irish power-sharing, Palestinian statehood and Algerian independence, that if no compromise is made, the militants could be defeated.

Policy

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[150] Home Minister SB Chavan in the Lok Sabha, August 26, 1991, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[151] Annual Report 1989-1990, Ministry for Home Affairs, p.1, Government of India.

[152] Annual Report 1990-91, Ministry of Home Affairs, p.9, Government of India.

[153] LK Advani speaking in the Lok Sabha on March 12, 1991, Budget Session, Government of India.

The appointment of Jagmohan as governor to Kashmir was the result of the then VP Singh's government commitment to tackle what it saw as a politically dysfunctional state that had fallen into the hands of criminals and was being further exacerbated by Pakistan. The appointment was made against the wishes of Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah who resigned in protest. By December, there was pressure on the government from certain parties such as the BJP to bring the state under President's Rule.[154] The imposition of Governor's Rule and the dismissal of the state assembly in 1990 provoked heated debates in the Indian Parliament but in its annual report for 1989-1990, the ministry of home affairs stated simply that 'governor's rule had to be promulgated' *after* Farooq Abdullah resigned.[155] The policy of the Governor's administration, it went on to state, was to check and curb terrorism in the valley and control law and order to restore normalcy in the state. The report thereby ignored the fact that Abdullah resigned in protest against the imposition of Jagmohan as Governor and that the government had known this would happen.[156]

That talks with Pakistan were completely delegitimized was also evident when one MP stated that "This government should stop talking about Simla Pact…I would like to say that Pakistan should be declared a terrorist country and should be treated accordingly."[157]

'Pakistan' then served as a nodal point for organising discourses and gave the conflict a heightened sense of urgency, elevating it to a 'national threat'. The idea of a national security threat then legitimized and prioritised the military option and the home minister's statement that "the situation in Kashmir calls for firm and resolute measures for reasserting the authority of the State and restoring normalcy" indicated that imposing the authority of the Indian State was paramount and therefore required the

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[154] SS Banyal, Behind the Rise of J&K Militants, *The Hindustan Times*, December 17, 1989.

[155] Annual Report 1989-1990, Ministry for Home Affairs, p.7, Government of India.

[156] Most scholars agree that New Delhi knew Abdullah would resign if Jagmohan was appointed governor and the former had himself made it clear to the Centre. However, home minister Sayeed, who was hostile to Abdullah, advocated for the appointment. See for example, (Habibullah 2008), pp.69-70; (Ānant 2010).

[157] BJP MP ML Khurana's speech in the Lok Sabha, March 27, 1992, Budget Session, Government of India.

military to do so.[159] This also feeds into the policy of sending Jagmohan as governor in spite of his unpopular earlier tenure in the state. Known for his hard-line approach, his immediate reaction was to dismiss state assembly and call in the military and paramilitary forces.

The idea of 'restoring normalcy', an oft repeated phrase across all time periods, is typical of state discourses on conflict, for the ambiguity of the term serves not only to appear rational, but also hinges on an idea of normalcy that goes hand in hand with the integrationist policy of joining Kashmir with the 'mainstream'.

Another prominent nodal point around which official discourses were structured was Article 370 of the Constitution.[160] While dealing with the special status of Kashmir within the Indian Union, the discourses reflect a tendency to equate this constitutional provision with India's secularism. This enabled the political elite to rationalise or de-rationalise Kashmir's unique relationship with India depending on which side of the political spectrum they belonged to. What was common to both however was the acceptance of the legitimacy of India's sovereignty over Kashmir.

For the BJP, the acceptance that J&K had any unique status was the problem. They believed that by accepting that J&K was anything other than a normal and fully integrated part of the Indian Union, it was leaving open a door of hope for militants. The BJP believed that scrapping the provision would help in removing the 'psychological barrier' in the minds of the Kashmiris and bring them into the 'national mainstream'.[161] As a policy, Advani admitted that even if the BJP were in power at the Centre it would not be able to abolish Article 370 since a two-thirds majority was needed to do so and this did not exist either at the Centre or in the state. They raise this issue so as to cast the historic blame on the Congress. They then, also, seek to

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[159] Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1990, Budget Session, Government of India.

[160] According to Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, Kashmir was guaranteed special autonomy provisions restricting the legislative functions of the Centre in the state to the areas of defence, foreign affairs and communications and also provided for a separate constitution of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

[161] BJP General Secretary Sahni quoted in *The Hindu*, January 20, 1990, p.6

distinguish themselves from Congress by demanding a more hard line stance on Pakistan and on internal security. [162]

It was regarded as a useless policy that should be done away with:

> I would like to point out that Article 370 has not served any purpose during these 40 years. Had it been so, we should have come across some results at least. Article 370 has brought the situation in the Valley to such a pass. They have been alienated. Government is not able to solve Kashmir even after retaining Article 370 all along; why not it accept our proposal of abrogating Article 370 for a couple of years and see for itself the result.[163]

The 'protection that we have given to them' mentioned in Singh's speech above indicated a patronising attitude towards the 'Kashmiri Muslims', rather than a political pact that was not merely 'given' but negotiated with the then Kashmiri leaders. In effect, both the Congress and the BJP, in their opposing conceptualisation of Article 370, considered the constitutional provision to be either a protection handed down and to be maintained or a useless policy which served to alienate Kashmir from the rest of India. In spite of their differences on the validity of Article 370, the idea that the Kashmir was a part of the Indian union and the latter's sovereignty supreme was the common factor that ensured that both were actually concerned more with establishing New Delhi's legitimacy rather than addressing the core right to special autonomy that was guaranteed to the state due to its peculiar historical relationship with India and not due to preserving secularism as some of the political discourses were making it out to be.

What also marked official discourses of the Indian state during the early years of the conflict was the denial of deep-rooted political grievances, and instead an acknowledgement of certain short terms policies that had left Kashmir out of the progress of the rest of the country. Development as a nodal point was one of the ways

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[162] Advani's speech in the Lok Sabha on December 28, 1989, Winter Session, Government of India (translated from Hindi).

[163] BJP MP ML Khurana in the Lok Sabha, September 14, 1991, Government of India.

in which the problems in Kashmir were perceived, though this was at this stage of lesser importance than other issues.

Addressing the Parliament in 1991, home minister SB Chavan stated that:

> We would like to see a number of projects in that area so that not only the problem of unemployment may be solved to some extent but they should get the feeling that like the projects that are located in other parts of the country, similarly, in J&K also there are certain projects which are being located. Let the young men get this feeling that there is total administration in that area. [164]

Dialogue as part of a security strategy has been a contentious issue amongst the political elite in India. As the case in Kashmir shows, the prospect of dialogue was entertained only if certain conditions were met, and sometimes even this could be anathema for some political parties and delegitimised for it could 'demoralise the security forces.'[165] In a parliamentary debate in 1991, the BJP's ML Khurana blamed the Congress for saying it would hold a dialogue with the militants as it would lower the morale of the military and para-military forces in the state. By linking talks with militants with lowering the morale of the security forces, the Opposition was carefully choosing to play on the deep-rooted national sentiment towards the Indian armed forces, and thus delegitimised dialogue for the greater good of Indian nationalism and defence.

At other times, dialogue was legitimised only so long as a solution was found 'within the framework of the Constitution'. In response to the government's releasing detainees for talks, BJP MP ML Khurana said,

> I am having all the reports as to how and which terrorists were released for having talks with them… It should be ascertained well before the release whether the man being released is sincere and helpful to bring about peace. There is an indiscriminate release of terrorists and wrong signals are given whether talks are being held with the terrorists, whether election is being held or not….They are trying to disintegrate India in collusion with Pakistan…The

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[164] Lok Sabha, August 26, 1991, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[165] ML Khurana in the Lok Sabha, August 26, 1991, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

government should make an announcement that there cannot be any negotiation with them unless they agree to talk within the framework of the constitution and unless they surrender arms and renounce the path of violence.[166]

By 1992, the denial of political agency in Kashmir was referred to in the context of elections, a nodal point that would become more prominent in the next phase. At this stage, suggestions of re-starting a 'political process' in the state, taken at its simplest to mean the conduct of polls, were beginning to be put forward as a solution to end the conflict. For Congress MP Digvijay Singh, a political process was the most important strategy in Kashmir.[167] He said that political forces in the valley had been isolated or had left leaving the Kashmiri Muslims and the Army and para military forces to deal with the situation themselves. Unless a political process was begun, he said, there would be no improvement. The appointment of Jagmohan in 1990 was blamed on the VP Singh government under the pressure of its ally BJP. This he said sent the message to the people that the government was using confrontational tactics and thereby isolated even moderate Kashmiri Muslims.

The discourses on causes, identity and policy mutually reinforced the representation of the conflict during this stage as bereft of genuine political demands. The Kashmiri militant was one who was sponsored by Pakistan, and who was necessarily anti-national due to his rejection of the Indian Constitution. The dismissal of the state government was articulated as necessary, and enabled the Centre to launch a brutal crackdown in the state. Essentially, during this phase, state discourses on causes, identity and policy show how the conflict was represented as a secessionist conflict and driven by terrorists who were endangering India's national security. The stationing of military and paramilitary forces was deemed as the rational step for protecting India's security and talks with 'terrorists' was delegitimised until they gave up violence and pledged their loyalty to the Indian Constitution.

Internationalisation, Human Rights and Dialogue: 1993-1995

Key Events

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[166] Lok Sabha, August 11, 1992, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[167] Lok Sabha, August 26, 1991, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

January 1993	In Sopore, security forces killed more than 50 civilians, leading to widespread protests in Kashmir
October 1993	Pakistan PM Benazir Bhutto appealed to the UN and international community to note the crises in Kashmir; Hazratbal incident
1993	Formation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), and umbrella organisation for various Kashmiri parties
May 1994	JKLF leader Yasin Malik released from prison and renounced violence
1994	Pakistan tried to pass a resolution at the UNHRC meeting in Geneva condemning human rights violations in Kashmir
1995	India allowed access to the ICRC to detainees in Kashmir; US Ambassador visits Kashmir
May 1995	Charar I Sharif incident

Causes

As Pakistani leaders accused India of human rights abuses in Kashmir and extended support publicly for the 'right to self-determination' of the Kashmiri people, the issue became internationalised to the extent there was mounting pressure on India to respond. In a departure from earlier positions, the Indian state approached Pakistan with offensive diplomacy, claiming all of Kashmir as its territory. So far the Indian state had been insisting on the Shimla Agreement as the basis for resolving all India-Pakistan

relations.[168] In February 1994, the Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution condemning Pakistan's interference in Kashmir and reiterated that the whole of Kashmir, including Pakistani held territory, referred to in India as Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), was an integral part of India.[169]

In his Independence Day speech to the nation, PM Narasimha Rao said that the "unfinished task of partition" was to get the Pakistan-occupied territory of Kashmir back and asserted that Kashmir would always remain an integral part of India with, without or in spite of' Pakistan.[170] In his speech, he also drew the attention of the international community to Pakistan's role in the conflict:

> Pakistan has been busy raising the Kashmir issue at every opportunity. I have been saying that India's outstretched friendly hands are always there… they talk of unfinished tasks. I can also say that it is our unfinished task to free the parts of Kashmir which have been occupied by Pakistan….I must concede that normalcy has not been restored in Kashmir. This is because of the support given to elements in the Valley by Pakistan. After today India need not show any proof about that nation's involvement in terrorist activities in Kashmir… With you, without you, in spite of you, Kashmir will be an inalienable part of India. [171]

By 1993 a number of new nodal points introduced certain changes in the discourse, while others remained consistent with the earlier phase. Pakistan now became even more prominent in the discourses as a prime reason for the violence as the Indian political elite drew attention to those militant outfits sponsored by Pakistan.

Identity

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[168] According to the Simla Agreement of 1972, India and Pakistan agreed to resolve all disputes bilaterally and recognised the ceasefire line of 1948 as the Line of Control (LoC) with both sides respecting this de-facto border.

[169] Full text of the resolution available on http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/parliament_resolution_on_Jammu_and_Kashmir.htm Accessed on 31 May 2013.

[170] *The Pioneer*, 16 August 1994.

[171] *The Pioneer*, 16 August 1994.

During this phase, the discourse was clear in acknowledgement of the need to differentiate between local and Pakistani groups operating in the state. The release of Yasin Malik after four years in prison was an attempt by the Centre to fill the leadership void and channel the anti-Pakistan feeling that had swept the Valley towards a political dialogue. His release also coincided with his declaration of non-violence as the preferred method for achieving the goals of his party. The release of Shabir Shah, another 'militant' who had been arrested for his separatist agenda, came soon after, a desperate bid by the government to get local leaders to start a political process.

Home minister SB Chavan said,

> Now the movement is being controlled not by the local militants but foreign mercenaries… Even in the Hurriyat, there are 70 to 74 small organisations which are their members. If each one of them was to say 'why discuss with Yasin Malik only? We have equal right'…So we do not have anyone in the representative character who can possibly claim 'I represent Kashmir'…After the elections are over there would be an elected representative government.[172]

This discourse appeared frequently amongst the political elite. For instance, Congress MP Mani Shankar Aiyar said:

> It is now becoming clear that it is the Jamat e Islami, it is the Harkat ul Ansar, and it is the Hizbul Mujahideen who are the three pro-Pakistan elements who constitute the enemy. Apart from these three, everybody else, whether he likes the National Conference or hates the Congress, as far as we are concerned, are Kashmiris, they are Indians. It is only against the enemy or increasingly only against the enemy that force is being used… in so far as dialogue is concerned, the real problem with Kashmir is whom to talk to… At any given point of time, the Hurriyat consists of sometimes 27 factions, sometimes it is reduced to 15, then it grows to 30. But how much do these factions represent, whom do they represent, what segment of the population they represent we do not know. And it was the government's coherent policy to attempt to discover through the ballot box who represented what. Now that process has been derailed at least in

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[172] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

terms of time. We have not succeeded in having the state assembly elections by July 1995 which was our original objective. [173]

The two statements above show that the Indian state wanted to portray that it was sincere in its efforts to engage in dialogue but was helpless given the various factions amongst the Kashmiris and thus legitimised and rationalised the need for elections to determine the issue.

The government iterated time and again during this phase that the people were tired of the insurgency and pointed to the involvement of foreign groups as proof that the conflict was not based on genuine local grievances. The home minister SB Chavan said regarding the aspirations of the people,

> …The people are totally disillusioned by the disinformation campaign spread by Pakistan. They say: We are neither interested in merging with Pakistan nor do we ask for any Azadi.; we would like to be with the mainstream…For the last ten years we have experienced what is being called jihad. In the name of jihad, forcible extortion from the people has taken place. They have misbehaved with women. They have forcibly entered the houses and forced the people to give them food….there is not even an iota of doubt in the minds of the people that these are people who are not interested in any kind of religious activity. Now the people have understood the game that it is Pakistan which is instigating these people, sending them here so that they can be used as mercenaries who will be creating a problem in this area. [174]

That the people did not want *azadi* was also echoed by BJP leader Vajpayee:

> The common man wants peace. He is fed up. He does not want separation from India. The slogan of freedom might have tempted some youth but now they understand that this freedom does not mean anything. Pakistan will not allow them to remain free.[175]

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[173] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[174] Lok Sabha, June 3, 1995, Government of India.

[175] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Government of India.

Thus, the people's feelings of betrayal by Pakistan were appropriated to mean a support for the Indian government. The identity of the Kashmiris was mentioned in the discourses but this was mentioned more in a cultural context than political. For instance, MP E Ahmed says "we have to respect the Kashmiri people, their Kashmiriyat feeling…people from Andhra Pradesh have the pride of Andhra, the people of West Bengal having their own pride…then why not the Kashmiri people."[176]

Home Minister SB Chavan responded to this saying,

> I do not remember that we have ever said or ever objected to Kashmiris calling themselves to having special status of Kashmiriyat…the people at large have lost faith in the terrorist activities, merger with Pakistan or independence of Kashmir… the necessity is to create conditions where they should be allowed to carry on with their professions. They should be able to earn their own livelihood. [177]

This was a discursive attempt to project the local Kashmiri at par with the rest of the Indians in terms of their regional identity. For the government, being Kashmiri was at par with being Bengali, Tamil or Marathi; it tried to project the Kashmiri identity as an extension of the dominant Indian identity rather than accepting that Kashmir had had a unique relationship much different from other regional identities.

Thus, discourses on identity differentiated between the ordinary Kashmiris who were fed up of the Pakistan sponsored militancy and wanted to go about their lives just like the rest of the Indians, and the militants who were largely foreign, or the local Kashmiri groups which according to the political elite, were Indian, and which were so many that only elections could determine their representativeness.

Policy

In New Delhi, the Congress government under Narasimha Rao continued with ongoing policies of force and opening talks with moderates but there was a change in other directions. The government now began talking of normalisation and political process

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[176] Leader of the Indian Union Muslim League. Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Government of India.

[177] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

and released some top Kashmiri activists in an effort to hold state elections. This phase also saw India reacting to Pakistan's allegations of human rights abuses by allowing international monitors such as the ICRC and also to turn the focus on Pakistan by highlighting its role in the conflict. By Sept 1994, the Indian political elite were also making public statements of the redundancy of the UN resolutions on Kashmir. According to the *Times of India* the minister of state for external affairs, Salman Khursheed, was quoted as saying that the 1948 UN resolutions were dead.[178] This coincided with UN chief Boutros Boutros Ghali's visit to the subcontinent and any attempt to revive UN mediation on Kashmir was firmly rejected by India.[179]

Another shift in the discourse is reflected in the way dialogue is perceived. In the previous phase, while dialogue had been suggested occasionally, it was not considered yet to be a ripe moment for talks. As the discourses now showed, the need for talks was felt only in the context of polls-in other words; engagement in itself was deemed to be worthless unless it was seen as enabling elections- a strategy the Indian state prefers in its management of internal conflicts. This commitment to elections can be viewed as an assertion of the Indian state's identity as a democracy and also as a way for it to filter out the legitimate Kashmiri voices amongst what it saw as a proliferation of Kashmiri groups claiming representation of the Kashmiris.

With Prime Minister Rao keen to conduct elections in the state, there was a need to develop a consensus on how talks would proceed. However, this did not go down well with a number of Opposition parties. In a discussion on March 29 1993, BJP's ML Khurana cautioned the Parliament over Farooq Abdullah's statement to the media that he wanted to restore the pre-1953 status and also that to resolve the Kashmir issue a meeting of India, Pakistan and Kashmir had to be convened.[180] Khurana branded both

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[178] *Times of India* (September 11, 1994) was quoting the minister's interview to Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*

[179] *The Sunday Observer* reported on 11 sept 1994 that the Indian leaders, including PM Rao, External Affairs minister and MoS in the external affairs ministry were reported to have said that it was Pakistan and not India which had failed to comply with the UN resolutions of 1948-1949 calling for the vacation of aggression by Pakistan from the occupied territory as a first step towards implementation of the resolutions.

[180] Lok Sabha, March 29, 1993, Budget Session, Government of India.

these ideas as "dangerous" and that "to change the policy on Kashmir would be dangerous." Further he argued that,

> The government should learn a lesson from Punjab. Punjab is returning to normalcy only because the Government has not held talks with terrorists. If the government holds talks with terrorists of Kashmir then the forces engaged in their efforts to overpower them would not succeed. If the government adopts a dual policy, then it would prove dangerous. We should not let the government take a U-turn.[181]

Looking at the above statement, it is clear that a significant part of the political elite considered dialogue as anathema, and viewed the refusal to talk with 'terrorists' as a successful security strategy.

Most radical of changes that occurred during this period was the government's willingness to discuss the issue of autonomy. In an interview to *India Today* appearing on May 31, 1993, Governor KV Krishna Rao said his policy was to "be soft on the public and hard on the militants" and admitted that while elections was the aim, the immediate task was to restore normalcy and bring down militancy. He went on to say that "if the militants feel that they have the public's support let them give up the gun and take up the ballot." Thus, a political space for the 'militants' finds its way into official policy but only through the avenue of elections. The necessity of this as the first step towards any possible resolution is made clear when in response to the quantum of autonomy; he said that "autonomy can be determined only after determining who the real elected representatives are."

In October 1994, minister for internal security Rajesh Pilot after visiting Jammu, said that the government was willing to discuss the quantum of autonomy with all political parties in the state and at the national level and that it would talk with any group which was ready to give up violence, in his words, the government had an "open mind" on autonomy. He also said that the government was committed to holding elections to enable the people to have their own government and stated that the people were fed up with the criminalisation of militancy.[182] References of the international context were

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[181] Lok Sabha, March 29, 1993, Budget Session, Government of India.

[182] *The Times of India*, October 24, 1994.

part of the discourse of the political elite in India. Referring in September 1994 to the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) announcement to halt violence and accept the offer of talks, union internal security minister Rajesh Pilot asked Kashmiri militants to take a cue.[183]

However, autonomy continued to be contested not just between parties but within the government as well. According to home minister SB Chavan, "I am opposed to granting any autonomy to the state before the polls are held." This statement, issued to clarify that Pilot's mention of autonomy in Kashmir was a personal opinion, is indicative of a rift within the ministry over nuances of policy. The difference in views also extended to the role of Farooq Abdullah with the home minister against any active role "He should not persist in his threats to boycott polls or he will end up being left in the cold" and Pilot firmly in support of bringing him on board saying "he is a nationalist and heads a party which still has some say in Kashmir."[184] Clearly, even at this stage, consensus within the government on crucial policy matters was lacking as contesting discursive representations of actors and demands clashed with each other for a dominant space.

The release of Yasin Malik and Shabir Shah were important policy decisions. That dialogue with these groups was legitimised marks an important shift from the earlier phase. This was also important for it showed the government's willingness to acknowledge an internal dimension to the conflict and one that would require some level of dialogue to normalise the situation.

Congress MP Sudhir Sawant in a debate in the Lok Sabha on May 8 1995 stated categorically that:

> The question in Jammu and Kashmir is not the question of whether the people want to be a part of India or not. The question is of a right of a State to secede from the Union. We cannot afford it. America fought a Civil war on this very issue…India will have to use whatever force is there at its disposal to prevent any state from seceding from the Union. Nobody, no power from outside has got any business to interfere in India's internal affairs. These are messages

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[183] APHC for UN Intervention, *Hindustan Times*, 9 September 1994.

[184] *India Today*, November 30, 1994

which should go loud and clear because there are certain attempts to distort images.[185]

Development as a solution to the youth's despair also entered as a nodal point around which policy discourses were framed. The Centre released a 200-crore package for J&K aimed at restoring the shattered economy of the state, including for rural development, primary schools, healthcare and rebuilding infrastructure damaged by militancy. Home minister Chavan's speech in the Lok Sabha made the development policy of the government clear:

> I hold the view that the people of Kashmir should get a feeling of confidence. A large number of youngsters are involved but they are totally disillusioned now. More employment opportunities will have to be created and we have started with the para military forces. A large number of them have been recruited and we would also be giving orders to all big public sector undertakings where the possibilities do exist, to absorb as many of them as possible.[186]

Article 370 continued to be a prominent nodal point but was debated again on starkly opposing views. For home minister Chavan,

> I have made the government's position very clear that Article 370 is going to remain till the people of Kashmir say we do not want this Article and you may remove it…Kashmir is a sign of our secular polity and if by any chance Kashmir is to be separated then we have no right to talk in terms of secular polity in this country. We will never allow Kashmir to be separated from India…Kashmir is part and parcel of India.[187]

On the other hand, Vajpayee asserted:

> I think Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed autonomy and it continues to do so. Regarding the extent of autonomy and the reasons for giving more autonomy to the state, it can be done in consultation with the elected representatives after peace is restored and elections are held there. Development activities have not

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[185] Lok Sabha, May 8, 1995, Budget Session, Government of India.

[186] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[187] Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

been affected due to lack of so called autonomy. The benefits of autonomy were reaped by a handful of leaders and not by the common men, be it the case of subsidy or the case of Article 370. The then PM Jawaharlal Nehru did not say Article 370 was inviolable and it cannot be done away with.[188]

Hence, the discourse on Article 370 remained largely consistent with the earlier phase and continued to reinforce the idea of Kashmir being an inherent part of the Indian Union.

The years 1993-1995 saw a change in the discourses of the Indian state in certain areas of causes of the conflict; it now launched an open offensive against Pakistan. The international context of Pakistan drawing attention to human rights violations in Kashmir was reflected in the discourses of the Indian state as it sought to blame Pakistan for the mayhem and vociferously reiterated that the whole of Kashmir was a part of India. There was a change in the discourses on identity as the local, Kashmiri militant was separated from the Pakistani, foreign militant and the former's identity therefore deradicalised. This was also reflected in the policy of the Indian state in releasing certain Kashmiri militants and beginning to consider the possibility of dialogue with them. n effect, while the discourses of the time opened up space for engagement, the continuation of other embedded discourses foreclosed the possibility for any resolution. This phase 'normalised' the Kashmiri identity to the extent that it paved the way for elections as a means to give the people a voice according to the terms and conditions of the Indian state. The silence of the discourses of the people's right to self-determination and the failure to acknowledge the separateness of the Kashmiri identity vis-à-vis other regional identities weakened the prospect of any meaningful resolution. Talks held with various groups could not break any ground because of the government's insistence on the Constitution as the mechanism for resolution.

Co-optation and "Normalisation": 1996-1999

Key Events

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[188] BJP MP Vajpayee in the Lok Sabha, August 22, 1995, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

1996	Hurriyat Conference demands tripartite talks with India and Pakistan to solve the Kashmir dispute
May 1996	Parliamentary elections; United Front government formed under Deve Gowda, assures maximum autonomy to J&K
September 1996	Legislative elections held, bringing to power a government in Kashmir under National Conference's Farooq Abdullah
1998	New government at the Centre headed by PM Atal Behari Vajpayee
June 1998	Farooq Abdullah instituted Regional Autonomy Committee proposes devolution of power at various levels
1997-1998	Series of talks between India and Pakistan
1999	Kargil War

Causes

No longer were the causes of the conflict, rooted in the historical conditions of the state, considered to be important as the Indian state attempted to move on from past issues. Making his speech to the Lok Sabha on July 12, 1996, PM Deve Gowda said, "We have come to the stage of handing over state to its elected representatives. Debating on the past history starting from 1958 to what happened till 1996 is not going to bring any peace in in the state of J&K." It is this profound statement that shaped the ideology of the state vis-à-vis its relations with Kashmir as the latter's history was pushed to the backburner. The report of the Ministry of Home Affairs for 1998-99 emphasised that there was an overall improvement in the situation since the 1996 elections. It noted:

Significant change in the nature of militancy; foreign mercenaries from across the border now dominate the scene thereby giving Pakistan a stronghold over prominent secessionist militant groups which are being used by the ISI for bringing in a communal divide, for ethnic cleansing and for extending the arc of militancy to Jammu and beyond.[190]

While Pakistan continued to feature in state discourses on Kashmir and its interference consistently articulated, the discourse grew louder in the wake of the Kargil War in 1999. Home Minister LK Advani, in a discussion on the internal security situation said that the genesis of militancy in Kashmir lay in the 1971 war:

It is my own analysis that after the Simla Agreement while working contrary to what it had promised us, Pakistan initiated steps towards going nuclear. After that, proxy war started. The proxy war is an outcome of their defeat in 1971 war and when they felt that they were not succeeding in proxy wars also as gradually India was checking it, that resulted in Kargil war. After Kargil, it has encouraged proxy war and terrorism. [191]

The report of the home affairs ministry too noted that:

Pakistan has always considered the partition of 1947 incomplete as per its concept of two-nation theory with Jammu and Kashmir being the main focus of its attention. it has made repeated attempts though in vain to annexe the state-first by pushing in 'kabailis' (tribesmen) with the active support of regulars followed by three wars and an impudent intrusion in Kargil in 1999. Each time the Indian nation has given them a befitting reply. Pakistan's President General Zia ul Haq launched a proxy war against India after Pakistan found it was making no headway in a frontal war. The proxy war began surreptitiously by misguiding disgruntled youth in the state and exploiting their sentiments. As a result large-scale exfiltration took place from the valley to Pakistan (1989-1990)…approximately 1500-2000 foreign mercenaries are presently operating in J&K who have been pushed in by Pakistan…these mercenaries belong mostly to Pakistan, PoK and Afghanistan which highlights the alarming role

[190] Annual Report 1998-1999, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

[191] Lok Sabha, December 15, 1999, Winter Session, Government of India.

being played by Pakistan as a centre for Pan-Islamic fundamentalist militancy.[192]

The state assembly elections in 1996 mark an important shift in the state's discourses. Having established a perceived sense of legitimacy through an elected state government, the Centre's discourses now moved on to focus on other issues that normalised and indeed largely equated the status of Kashmir at par with the rest of the states. An important shift also occurred in India's relations with Pakistan as it sought to alienate Kashmir and bring other issues to the table in talks with Pakistan. The elections also ushered in changes in the way the conflict in Kashmir was now perceived by the Indian State. On the one hand, it insisted that 1996 had brought to an end the internal causes of the conflict and that the Centre had been able to assuage the peoples' grievances, while on the other it noted that Pakistan was continuing its proxy war in Kashmir. The separation of the two dimensions of the conflict was a subtle reflection that with an end to the violence of the early 1990s, the situation had largely been resolved.

Identity

Religion, previously an underlying theme of the conflict, was used in the Othering of Pakistan:

> Our boys have seen Benazir Bhutto's version of Islam and the treatment meted out to the Muhajirs and also the face of Indian secularism no matter how many its weaknesses. They have also seen how Hindus opposed the BJP after the demolition of the Babri Masjid and voted out their state governments.[193]

It was also brought up by Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah: "Pakistan leaders have made a mess of Pakistan in the name of Islam. For Allah's sake, don't let them make it worse in Kashmir than they have already done by misleading you."[194]

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[192] Annual Report 1999, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

[193] Congress MP Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Lok Sabha, August 4, 1998, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[194] *The Indian Express*, August 31, 1996.

As in the previous phase, the youth of Kashmir who had joined the conflict were treated as passive actors, manipulated by the evil neighbour. In the words of Prime Minister IK Gujral in the Lok Sabha on July 28, 1997:

> It is not that the insurgency has ended but by and large I think both the governments-the state and the Centre, have been able to get the better of the insurgency…our policy has a further dimension also but previously also we have been trying to get back those estranged youth who I believe have been led astray by the false propaganda against India…the main point is that we are always willing to talk to those young men who are our own children and who are our own boys who have been led astray. Naturally it is implied and understood that they must give up arms and they must come back home…if in the family the sons go astray or get alienated, it is my duty as the head of family to invite them back, try to remove their doubts and suspicions… there is no compromise on two issues-secular unity of India and also the integrity of India. Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. The whole state of Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India and shall continue to be so.

The Indian State was likened to a chief patriarch, thereby implying that it was its duty to bring back the "misled" youth of Kashmir. That the people had moved on from the causes of the conflict and were no longer caught in the past was reiterated by a government minister:

> Earlier people used to go on strike to support the terrorists. Today they go on strike on the issues of tax, livelihood, and other basic problems. This is a big achievement. ..The people have fully disassociated from the terrorists. [195]

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[195] Minister of State, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Lok Sabha, March 12, 1999, Budget Session, Government of India.

Policy

If autonomy was important, it was an issue that would be discussed only after elections were held. PM Gowda, in the Lok Sabha on July 12, 1996:

> My concern is that elections must be held and the power should go to the people. Then, the question of autonomy will be discussed with the elected representatives. With whom should the Central government discuss now?

Regarding talks with militant groups, he said

> Some of the militant youths have approached me. They are also prepared to participate in the elections and they tried to explain certain problems… I told them to first go before the people, show their sincerity to the people, and if the people voted for them then they will also be called for discussion as far as the autonomy and other issues are concerned.[196]

The legitimization of engaging with 'militant youths' was now dependant on their participation in elections, without which the Indian state found no reason to discuss with them the issue of autonomy. Unlike the earlier and oft-repeated position that dialogue would be held with anyone who gave up violence, elections was now an important criteria in determining eligibility for dialogue.

Under Gowda, talks with Pakistan had resumed after a gap of more than four years. While crucial in itself, a key feature of the political discourses of the time was the idea of differentiating between Kashmir and other issues while dealing with Pakistan and the beginning of a discursive change that sought to bring into Indo-Pak talks other issues apart from Kashmir, and indeed even a deliberate attempt to keep Kashmir out.

In August, BJP leader Vajpayee suggested that a 10-year embargo be put on the Kashmir issue to enable India and Pak to improve their bilateral relations. He also said that "the only issue on which India can negotiate with Pakistan is the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir".[197]

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[196] Lok Sabha, July 12, 1996, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[197] *The Indian Express*, August 31, 1996.

In April 1997, external affairs minister, IK Gujral met his Pakistani counterpart. In response to a question that talks had broken off in 1994 because for Pakistan, Kashmir was the core issue, Gujral said that "for us there is no core or non-core issue. We are willing to discuss everything including Kashmir." He also said,

> India's basic position on Kashmir-that it is an integral part of India and that a democratically elected government has been installed-cannot change. And whatever concessions there are in terms of autonomy is an internal issue between the Centre and the elected government...As we did in China, we should put the issue on the backburner and proceed onto other things...I am willing to make concessions on anything, except the sovereignty or the secular character of our nation. That is non-negotiable. There will not be another partition of India.

By the time a new government was set to be formed at the Centre under the Prime Ministership of Atal Behari Vajpayee, this idea had firmly planted itself in the state's discourses. In his speech to the Lok Sabha on March 28, 1998, soon to be appointed PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee said,

> I had told Pakistan not in the capacity of PM but as a leader of opposition that you keep aside the issue of Kashmir for some days and open your gate in the fields of commerce and economic cooperation and other areas. We produce certain items which Pakistan needs and a few items are produced in Pakistan which we need. We have not been able to create that atmosphere but I am confident it will happen when situation will be conducive.[198]

The return to 'normalcy' was a key feature of this phase, the state assembly elections having bolstered India's claims of democratic governance in Kashmir. The Indian leadership wasted no time in conveying to Pakistan that its internationalisation of Kashmir in the previous phase was in vain, as the state had come to the point of normalisation:

> Peace has been restored there. Elections were held. A large number of tourists are going there. The tour of Amarnath is going on peacefully. It is said that

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[198] Lok Sabha, March 28, 1998, Budget Session, Government of India.

Kashmir is a flash point. Yes if Pakistan wants to take some steps to draw the attention of the world by masterminding petty disturbances…Pakistan is not satisfied with its boundaries. Pakistan wants to change the status quo. The rulers of Pakistan are unable to digest the fact that the a state with a majority of Muslims should live with India.it is their problem if they have not accepted secularism…We told Pakistan that we were prepared to negotiate about Kashmir but other matters related to it should also be included in the negotiation…but Pakistan is not ready for that. They are not interested in negotiation…one of the measures of the CBMs put up by Pakistan is that the government of India should talk to Hurriyat Conference by recognising it as the representative organisation of Kashmir. No Indian can accept this proposal.[199]

As the above speech shows, India took exception to Pakistan's insistence that the Hurriyat was the sole representative of Kashmir. The Hurriyat had refused to participate in the 1996 state elections and there was a growing distrust between the Centre and the Hurriyat; the latter keeping up its anti-India agitation. It reached out to Pakistan and to the US to pressure India into accepting its demands but there was little by way of direct talks between the Hurriyat and Centre at this stage.

As the above discourses on causes, identity and policy show, the years 1996-1999 were crucial to transforming the conflict from the violence of the earlier phases to what the Indian state now considered a fairly 'normalised' situation. The internal conflict, for the Indian state, was virtually over as elections had brought to power an elected state government. The National Conference was now viewed as the legitimate representative of the Kashmiri people, and Kashmiri groups such as the Hurriyat were sidelined and token messages of talks continued to be vocalised by the Centre as per previously articulated conditions of adherence to the Constitution.

2000-2007: Reconsidering autonomy and reaching out to separatists

Key Events

2000	J&K state government adopts resolution calling for implementation of the State

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[199] Prime Minister Vajpayee in the Lok Sabha, August 4, 1998, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

	Autonomy Committee Report
2000	Ceasefire with the Hizbul Mujahideen
April 2001	KC Pant appointed as the Centre's interlocutor in Kashmir
2001	Agra Summit meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan
December 2001	Attack on the Indian Parliament
September 2002	State Assembly elections, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed sworn in as CM of J&K
April 2003	PM Vajpayee visited Kashmir
2003	India announced its willingness to talk with the APHC
May 2004	New government at the Centre led by Manmohan Singh
2004	PM announced reduction of troops in Jammu and Kashmir
2006	Round Table Conferences instituted by the Centre to discuss matters relating to J&K

Causes

Amongst the most important discursive changes occurring in this period was a change in the meaning of autonomy and a greater willingness to discuss the issue albeit at New Delhi's terms. As the elected state government in Jammu and Kashmir passed a resolution calling for the implementation of the State Autonomy Committee Report in 2000, in New Delhi, pandemonium broke out. The report essentially sought to restore

Kashmir to its pre-1953 status and reverse all those constitutional provisions that had been extended to the state ever since. In New Delhi, the political elite sought to redefine autonomy on its own terms and rejected the report. Vajpayee said he had conveyed his views to Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah "I told him that if they demand more political and financial powers that is a different matter. But there is no going back to the pre-1953 position."[200] This was the beginning of considering alternative meanings to autonomy; greater political and financial powers were acceptable and legitimate, but autonomy in the pre-1953 sense was unthinkable.

In the Lok Sabha, the dominant way in which autonomy was debated was in making it an issue of nation-wide application rather than an issue particular to Kashmir. On July 25, 2000, e.g., MP Somnath Chatterjee stated: "The question of autonomy is not restricted to Jammu and Kashmir alone. Different shades of autonomy and different concepts of autonomy are being put forward. There have been demands for a long time for this. The Sarkaria Commission has given its report."

The Annual Report of the Home Ministry 1999-2000 went on to note that:

> Constitutionally J&K enjoys more devolution of powers than other states because not all items in the Union List or the Concurrent List of the 7th Schedule to the Constitution are applicable to J&K. There is no state list for J&K and powers to legislate on residual matters vests with the state unlike the rest of the country…The government is however committed to continuing the endeavour to evolving a broad consensus on the implementation of steps for wide ranging devolution of powers to the states that leads to efficiency in administration, acceleration in development and the fullest realisation of creative potential of all sections of society. Government is of the firm conviction that national integration and devolution of powers to the states must go together.

With the attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2001, on the J&K state legislature building and on the Indian Parliament in December, a new discourse on Kashmir and terrorism was taking shape amidst the Indian political elite. Finally

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[200] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/820284.stm Accessed on 30/09/13

vindicated about their position on the threat of terrorism, a new initiative of bringing Kashmir under the global war on terrorism was under way. Now, the attack on the Indian government was equated with the attacks on the World Trade Centre indicating a heightened sense of urgency in the world about the danger of terrorism:

PM Vajpayee, in the aftermath of the Agra Summit, identified Pakistan sponsored terrorism as the single most important factor in the Kashmir conflict:

> Pakistan was also reluctant to acknowledge and address cross-border terrorism…no objective will be achieved by going into the controversy whether Jammu and Kashmir is a prime issue or not. We cannot ignore the cross-border terrorism and insurgent activities prevailing in the state. The activities being carried out in Jammu and Kashmir with the help of foreign mercenaries and foreign funding is nothing but terrorism. Killing of innocent men women and children cannot be termed as jihad or a political movement…therefore, Pakistan's refusal to stop cross-border terrorism is the biggest hindrance in creating a positive atmosphere for a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.[201]

After the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, the terrorism discourse only grew stronger:

> December, the 13th, has been likened to America's September 11 and that is true. The attack on December 13 on our Parliament was an attack, though smaller in scale than the attack on the United States of America, but far more symbolic in as much as it was an attack on the democratic temple of India's polity.[202]

By 2003-04, even as relations between India and Pakistan witnessed a thaw, the relationship of India and Kashmir also saw greater initiatives as PM Vajpayee visited Kashmir and reached out to the people in a bid to woo their 'hearts and minds'. By offering the people greater economic incentives, as well as talking about regional and

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[201] Lok Sabha, July 24, 2001, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[202] Omar Abdullah, MoS in the Ministry of External Affairs said in the Lok Sabha on December 18, 2001, Government of India.

sub-regional federalism, the causes of the conflict were represented as economic and political dissatisfaction-issues that were common to other states in India as well. The new government formed in 2003 led by Manmohan Singh continued to frame the issue in similar terms, suggesting a continuation of official representations of the conflict.

Identity

India expressed willingness to talk to the Hurriyat in 2000, amidst growing international pressure to release Hurriyat leaders who had been detained. The announcement came in the wake of US President Bill Clinton's visit to the region in March. This was followed by a ceasefire announcement by the Hizbul Mujahideen in July 2000, which overshadowed any possibility of talks with the Hurriyat as the government scrambled to respond to this new development. Though the announcement was revoked in August, the initiative was welcomed by all sections of the political elite, and was followed in November by the announcement of a ceasefire by PM Vajpayee.

On August 8, the government stated in the Lok Sabha,

> Having welcomed the move towards peace made by a senior Hizbul Mujahideen leader during a press conference on 24 July 2000 and having taken cognizance of the support extended to the peace initiative by the people of J&K as also recognising the need for restoration of peace in J&K, the government extended the offer to HM leadership to come over ground and establish contact with the Union Home Secretary to discuss modalities necessary for initiating a dialogue and preparing grounds for restoration of peace. This process has started. The government would like to invite all militant groups and political leaders to come forward to restore peace and normalcy in the state of J&K.[203]

The above statement reflects a recognition by the Indian government of the legitimacy of the Hurriyat and HuM but the latter continued to be referred to as a terrorist outfit, and this offer of talks was conditional upon their renouncing violence.

In April 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Kashmir and reached out to the people and to Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue. After his visit, he addressed the Lok Sabha:

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[203] MoS in the MHA, Vidyasagr Rao, Lok Sabha, August 8, 2000, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

I went to Jammu and Kashmir on a two-day visit on April 18-19, 2003…I assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that we wish to resolve all issues-both domestic and external-through talks. I stressed that the gun can solve no problem; brotherhood can. Issues can be resolved if we move forward guided by the three principles of insaniyat (humanism), jamhooriyat (democracy) and Kashmiriyat (Kashmir's age old legacy of Hindu-Muslim unity). In my speech I spoke of extending our hand of friendship to Pakistan. At the same time I also said that this hand of friendship should be extended by both sides…unemployment is the greatest problem facing the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. We have decided to facilitate creation of one lakh opportunities for employment and self-employment over the next two years. [204]

The discourses on identity during this period show how the government considered the problems of the ordinary Kashmiri to be settled through democracy and humanity, with an emphasis on economic issues as the root of their dissatisfaction. The unemployed youth were sought to be assuaged through creation of employment opportunities.

Policy

The release from jail of senior Hurriyat leaders in April-May 2000 was an attempt to reach out to the separatists but talks ultimately fizzled out because of the Indian government's refusal to consider the possibility of tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat that the latter demanded. Further, the Indian government's insistence on the Constitution was in contrast to the Hurriyat position of maintaining that Kashmir was a disputed status. In November, the Prime Minister announced a ceasefire with the Hizbul Mujahideen and this was extended into the first quarter of 2001. A statement by PM Vajpayee on December 20, 2000:

Following my announcement of 19 November during the holy month of Ramzan, our security forces would not initiate operations against the militants also expressing a hope that along the LoC too infiltration will cease, there have been some encouraging developments…The Government is heartened by the response of the citizens, political parties and other organisations in the state of J&K. Our peace initiative has been widely welcomed there. A distinctly

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[204] Lok Sabha, April 23, 2003, Budget Session, Government of India.

different and more optimistic mood now prevails in that state…As part of our continued commitment to the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, the government will initiate such exploratory steps as are considered necessary by it, so that the composite dialogue process between the governments of India and Pakistan could be resumed. Let me inform the house that the government's unwavering commitment to meeting the challenge of terrorism remains undiluted.

In April 2001, KC Pant was appointed the first interlocutor of Kashmir by the Indian government and asked to hold talks with all sections in the state. The mission failed as the Hurriyat refused to meet him. KC Pant said in relation to the APHC staying away from talks, "In this situation, if any group does not want to assist in the peace process, it will have to answer to the people of the state as to whether it is not being obstructionist."[205]

Meanwhile, Indo-Pak talks were put on high priority and meetings between the leaders of the two countries resulted in widening the discourse on bilateral relations beyond Kashmir. In the Lok Sabha, July 24, 2001 PM Vajpayee said,

At the retreat in Agra President Musharraf and I had extensive one to one talks…I emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust for progress on all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir. I took up other specific issues which would help the process of peace….I focussed on terrorism being promoted in the state of Jammu and Kashmir…President Musharraf focussed exclusively on Jammu and Kashmir…I had to abandon the quest for joint document mainly because of Pakistan's insistence on the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue as a pre-condition for the normalisation of relations…Pakistan wants to evolve the solution of Jammu and Kashmir problem as per the wishes of Kashmiri people… Most of the Kashmiris have their elected representatives who present their legitimate demands before the Government. We are ready to consider demands and ideologies which may even come from representatives of a small section of the Kashmiri people provided they are ready to give up the path of violence. With

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[205] *Tribune*, June 4, 2002, http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010604/j&k.htm#2 Accessed on Sept 16, 2013.

these feelings we have offered talks with the representatives of the All Party Hurriyat Conference.

The government was dissatisfied with Pakistan making Kashmir the main focus of talks and the failure of the Agra Summit came as a blow to the peace process. Vajpayee's statement above also reflects that international pressure to engage with the Hurriyat may have possibly worked and the government made attempts to reach out to them. Importantly, the government reiterated that the elected government of Jammu and Kashmir was the legitimate representative of the people and that it was the best channel for communication with New Delhi.

Making the government's position on Pakistan clear to the international community, home minister LK Advani said in the Lok Sabha:

> I hope that our Kashmir problem will not be resolved with third party intervention. We have always believed it as our bilateral problem. Whether it be a direct or proxy war with Pakistan the problem is ours and only we would resolve it… during my talks with the representative of various countries whether it be Britain, America, France or any other country, I always stressed that though terrorist organisations are dangerous, those rogue or terrorist states who have terrorism as part of policy of their government and are sponsoring terrorism are even more dangerous and these countries have kept on extending financial and moral help to terrorist organisations all through these years and it has continued unabated…in 21st century, more especially after 11 September incident, the entire world admits now that it is a new kind of war.[206]

Thus, the speech above indicates India was unwilling to allow any third-party intervention over Kashmir and was willing to fight its war alone but cautioned the international community against extending any form of support to "rogue or terrorist" states, implying Pakistan. There was a heightened sense of securitisation as the home minister asserted "internal security is no less important than defence."[207]

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[206] Lok Sabha, December 17, 2002, Winter Session, Government of India.

[207] Ibid.

A major change in policy took place in 2003 when, after years of refusing to talk to Kashmiri separatist groups, India announced it was prepared to hold negotiations with the APHC. The failure of the two interlocutors appointed to hold talks with all groups in Kashmir made the Centre take the initiative to directly engage with the Hurriyat. By the end of the year pro-talk Hurriyat leaders were sending feelers that they were ready to talk to the Indian government provided a similar opportunity was given to them to talk to Pakistan as well.

India was taken by surprise when in October 2004 Musharraf came out with a proposal for both India and Pakistan to consider the option of identifying some regions of Kashmir on both sides of the LoC, demilitarize them and grant them the status of independence or joint control or under UN mandate. The reaction in Delhi was muted as they were conveyed to the media rather than in formal talks and were rejected by Manmohan Singh. In November 2004, a month after Musharraf made public his proposals, Prime Minister Singh announced a reduction in troops in Kashmir. A statement by the external affairs ministry laid out that:

> During the past several months, the Indian Army and other security forces deployed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir have achieved success in bringing about an improvement in the security situation in the State. Effective counter-infiltration measures and mobilising the support of the people in the war against terrorism have led to a visible improvement in the situation. This is reflected in the increased tempo of economic activity, continuing increase in tourist arrivals, and a general sense of security among the people. In recognition of the improvement in the situation in the State, the Government has decided to reduce the deployment of troops this winter.[208]

This was the first time since the insurgency broke out in 1989 that a reduction in troops had been finalised and came in the run up to Singh's visit to Kashmir. In Kashmir, the Prime Minister said he was there to "reach out to the hearts and minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir" and to help assist the long-term development of the State. Further, "I have come to you to say that we can make that new beginning, with dignity

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[208] *The Hindu*, November 13, 2004
http://www.hindu.com/2004/11/13/stories/2004111304201100.htm Accessed on 1/10/2013

and self- respect. Every one of us has a right to live a life of dignity and self-respect. That is our commitment to each and every individual."

He reiterated his government's commitment to "an unconditional dialogue with anyone and everyone in the State who abjures violence." However, he said, "Kashmir cannot wait until these dialogues arrive at a satisfactory solution. The challenge is to begin peace building in Kashmir now. I want the journey of development to begin here and now." Calling for a "new vision of development for Jammu and Kashmir", the PM said, "Kashmir needs financial resources. Kashmir needs physical infrastructure, Kashmir needs better connectivity in all directions." His aim he said was not to offer a "package" but a "plan. A plan to reconstruct the economy, reform the government, regenerate entrepreneurship, revitalise the institutions of civil society and redefine the political paradigm and context in the sub-continent."[209]

This talk of a "new vision" and a "plan" aimed to accelerate the pace of development in Kashmir, but the issue of autonomy was glaringly absent. In 2006, Prime Minister Singh launched a series of round table conferences on Kashmir and called on parties of all hues-political and civil society to participate to resolve the issues facing the state. In February 2006, the first round table conference took place. Most separatist and hardline groups such as both factions of the Hurriyat and the JKLF refused to participate.[210] Decentralisation appeared as the key theme for resolving political issues in the state as PM Singh said:

> We want the people to be physically secure and this can only happen if violence and terrorism ends permanently. We want the people to be economically secure and this can only happen if the tremendous potential of the state is channelized and every citizen has access to quality education and health care. We want every group to be politically secure and this can only happen once power is decentralized to the villages...this vision of empowerment and comprehensive

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[209] http://pmindia.gov.in/press-details.php?nodeid=82 Accessed on 1/10/2013.

[210] The Hurriyat was divided into the pro-talk moderate faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and the hard-line pro-Pakistan faction headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani in 2003.

security is related to good governance and people's active participation in formulating policies and monitoring their implementation.[211]

'Regional federalism' was introduced as a solution to the different aspirations of Leh, Jammu and Kashmir and autonomy was sought to be discussed within the parameters of the Constitution:

> One common view that has emerged from this conference is the absolute necessity to maintain the unity of the state while at the same time providing adequate space for the full blossoming of regional and sub-regional identities… I am requesting the Home Minister to form a high level group of officials to examine all current cases of detention and see whether it is possible to release all detenues against whom there are no serious cases… A variety of views have been expressed on the issue of autonomy and self-rule. I recognise that there are many differing views and perception on this issue. There is a need to evolve a common understanding on autonomy and self-rule for the State of Jammu & Kashmir and I am confident that working together with all groups, both within and outside the mainstream, we can arrive at arrangements within the vast flexibilities provided by the Constitution, arrangements which provide real empowerment and comprehensive security to all people of Jammu & Kashmir.[212]

At the end of the second round table dialogue in May 2006, PM Singh set up five working groups to take forward the various issues that were part of dialogue. These were: a group to work out confidence building measures to rehabilitate and improve the living conditions of all sections of the people in the state, another working group to discuss strengthening of cross-LoC relations, the third working group would look into economic development, the fourth working group would work on measures to improve governance and the fifth working group was entrusted with the improvement of Centre-state relations.

By the end of 2007, the government had still not managed to make headway with the Hurriyat and other separatist groups, and though the dialogue process with Pakistan

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[211] http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=274 Accessed on 1/10/2013

[212] Ibid.

continued, core issues remained unresolved. On the other side, improvement in Indo-Pak relations in matters of trade and economic and societal contact had offered new ways of engagement and in Kashmir; political discourse widened the space in which autonomy was debated even if in ways acceptable to the State. In essence, during this period, the government made a number of policy changes with regard to its position on dialogue, but due to the rigidity on the Constitution, reluctance on allowing tripartite talks, and stress on abjuring violence, talks with Kashmiri groups failed to move forward. Autonomy entered as an important theme in the official discourses, but in the context of greater decentralisation and federalism and legitimised only if it fell within the parameters of the Indian Constitution. The phase also reflects how the Indian state considered economic development to be one of the main issues to be prioritised.

2008-2010: A return to the past?

Key Events

2008	Mass protests in the Valley following a state government order for transferring land to a Hindu religious trust
2009	Bodies of two Kashmiri women found; protestors in Kashmir blamed the Army for their killing
2010	Anti-India protests followed the death of a Kashmiri youth through Army firing

Causes

Between June and September 2008, mass protests erupted after a state government order transferring forest land in the state to a Hindu religious trust-the Amarnath Shrine Board which organised the annual Hindu pilgrimage in the state. The deal polarised J&K society on religious lines and Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley saw a huge uprising against the order. Police and paramilitary firing, meant to disperse the angry stone pelting crowds, left more than 30 people dead and hundreds injured and contributed to the anti-India feeling in Kashmir. Pro-independence slogans echoed in

the Valley for the first time in more than a decade. While the state government ultimately revoked the order, counter protests in Hindu-majority Jammu further widened the religious rift. Visiting Kashmir in October, Prime Minister Singh said,

> The Amarnath pilgrimage is a matter of pride for us. It is a shining example of religious harmony. It represents one of the finest examples of our composite culture where Hindu pilgrims have been looked after by their Muslim brothers for hundreds of years. It is regrettable that there was violence because of differences on a piece of land that was transferred to the Amarnath Shrine Board. I had expressed this concern in my Independence Day speech also. I express my sympathy with the friends and relatives of those who lost their lives in the violence. I also feel sad that curfew had to be imposed on many occasions causing a lot of problems to the people. But it was necessary to do so to prevent violence and loss of life and property.[213]

In the Lok Sabha, the debates were fractured along two lines-members of the UPA coalition blamed the previous NDA government of setting up and giving the Amarnath Board a free hand in the state while non-UPA members accused the government of buckling under pressure and giving in to the demand of the Kashmiri Muslims while letting Hindu agitations in Jammu go unheeded.[214] Causes for the violence were also pinned to the role of Pakistan as the following statement by leader of the Opposition LK Advani showed:

> When the Government of the State – it was the PDP Minister who gave that order – and when he decided to set up a similar Shrine in Amarnath and provide land for temporary use of the pilgrims, there was a hue and cry of a nature behind it that I have no doubt that the ISI might be there. I do not know. The allegations were that it was the ISI which did it. But the situation was such that the Congress-PDP Government succumbed to it.…[215]

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[213] http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=703 Accessed on 1/10/2013

[214] See for example speeches of Mehbooba Mufti for the former and Maneka Gandhi for the latter in the debate on July 22, 2008.

[215] Lok Sabha, July 21, 2008, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

Mass protests in 2009 and 2010 were likened to acts of terrorism, delegitimizing them from any genuine grievance. In October 2009, for instance, a senior official of the Indian Army stated that the main issue in Kashmir was the "agitational terrorism" that was being on its streets-referring to the mass protests over the Amarnath controversy in 2008 and the Shopian incident in 2009.[216] Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) chief NK Tripati described the street protests and stone pelting by the Kashmiri youth as "gunless terrorism" largely sponsored by separatists and Pakistan; stripping non-violent protests of any legitimacy or agency.[217]

Identity

After more than a decade of relative peace in the Valley, the years from 2008 to 2010 saw an unprecedented wave of anti-India protests due to a series of events during these years. While the government sought to placate the masses and mentioned their sense of grievance, the identification of Pakistan and separatists made its way into official discourses. The annual report of the home ministry of 2008-09 also alluded to the role of 'separatists' in fuelling the agitation and spreading 'propaganda':

> Unfortunately, in June, 2008, a major controversy arose around the issue of transfer of forest land to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) for the purpose of making arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra. Certain decisions taken by the Government in this regard led to major controversies which, in turn, were sought to be exploited by the separatist elements through large scale propaganda. All this snowballed into a two month long agitation both in the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu regions, and also created serious polarization between the two regions of the State…"

The annual report of the home ministry for 2010-11 also hinted at the role of separatists as it mentioned how:

> The agitation has drawn ideological support from the separatists…On a few occasions there was firing, from within the crowd who could have been

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[216] http://ibnlive.in.com/news/army-fears-spillover-terror-in-kashmir/104354-3.html Accessed on 1/10/2013

[217] http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2010/Feb/4/pak-sponsoring-gunless-rebellion-crpf-72.asp Accessed on 1/10/2013

militants… The security forces have resolutely faced the stone pelting by misguided youths with commendable restraint…

The participation by Kashmiri youth in the mass protests was viewed as pointless; and instead they were urged to return to their normal lives. Following the events of 2010, PM Manmohan Singh said,

> I can feel the pain and understand the anger and frustration that is bringing young people out on to the streets of Kashmir. Many of them have seen nothing but violence and conflict in their lives and have been scarred by suffering… Let us make a new beginning. I appeal to the youth to go back to their schools and colleges and allow classes to resume. I ask their parents: what future is there for Kashmir if your children are not educated?[218]

In the Lok Sabha in August 2010, Home Minister Chidambaram spoke of the grave situation in Kashmir and appealed to the parents "Your children's safety and welfare is our paramount consideration as it must be yours... Mindless violence and destruction of public property will not lead to any solution."[219] This patronizing appeal to parents, evident in both statements above, reflect the government's representations of the participants as children, or non-adults, who needed to be guided by their parents instead of indulging in 'mindless' agitations.

Policy

There was no radical change in policy to deal with the crises. PM Manmohan Singh continued to talk of 'dialogue' as a means of resolving the issue:

> The recent incidents in J&K show that there is some resentment towards the Government among a section of the youth here on certain issues. It has always been our belief that even the most difficult issues can be resolved through dialogue. This is the reason why we started a series of round table conferences. The Government will welcome dialogue with all sections of people. This also

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[218] PM Singh's speech to the All Party Delegation from J&K on August 10, 2010 http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=916 Accessed on 1/10/2013

[219] http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gmXojp2AYgiSq3kkx2ddw4BG__SQ Accessed on 1/10/2013

includes those who have so far opted to stay out of the political process. I urge that whoever has complaints and grievances should come forward for a dialogue. At an appropriate stage, I would also be happy to meet such people. [220]

In 2009, yet another controversy engulfed the state when the bodies of two women were found in Shopian in Kashmir. Alleging their rape and murder by security forces, widespread protests erupted in the Valley. Eight people died and several hundred were injured in the clamp down by security forces. The Indian state upheld the role of security forces in Kashmir and refused to budge on the issue of AFSPA revocation. "We must have faith in our Army and security forces. Just because there are one or two black sheep in the forces, let us not demean them," Chidambaram said in July 2009, referring to agitations launched against the paramilitary forces and for their withdrawal. "The government would review the demand for withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act at an appropriate time. [221]

Matters came to a head in 2010, when, in reaction to the killing of an innocent Kashmiri youth by security forces, mass anti-India protests broke out in the Valley. More than a hundred Kashmiris-mostly young boys, died in security force firings. Annual home ministry report of 2010-11 stated the government's policies:

> The summer of 2010 in the State of J&K has witnessed unprecedented violence in the Valley in the form of protests and agitations turning violent and the security forces being attacked. The use of stones by a section of the youths has been a unique feature of violent attacks on the security forces. This form of agitation generated a cycle of violence and disturbed the law and order situation in the State particularly since June, 2010…Government of India approved an 8-point plan to be implemented to ease the situation. This includes appointment of interlocutors for sustained dialogue; release of students/youths detained for stone pelting; review the cases of all PSA detenues; review the deployment of security forces in the Kashmir valley; ex-gratia relief to the families of the

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[220] http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=703 Accessed on 1/10/2013

[221] http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/terror-threat-hasnt-diminished-chidambaram/article236560.ece Accessed on 1/10/2013

deceased persons at 5 lakh per person killed in the civil disturbances since 11.06.2010; appointment of special task forces to examine developmental needs of Jammu and Ladakh regions; reopening of all schools, colleges and provision of Additional Central Assistance of 100 crore to the State Government to restore the damaged infrastructure of schools and colleges.

Prime Minister Singh also emphasised economic incentives as a solution but political dialogue was also considered necessary without going into what this entailed:

I am convinced that the only way forward in Jammu and Kashmir is along the path of dialogue and reconciliation… We must promote economic activity and create opportunities for employment. We must build physical and human resource infrastructure. But I recognize that the key to the problem is a political solution that addresses the alienation and emotional needs of the people. This can only be achieved through a sustained internal and external dialogue… We are willing to discuss all issues within the bounds of our democratic processes and framework… Let us recognize that repeated agitations whether violent or otherwise only obstruct this process… We understand the prevailing public sentiment on the issue of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Eventually the J&K Police has to take on the burden of normal law and order duties. They do not require special powers to discharge their functions. We will help to accelerate the process of strengthening and expanding the J&K Police so that they can function independently and effectively within the shortest possible time…[222]

As with the early 1990s, little attention or thought was given to the genuine political frustrations and angst of the Kashmiri youth, and their agitations were termed as 'obstructions' in the path to peace. In September, the Prime Minister pointed to the role of parties with agendas for politicizing the unrest:

I have said this earlier and I say it again - the only path for lasting peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir is that of dialogue and discussion. It is indeed tragic that some of our people have forsaken this path during the recent days. I

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[222] PM Singh's speech to the All Party Delegation from J&K on August 10, 2010 http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=916 Accessed on 1/10/2013

was shocked and distressed to see young men and women- even children- joining the protests on the streets. While some of these protests may have been impulsive or spontaneous, it cannot be denied that some incidents were orchestrated by certain groups. What we have seen over the past three months must persuade us to reflect and deliberate on the way forward. We have to talk to each other. And those who have grievances against the Government have to talk to the administration. But it is also true that meaningful dialogue can happen only in an atmosphere free from violence and confrontation. Discussions can take place only if we have calm and public order. The Central and State Governments have already appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the youth, to eschew violence.[223]

The discourses of the political elite in 2010 were similar in rhetoric as earlier; violence was seen as the work of separatists and of Pakistan, the youth being mere puppets in their hands. Moreover, their protests were seen to be obstructions in the path to peace and it was suggested that the youth needed employment and economic opportunities. AFSPA was finally acknowledged as a matter of controversy but there was a greater emphasis on the need for the security forces to maintain 'law and order' and therefore the issue of revocation indefinitely postponed.

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[223] http://pmindia.gov.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=928 Accessed on 1/10/2013

Conclusion

That the events of 2010 saw in Kashmir a similar anti-India movement as in the early 1990s was no surprise. Without having resolved the political issues at the core of the conflict, the various measures to 'normalise' the situation in the state could not have brought about genuine peace in Kashmir.

The pattern of state response in Kashmir has been one of management rather than genuine resolution. The discourses of the State point to an ideology of tight control and inflexibility-giving very little space for alternative discourses and engagement. Core issues such as autonomy have become a subject matter of committees, interlocutors and reports, with very little movement on actual implications and implementation of autonomy. No consensus has been achieved on what autonomy for Kashmir really means; instead, as the discourses show, over the years there has been a move to consider Kashmir as any other state in India. In this capacity, then, federalism and decentralisation have replaced autonomy as the mantra.

For the Indian state, elections seemed to be the solution to the problem in Kashmir and feature as an important tool in its conflict management repertoire. Development and employment were the other tools with which to resolve conflict. Negotiations and dialogue appear frequently in the discourses, but deciding who to engage with and on what terms has been more of the stumbling block. At some point the Hurriyat and separatists were sought to be engaged with only if they participated in elections, but as the analysis shows, talks were later legitimized with the same. The insistence on keeping internal issues separate from the external issue with Pakistan has meant that simultaneous progress on both fronts has been near impossible. Moreover, the insistence on any dialogue being within the framework of the Indian Constitution has been an obstruction for all those Kashmiri groups challenging the validity of the constitutional arrangements.

The internal dynamics of the state itself has been politicised through the prism of religion-a potent tool in contemporary India. The tendency to see Kashmir as the beacon of Indian secularism has often meant that religious identity has been prioritised over the Kashmiri political identity. In recent years, the dissatisfaction of the youth has been framed in economic terms, suggesting employment as a solution to their grievances and thus legitimizing economic demands.

More broadly, two themes run across the discourses on the conflict in Kashmir-democracy and paternalism. Democracy, represented in terms of elections and an elected state government in Kashmir, is seen as a solution to the crisis, and is projected as a legitimate avenue to present demands to the Indian government; on the other hand, a general paternal attitude exists amongst the political elite as it deals with the Kashmiris as it emphasises the need to bring back the misguided youth and negotiate with any disparate groups on its own terms.

Returning to the research questions, the discourse analysis of the Kashmir conflict over time shows how the conflict has been transformed in the discourses from being a secessionist conflict to a political and economic one; politically as a demand for greater autonomy and economically as a demand for employment. The spectrum of identities range from the foreign/Pakistani jihadi or terrorist to the misguided youth. In between exist the Kashmiri terrorist, the pro-liberation Kashmiri parties and the Kashmiri nationalist parties which are part of the Indian political mainstream. Talks are legitimized only with those groups that are willing to give up violence and pay allegiance to the Indian constitution. The continuation of this policy discourse across all phases indicates the assertion of the Indian state's territorial integrity.

Chapter 5: A discourse theoretical analysis of the Naxal conflict

Referred to as the 'Maoist', 'Naxalite', or 'left wing extremist' conflict, the naxal challenge has in recent times moved from being an entirely state-centric to a national issue, as the Centre has shown increasing interest in addressing the problem. The naxal conflict is different from the conflicts in Punjab and Kashmir, as the issue is not limited to a particular state but is spread out geographically, and is also not confined to border regions. Further, the key actors in the conflict are not religious minorities, but belong to the lowest castes and tribes of rural India. Despite these differences, the naxal conflict is a useful case to analyse changes in the state's discourses as well as to draw comparisons from the discourses on the Punjab and Kashmir conflicts. Moreover, do these differences make legitimisation of force harder for the State? How do conflict representations and policy options legitimise the preferred security strategy?

While much of the current literature on the naxal conflict focuses on the groups and ideologies, causes of the conflict and state government responses, this chapter shall analyse the Centre's response to the issue over a ten year period from 2000 to 2010. The relatively short time period is analysed as a phase in itself. A careful analysis of the discourses of New Delhi on the issue is carried out and divided under sections on causes, identity and policy representations.

In particular, this chapter will answer more definitely:

How is the naxal conflict understood by the Indian government? Has this changed over time?

What are the policy options weighted by the Indian government in dealing with the conflict? Does this change over time?

How was India's security strategy against the Naxalites legitimised?

Background of the conflict

Since colonial times, peasant rebellions had been a common feature in India, including in Bengal, as the Indian peasantry sought to rebel against colonial exploitation. With India's independence in 1947, the colonial legacy of inequitable land distribution

policies continued and with it, the tillers continued to face exploitation at the hands of the landowners (Gupta 2007). In 1967, a peasant uprising against land owners and land policies erupted into violence in a village called Naxalbari in West Bengal. It is from this district that the term 'Naxalism' originated to refer to similar armed peasant movements across the country. Even prior to this, Andhra Pradesh witnessed a Communist party-led peasant uprising in 1944, and a similar uprising took place in the state in 1968. Organisational and ideological support for the uprising in Naxalbari came from the militant wing of the Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM) which later split from the parent party to form the Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist, also called CPI (ML) (Mehra 2000). Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal, stalwarts of the communist movement in Bengal during the 1960s, were greatly inspired by the Chinese communist movement and its pattern of leading revolution from the villages. When the CPM decided to join parliamentary politics, the CPI (ML) took charge of the movement. As the peasants resorted to violence against the landowners in Naxalbari, the police was sent in and clashes between the rebels and the police led to a brutal suppression of the former.

By mid-1972, the movement was almost entirely crushed. The movement in Andhra Pradesh was likewise crushed by the time the Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency came to an end in 1977. During the Emergency, a number of leaders of the Naxalite movement were jailed under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. In 1972, Charu Mazumdar died in police custody. The Naxalite movement, despite its origins in rural Bengal, was led by educated, urban youth from middle and upper middle class families, and could not unite the myriad movements in other parts of the country. Once the leadership was crushed, the movement was largely over.

Since the Emergency, Naxalite parties such as the CPI (ML), Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG) have made efforts to mobilise through front organisations, which dealt with workers and peasant's rights in mainstream politics, and armed wings which had a long term agenda of organising armed revolution to achieve radical changes (Basu 2011). Since the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a proliferation of Naxalite groups across states like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. The pace and pattern of development projects in these states also served to alienate people from their traditional livelihood, and in many cases, caused displacement of people to make way for the

construction of dams, mineral refineries and factories. The goal of the CPI (M) is to capture state power through armed struggle and an overhaul of the existing political system (Ramana 2006).

 The most recent report of the Home Ministry indicates that front organisations of these left wing extremist groups are active in 20 states of India, of which the CPI (M) is the most dominant and violent.[225] The worst affected states are Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar. While Naxalism has largely been an issue specific to the state governments, in recent times, it has assumed national significance with the Centre taking a keener look at the problem.
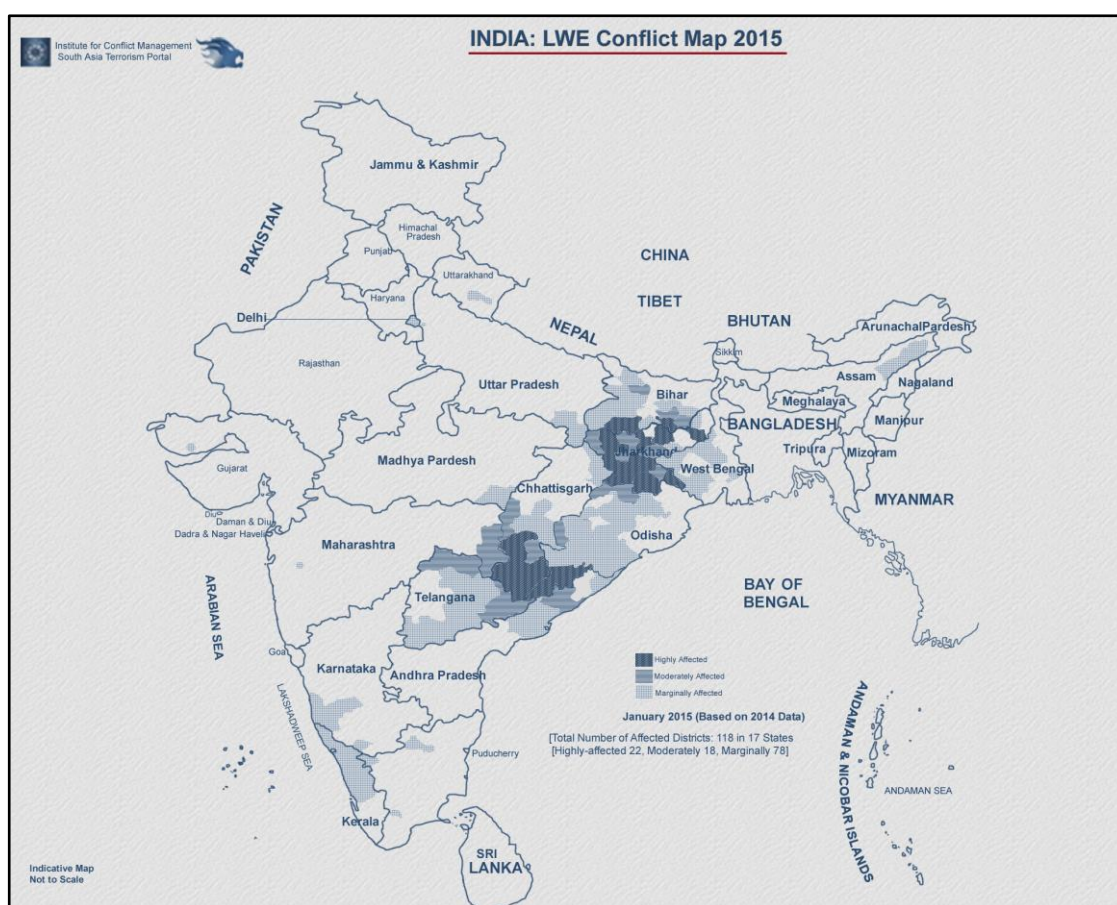

Figure 1: Map of Naxal affected states (Source: http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/database/conflictmap.htm)

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[225] Annual Report 2013-2014, available at http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/AR(E)1314.pdf. Accessed on September 30, 2014.

Towards a discourse analysis of the management of the Naxal conflict

As the above background shows, there has been a long history of the Naxal conflict and it has spread from a small district in West Bengal to across 20 states in India. From being a state-specific issue it has now become a 'national' security problem and to that extent occupies a prominent place in the Centre's discourses on security.

Below, some of the most significant events related to the naxal conflict between 2000 and 2010 are laid out. Discourses have been selected around these events and analyses is presented around the themes of causes, identity representations, and government policy discourses.

Key events

2000	Creation of two new states: Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh with significant tribal populations
2001	Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance; CPML People's War and Maoist Communist Centre and their formations and front organisations notified as terrorist organisations under the provision of the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance 2001.
2004	CPI(ML) and the MCC merged to form the CPI (Maoist)
2005	Peace talks between Maoists and AP government; in Chhattisgarh, Congress government instituted Salwa Judum-an armed resistance group of local tribals to fight against the Naxalites.
2006	PM Manmohan Singh calls it the biggest internal security threat; Chhattisgarh state government appoints KPS Gill as security adviser; Naxal Management Division

	created within the Ministry of Home Affairs to deal with the issue from a security and development perspective.
2009	Formation of GoI's first inter-state military offensive against the Maoists-Clear, Hold and Develop. It took its cue from the US Army Counter Terrorism Handbook which had a chapter Clear, Hold and Build. Home Secretary GK Pillai said in Oct 2009 that within 30 days administration would be restored in these areas; CPI (M) banned as a terrorist organisation
2010	76 security personnel killed in Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh-one of the deadliest attacks by the naxals; in July, Maoist leader Azad was killed; in Chhattisgarh CM says links between Maoists and LeT, similar sentiments echoed by J&K CM

Causes

The creation of the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in 2000 was the result of administrative and socio-political convenience. While not directly related to the issue of Naxalism, the creation of these states did mean that demographically they had large tribal populations. At this stage, the onus of the naxal issue fell on individual state governments, though this was gradually giving way to an increased focus of the Centre on the issue. In 2001, even as worldwide events such as the terrorist attacks in New York and subsequent attention to terrorism increased, in India, there was an attempt to link the Indian Maoists with the Maoists in Nepal as a senior government minister

claimed that there were "reports that Indian left extremist groups and Maoists of Nepal are in contact with each other."[226]

The annual report of the home ministry for 2001-02 noted that that the "Efforts are being made by the left wing extremist outfits towards actualisation of the Compact Revolutionary Zone envisaged by the MCC, CPML-PW and CPN (Maoist) of Nepal for linking up the strongholds of the CPML-PW in Telengana and Dandakaranya and of the MCC in Bihar and Jharkhand with those of the CPN (Maoist) in Nepal." That the government believed that the Maoists were uniting in India and Nepal also elevated the problem from a local issue to an international one.

There was a near unanimous view in the parliament that the roots of the naxal issue were to be found in economic causes. A senior member of the opposition Congress party said that unemployment affected terrorism. While talking of Kashmir, the north east and naxal affected states, he said that many educated youth were facing lack of employment opportunities, and "are quite easily misled by the people who want to mislead them. This economic problem generates terrorism."[227] This was echoed by other MPs such as Gutha Sukender Reddy from Andhra Pradesh who said that "one of the reasons why Naxalism has assumed such a serious proportion is the unemployment problem among the youth."[228] He also said that "Naxalites have no faith in democracy. They believe in gaining power through the barrel of the gun…these extremists have made life miserable." Further, he said, "where there is poverty, there is unrest. The government should implement effective economic policies and programmes and see that economically backward areas witness adequate economic development."

In 2004, the merger of the CPI (ML) and MCC to form the CPI (Maoist) also stoked added concern amongst the political elite who were convinced that there was a more sinister plan to wreak havoc on India's national security. There was also some concern about "compact revolutionary zones" set up by Naxalites to which MoS Jaiswal said that "available reports indicate that Naxalite outfits have been making attempts to carve

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[226] Minister of state in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Vidyasagar Rao made the statement in Parliament on December 18, 2001, Winter Session, Government of India.

[227] Shivraj Patil, Lok Sabha, December 17, 2002, Winter Session, Government of India.

[228] Lok Sabha, December 17, 2002, Winter Session, Government of India.

out a compact revolutionary zone spreading from the Nepal border through Bihar and the Dandakaranya region to Andhra Pradesh."[229]

This concern with the links of the Naxals with Nepalese groups was a consistent feature of the discourse, and suggests that it formed an important part of the discourse on causes of the conflict. It implies that the government never considered the issue to be purely internal. The internal issue was linked to economic dissatisfaction but links with foreign groups made the issue a greater threat.

At the second meeting of the standing committee of chief ministers on Naxalism in April 2006, PM Manmohan Singh said, "The problem of Naxalism is the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by the country."[230] This statement represented how the conflict had now been elevated in terms of its threat perception. He also said that the Naxalites were trying to establish "liberation zones where they are dispensing or claiming to be dispensing basic state functions of administration, policing and justice. It is a cause for great concern that civil administration and police are periodically absent in some of these areas." That the PM alluded to political shortcomings as a possible cause for the conflict suggests that some of the demands and grievances were considered legitimate, but the violence perpetrated by naxal groups was a major cause for concern and entirely delegitimized. There was a heightened sense of urgency as the PM said that there had been a "qualitative change" in the character of the movement: "They were earlier restricted to using local weapons, acted in small groups and indulged in isolated attacks. The naxal movement is now characterized by growing militarisation, superior army style organisation, better trained cadres, attacks on large targets through large scale frontal assaults, better coordination and possible external links." Further,

> Naxalism is directly related to underdevelopment…it is the tribal areas that are the main battleground of left wing extremism today. Exploitation, artificially depressed wages, iniquitous socio political circumstances, inadequate employment opportunities, lack of access to resources, under developed agriculture, geographical isolation, lack of land reforms – all contribute

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[229] Lok Sabha, 23 August, 2005, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[230] www.pib.nic.in Accessed on August 25, 2014.

significantly to the growth of the Naxalite movement. All these factors have to be taken into consideration as we evolve solutions for facing the challenge of Naxalism.[231]

A detailed discourse of the causes can be found in a Planning Commission report of 2008, when in March, an expert group published their report titled 'Development challenges in extremist affected areas'.[232] The report recognised that "The directional shift in Government policies towards modernisation and mechanisation, export orientation, diversification to produce for the market, withdrawal of various subsidy regimes and exposure to global trade has been an important factor in hurting the poor in several ways" and that "it should not cause surprise that a large section of the people are angry and feel alienated from the polity." It also referred to the causes as follows:

> Apart from poverty and deprivation in general, the causes of the tribal movements are many: the most important among them are absence of self-governance, forest policy, excise policy, land related issues, multifaceted forms of exploitation, cultural humiliation and political marginalisation. Land alienation, forced evictions from land, and displacement also added to unrest. Failure to implement protective regulations in Scheduled Areas, absence of credit mechanism leading to dependence on money lenders and consequent loss of land and often even violence by the State functionaries added to the problem.

Such a lucid explanation of the causes of the conflict also put the onus of responsibility on the State; though the report also noted that the Naxalites were exploiting the situation for their own ends,

> The Naxalites exploit the situation for their own political gain by giving the affected persons some semblance of relief or response. Thereby they tend to legitimise in the eyes of the masses their own legal or even illegal activities… their hostile attitude towards the electoral process has meant that they have not had much effect on the political system and the functioning of the local bodies.

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[231] PM Manmohan Singh, April 13, 2006. www.pib.nic.in Accessed on August 25, 2014.

[232] Full text available at http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/publications/rep_dce.pdf Accessed on September 25, 2014.

Instead they have concentrated on establishing their organisations as alternatives.

For the government, the litmus test of the legitimacy of rebel groups thus was their participation in the electoral process, and, in this case, the reaction of the Naxalites was proof of their undemocratic functioning and delegitimised their means.

The government also blamed the Naxalites for hindering the pace of development. In September 2008, PM Manmohan Singh said that

Naxalism and Left Wing Extremism continue to pose a challenge to development and the social and economic uplift of people in some of the most backward regions of our country. The States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Orissa figure prominently in the list of areas that are affected. What is especially disturbing is the extent to which these extremists have improved techniques and the kind of improvisations that they have succeeded in making. …[233]

The annual report of the MHA for 2007-08 mentioned that

Naxalites typically operate in the vacuum created by functional inadequacy of field level governance structures, espouse local demands, and take advantage of prevalent dissatisfaction and feelings of perceived neglect and injustice among the under privileged and remote segments of population. Simultaneously, systematic efforts are made by them to prevent execution and implementation of development projects, deliberately target critical infrastructure like railways, roads, power and telecommunications, and to try and create an environment, through violence and terror, where the governance structures at field levels are shown as being ineffective.

The above quote shows how the government differentiated between the genuine economic dissatisfaction of the local population and the Naxalites who they considered as exploiting these grievances for their own ends, which were to create an environment of 'violence and terror'. These means were delegitimised, and their violence was seen

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[233] Lok Sabha, September 17, 2008, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

as being a deliberate attempt to malign the government by thwarting development projects.

A glance at the discourses on the causes of the Naxalite conflict detailed above reflects some clear patterns. The causes were pinned to prevailing economic policies and patterns of development and not just to 'law and order' issues that could be left to the state governments. Poverty and unemployment were regarded as being the primary motivators for leading the poor to take up arms against the State. These were the reasons why the Naxalites were able to garner support amongst the population. The attempt to link the Naxalites with foreign support worked to give the issue added urgency but was not considered a primary cause for the conflict. The concern with 'compact revolutionary zones' in the aftermath of the merger of two separate sections of the Naxalites also and with their growing strength and capacity ever since ensured that the issue became one of the most prioritised national security issues. No longer was the Centre content to leave the conflict purely in the hands of individual state government but took a keener interest at the issue.

Identity

In terms of identifying who the Naxalites were, the government had already banned the front organisations and knew both the main organisations and where they operated. The Naxal groups were termed 'terrorist organisations' and their reach was seen to have been expanded to 9 states across India. The annual report of the home ministry for 2001-02 noted that "left wing extremist movement remained a cause for concern with countrywide Naxalite violence increasing during the current year…among the states affected by the menace, Bihar and Jharkhand witnessed an increase in Naxalite violence." It also noted that the "MCC and the CPML-PW continued to spearhead the Naxalite movement and accounted for around 85.9% of countrywide Naxalite violence and resultant deaths despite their inclusion in the schedule 18 of POTA as terrorist organisations." The report also lay out that 53 districts in 9 states were affected by left wing extremism, worst of them being Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.

Interestingly, the government also identified the Naxalites as essentially 'our own people' and as those gone astray. The Centre drafted a surrender policy for "left wing extremists" in 2000 and had circulated it amongst state governments for their views.

According to a senior home ministry official, "the primary objective of the policy is to contain left wing extremist violence by weaning away the misguided youth and able bodied men and women who have drifted to the extremist fold and to bring them back to the mainstream."[234] The framing of the Naxalites as 'terrorist organisations', 'extremists', and 'misguided youth' at varying times suggests the inability of the government to fully comprehend the legitimacy of the Naxals. Opposition MPs questioned the government on this treatment. Home minister Shivraj Patil said in the Lok Sabha, replying to a query about why the government was treating them as brothers:

> If a man does not get food, employment, and a house and there is no one to support the family members and whatever support he requires is not provided to him and if such a person is forced to take up arms under the influence of wrath then it is not good to treat him as a foe and open fire on him. These people have been forced to take up arms due to some compulsion and we do not want to treat them as our foes. We want to make them realise that the path they have chosen is not good. I want to tell all such persons who have taken up arms they are not going to get anything with the help of arms and violence…but if they come through negotiations or any other channel or if they do something through the House they would be able to achieve enough…We are not taking the course of negotiations due to some kind of fear. We are taking this course because they are our own people.[235]

In other words, officially the government maintained that the Naxals were not enemies, but rather had been 'forced' to take up arms. The Naxals were blamed for arousing a sense of false consciousness amongst the people by using violence since ideologically it was not able to attract attention. PM Manmohan Singh said that the Naxalite movement had lost most of its intellectual attraction but was "generating some notions

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[234] Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Vidyasagar Rao, Lok Sabha, March 14, 2000, Budget Session, Government of India.

[235] Lok Sabha, December 14, 2004, Winter Session, Government of India.

of empowerment through the use of violence and weapons" especially among "deprived and alienated sections of the population."[236]

The government also recognised the supporters of the naxal movement largely as tribals or the very poor in the areas affected by Naxalism. A 2008 Planning Commission report identified that "The main support for the Naxalite movement comes from dalits and adivasis..." In September 2008, PM Manmohan Singh said "Left wing extremists also appear to have a ready-made pool of disaffected elements, mainly from the tribal and other very poor sections of the society…"[237] Further, "It is not a coincidence that the areas affected by Naxalite activity are also areas with a large representation of tribal communities. It was in recognition of this fact that many such States and areas have been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. This provides for a special role for Governors. Our Government has enacted the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which is a path breaking initiative empowering tribal families."[238]

By asserting that the support base of the Naxals comprised largely of tribals and the poorest of the poor, the government was essentially denying agency to the supporters by emphasising their desperation as being reason for the ease with which they could be exploited.

The political elite in New Delhi took issue with the claim of the Naxalites that they were pro-tribal. For instance, one MP said, "They claim that they are for the people and that they are Marxists and Leftists. But the fact is they are neither Marxists nor Leftists, they are anarchists. So anarchism is Naxalism. They are disturbing the development process. They are anti-tribal and anti-development."[239] In a similar vein, Congress MP Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi debated the use of the term Maoists by the media. He said, "I do not know why you use the term Maoists. But the name Mao Zedong is a name to the

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[236] Meeting of chief ministers on Naxalism, 13 April 2006
http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=17128 Accessed on December 6, 2014.

[237] Lok Sabha, September 17, 2008, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[238] Lok Sabha, September 17, 2008, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[239] Dr Babu Rao Mediyam, Lok Sabha, December 13, 2004, Winter Session, Government of India.

whole world for his revolution…I asked the journalists, 'You can say 'extremist', you can say 'Naxalites', but why do you say 'Maoists'?"[240]

They were also termed anti-national by PM Manmohan Singh, "In several parts of our country, there have been increasing instances of public protest against high-handedness of militant and Naxalite cadres, which are indeed welcome signs and need to be harnessed as a possible paradigm for dealing with such anti-national elements…"[241]

With regard to foreign links, it was claimed by the government that "There are no inputs to indicate that Left Wing Extremist (LWE) groups are getting assistance in terms of weapons and finance from foreign countries. Further, there are no inputs to indicate that LWE groups have established nexus with terrorist and separatist outfits abroad. However, CPI (Maoist) maintains links with certain like-minded parties of some neighbouring countries."[242] The minister also said that there were inputs to suggest that "Left Wing Extremist groups, particularly CPI (Maoist), extort considerable levy from various mining mafia groups in the Naxal-affected States."

Essentially, the discourses on identity indicate that the government considered the Naxalites as extremists (clear from their use of the term Left Wing Extremism to refer to the movement) but the kind that were part of the mainstream or "our own people". They were also identified as tribals, and their main support base as coming from the tribals and poorest sections of society. There was no altruistic aim of the Naxalites as far as the government was concerned and instead it considered them to be taking advantage of the misery of the poor and tribals and in the process hindering development.

Policy

The twin emphasis on 'development and security' in the Centre's discourses highlights that the conflict was viewed as primarily an economic one but the policy thrust was on security. Since 2000, the Naxalite issue began to gain prominence in the Centre's discourses on internal security. In March 2000, home minister LK Advani told the

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[240] Lok Sabha, November 21, 2007, Winter Session, Government of India.

[241] Lok Sabha, October 6, 2005, Government of India.

[242] MoS in MHA Ajay Maken, Lok Sabha, December 7, 2010, Winter Session, Government of India.

Parliament that Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had "witnessed an increase in left wing extremist violence" and that the Centre had in its meetings with state governments asked them to prepare "integrated action plans encompassing development and security aspects of the problem."[243] He also said that the government had set up a coordination centre headed by the union home secretary and with chief secretaries and director generals of the police forces of the affected states to review and monitor the plan of action. Chief Ministers of affected states also held meetings with the Centre in New Delhi to review the situation. The home minister identified several policy decisions taken such as "providing financial support for combating left wing extremist activities, construction/improvement of identified critical roads, preparation of plans for development of affected areas to tackle the problem in a holistic manner, sharing of intelligence inputs on constant basis, providing help to paramilitary forces".[244]

At this stage, it was evident that the Centre considered Naxalism to be the responsibility of the state governments, but provided financial assistance and intelligence sharing along with the supply of paramilitary forces. For instance, the Centre had implemented a scheme to reimburse 50% of the security related expenditure incurred by states in tackling the problem of left wing extremism.[245] However, that the issue was becoming a growing concern for the Centre was becoming more and more evident. According to Home Minister LK Advani, "keeping in view the overall dimensions which left wing extremism has assumed in some states, it has become a matter of concern for the central government as well."[246] He said that the centre was providing states with financial assistance for modernisation of the police forces in the affected states. He also said that meetings with chief ministers had taken place and they were urged to focus on inter-state coordination, intelligence gathering, responsive administration and socio-economic measures to cater to the needs of the poorer segments and redressal of peoples' grievances. He also said that it was agreed that police forces of affected states should undertake joint operations.

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[243] Lok Sabha, March 8, 2000, Budget Session, Government of India.

[244] Lok Sabha, March 8, 2000, Budget Session, Government of India.

[245] MoS in the MHA Vidyasagar Rao, Lok Sabha, April 18, 2000, Budget Session, Government of India.

[246] Lok Sabha, April 25, 2000, Budget Session, Government of India.

By the end of 2001, a year that saw increased concern with terrorism following the events of 9/11 in New York and the attack on the Indian parliament in 2001, the Naxalite issue had begun to be taken more seriously and the government noted an increase in the number of states facing Naxalite terror. In response to the government's evaluation of the Naxalite conflict, minister of state in the ministry of home affairs Vidyasagar Rao said that the government was facing various internal security challenges, including "violence perpetrated by the left wing extremist groups in some states like Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Orissa."[247]   He also said that the state governments had been advised to formulate "Integrated Action Plans" encompassing "security and development aspects". There was some attempt to link the Naxalites with the Maoists in Nepal. On December 18, 2001, the government stated in the Parliament that "there are reports that Indian left extremist groups and Maoists of Nepal are in contact with each other." He also said that since "public order" and "police" were state subjects, it was for the "state governments to devise various methods and take concrete steps to curb left wing extremist activities in the states." He said that the Centre was helping with financial support for various policies to deal with the issue.

An attempt at talks by the Andhra Pradesh government in 2002 fizzled out when the ruling party could not garner support across the political spectrum. In the Parliament, the issue was controversial. For instance, one MP from the state said that while the Andhra Pradesh government tried to negotiate with the "extremists", it was "unfortunate that some of the political parties have supported the extremists. Extremists believe in gaining power only through the barrel of the gun. That being their stand, any negotiation with them will never be successful."[248] Others urged the government to follow the example of the Andhra Pradesh government and keep the negotiation process going.[249] For instance, MP Asaduddin Owaisi, "This naxal problem is a socio-economic problem. It has to be dealt with talks only…"[250] The lack of unanimity on

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[247] Lok Sabha, December 18, 2001, Winter Session, Government of India.

[248] Andhra Pradesh MP Gutha Sukender Reddy, Lok Sabha, December 17, 2002, Winter Session, Government of India.

[249] See for example speech of Prof Ramadass in a discussion on internal security in the Lok Sabha, December 2004.

[250] Lok Sabha, December 13, 2004, Winter Session, Government of India.

whether dialogue with the Naxalites was legitimate or not added to the policy confusion in New Delhi.

At a chief ministers conference held in New Delhi on February 8, 2003, it was agreed to adopt a two pronged strategy to tackle this problem:

> On the one hand there is a need to remove all the shortcomings in intelligence gathering and sharing well-coordinated anti-Naxalite operations by Special Task Forces of the concerned states under a designated coordinator, on the other, a greater emphasis needs to be given by the states to accelerate development of the physical and social infrastructure in the affected districts.[251]

The conference also underlined the fact that one of the basic reasons "for the ills of extremism" was the lack of good governance. Therefore, it was decided, there was a "need to make the administrative machinery more responsive, transparent, and sensitive." It was agreed to put in place "effective public grievances redressal system and post committed and upright officers with stable tenure in the affected districts."

Further, the report noted that:

> Considering that Maoist violence in Nepal may have some repercussions on the internal security situation of the country particularly in view of the CPN (Maoist) linkages with CPML-PW and MCC, states affected by left wing extremist activities and those bordering Nepal have been requested to take immediate action to arrange intensive patrolling of the areas bordering Nepal to prevent ingress of Maoist elements.[252]

Essentially, the twin emphasis on security and development as a policy thrust was laid out along with a plan to improve governance while at the same time keeping vigil on foreign linkages.

It was in 2004 that the government discourses reflected a willingness to consider dialogue as a policy for resolving the issue. This change came about as a result of the state government of Andhra Pradesh engaging in dialogue with the Naxalites in

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[251] Annual report of the Ministry of Home Afffairs, 2002-03, Government of India.

[252] Ibid.

October, after initiating a ceasefire in June. In September, the merger of the MCC and PWG to form the CPI (Maoist) was made public. Talks eventually broke down due to differences over bearing of arms and due to hostilities in January 2005. Home minister Shivraj Patil said in the Lok Sabha that it was a result of direct talks that the Andhra Pradesh government initiated with the Naxalites that the number of deaths due to violence had come down. "This shows we can solve the problem through dialogue."[253] Simultaneously, the government kept up its policy of development and security. The minister said, "We have asked the Planning Commission to allocate maximum funds for Naxalite and terrorism affected areas so that economic development can be seen in those districts." The Centre also deputed to the affected states "central paramilitary forces, mine protected vehicles and air support wherever required for effective anti-Naxalite operations. India Reserve battalions have also been sanctioned to these states."[254]

Until 2004-2005, the Centre's position on the Naxalite issue was that it was up to the state governments in their individual capacity to deal with policy making, even though it extended help to them. From 2005 onwards, in the wake of the merger of two of the sections of the Naxalites, the Centre sought to bring states together to deal collectively with the issue and develop coordinated policies with assistance from the Centre.

At a March 2005 meeting held to review Naxalism in the states, the Centre advised state governments to constitute Village Defence Committees to "put pressure on the Naxalites." In the same year, the state government in Chhattisgarh instituted the Salwa Judum, a group of armed vigilante civilians aimed at countering the Naxalites. The group indulged in violence and human rights violations, and the state government faced flak from human rights organisations across the country and was later declared illegal by the Supreme Court.[255] Some in the political elite questioned the arming of civilians against the naxals. In the Parliament for instance, a Communist party MP said,

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[253] Lok Sabha, December 14, 2004, Winter Session, Government of India.

[254] MoS Jaiswal, Lok Sabha, November 28, 2005, Winter Session, Government of India.

[255] http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/salwa-judum-is-illegal-says-supreme-court/article2161246.ece, 2014.

The Government of India should take note of the comments made by the Supreme Court on Salva Judum. I am raising this issue because Salva Judum is an extra constitutional authority; a civilian section is being armed, financed by the Government of India finances. The Government is trying to put them against Naxalites in the name of one group of tribals fighting against another. Are we going to allow the type of private army to come up? Is it the way the Government is going to stop terrorism? Naxalism is a socio-economic issue. The Government has to solve the problem of poverty to finish Naxalism in this country. But the Government is considering this problem as a law and order problem, which is not going to help.[256]

This alternative policy discourse castigating the Centre's decisions remained marginalised, as dominant representations of the conflict served only to approach it through the prism of security. By 2005, the Centre was urging states to formulate joint operations and step up the fight against the Maoists. The central government instituted a standing committee comprising of the chief ministers of 13 states affected by Naxalism as well as home ministry officials in April 2005. In its first meeting, it was decided to set up inter-state joint task forces "to facilitate coordinated and synergised anti-Naxalite operations across state boundaries."[257] At this meeting, it was decided that

The states will adopt a collective approach and pursue a coordinated response to effectively combat the menace of Naxalism, suitable mechanisms for joint operations will be finalised, the states will strengthen and upgrade the state police forces also intelligence work, and the states will set up special and stable administrative structures at the state and district levels for better governance…the government remains committed to combating this problem through a multipronged approach on political, security and development fronts.[258]

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[256] Suravarm Sudhakar Reddy, Lok Sabha, 20 February 2009, Budget Session, Government of India.

[257] Home minister Shivraj Patil, September 20, 2005, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2005-09-20/news/27508679_1_shivraj-patil-j-jayalalithaa-babu-lal-gaur Accessed on August 26, 2014.

[258] MoS Jaiswal, Lok Sabha, November 28, 2005, Winter Session, Government of India.

A detailed response was also laid out at a chief ministers meeting on internal security in April 2005, when PM Manmohan Singh said,

> We cannot ignore the fact that the threat of Naxalism is geographically spread out to the more backward regions and districts of our country. Hence, our strategy to tackle this threat to law and order in these districts and regions will have to be to implement programmes and policies that address the pressing needs and demands of the people, especially the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes; and, at the same time, to ensure effective policing and maintenance of law and order. The speedy implementation of land reforms, the redistribution of land, the assurance of tribal rights to forest produce, implementation of development projects and spread of mass education and health facilities are all important steps we must take. At the same time, we cannot ignore the inter-State and external dimension to Naxalism today. This requires greater coordination between State governments and between the Centre and States. We have to take a comprehensive approach in dealing with Naxalism given the emerging linkages between groups within and outside the country that the Home Minister has referred to."[259]

As the above quote suggests, the government appeared to recognise that the issue was multipronged but its emphasis continued to be on 'policing', 'maintenance of law and order' and greater coordination between the Centre and states. Further, the conflict was elevated to a greater threat to security given its links with groups operating from outside the country.

At a review meeting of the home ministry in the aftermath of one year in office in 2005, the government exempted the Naxal-affected States from the payment of cost of deployment of Central Para Military Forces on anti-Naxalite duty. To help states maintain law and order and for tackling insurgency and Naxalite problem more effectively, 15 battalions of CRPF, 20 battalions of SSB and 12 Indian Reserve battalions were sanctioned. In other words, the military might against the Naxalites was increased and continued to be the preferred policy against the issue. A minister in the

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[259] April 15, 2005 http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/AdvSearch.aspx Accessed on August 26, 2014.

home affairs ministry said that the central government had adopted a multi-pronged strategy to deal with Naxalism which included,

> …a peace dialogue by the affected states with naxal groups willing to abjure violence, modernization and strengthening of the state police forces, long term deployment of paramilitary forces, intensified intelligence based well-coordinated anti Naxalite operations, focused attention on integrated development of the affected areas and removal of socio-cultural alienation of people, gearing of public redressal system and creation of local resistance groups.[260]

The emphasis on dialogue was novel, but with the condition that the groups gave up violence as a precondition for talks meant that it was not able to materialise.

At a meeting of the top-level police officers of the country held in October 2005, the home minister said that Naxalism remained a "serious threat" to the internal security of the country and stressed the need to accord high priority to ensuring faster integrated development of naxal affected areas and also strengthening the administrative machinery in such areas. He said that the Centre would extend all possible assistance to augment local capabilities for intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms to launch effective police actions in a coordinated and sustained manner.[261] At the same meeting, PM Manmohan Singh said that police forces faced multi-dimensional security challenges in different regions, including Jammu & Kashmir and the hinterland, affected by Left-wing extremism. In this context, he said that development programmes aimed at reducing imbalances between regions and improving the lot of the poor people and hoped that National Rural Employment Guarantee Act would go a long way in mitigating poverty in Naxal-affected areas. He emphasised the urgent need to improve the quality of governance, apart from investing in social and physical infrastructure in Naxalite and border areas. He said,

> No group or organization can be allowed to take the law of the land in their own hands and indulge in violence…I recognise that the problem of Naxalism cannot be solved by police action alone. While we do need

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[260] MoS Shriprakash Jaiswal, Lok Sabha, August 16, 2005, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[261] http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/AdvSearch.aspx Accessed on August 26, 2014.

sustained and effective police action, we have to accelerate socio-economic development of the Naxal-affected areas…Development programmes of the government are aimed at reducing imbalances between regions and improving the lot of the poorer sections of our people. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act will go a long way in mitigating poverty in many Naxal affected areas. The government has also set up a Backward Regions Grant Fund to finance development of more backward regions. There is a proposal to provide rights to tribals living in forest villages so that they can have a secure livelihood…there is urgent need to improve the quality of governance in these areas…[262]

The above quote of the Prime Minister demonstrates the extent to which the conflict was viewed as an economic one. At the same time, that the speech was made to police chiefs was a sign that it was not as serious a threat as some of the other conflicts where issues of secession or territory have appeared frequently in elite discourses. Also, the policy discourse seems to be more all-encompassing as it focussed on 'socio economic development' and improving the 'quality of governance'. Despite the comprehensive policy goal stated by the government, however, implementation was lacking, and violence continued on both sides. In November 2005 MoS Jaiswal said that "the government is alive to the menace of Naxalism and will deal firmly with Naxalites indulging in senseless acts of violence. The government remains committed to combating this problem through a multi-pronged approach on political, security and development fronts."[263]

Interestingly, the government was of the opinion that Naxalism was more difficult to manage than the conflicts in Kashmir and the north-eastern parts of the country. Home minister Shivraj Patil said,

It is correct that we have been able to check extremism in Kashmir and the north eastern states although we have not been able to curb Naxalite violence to that extent. We have adopted a multi-pronged approach. The task is to be carried out by state governments so we have given approximately 26 battalions

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[262] October 6, 2005. http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/AdvSearch.aspx Accessed on August 26, 2014.

[263] MoS Jaiswal, Lok Sabha, November 29, 2005, Winter Session, Government of India.

to the state government...we have also provided them with armed vehicles...police modernization...But would we be able to solve the problem of Naxalism with the help of the police? We will definitely use the police force when required but we would also take steps to address the administrative matters with the help of the state government like the issues of land, unemployment and any kind of injustice...[264]

This acknowledgement by the government that it was not able to decrease Naxal violence as it had done in other conflict zones also denotes the difference in policy—the geographically scattered nature of the conflict, and the reliance largely on police forces and to a limited extent paramilitary forces stand in stark opposition to the use of the army and military forces in conflicts in Kashmir and the north east.

In April 2006, the Centre held the second meeting of the standing committee of chief ministers on Naxalism. In a press release issued in the aftermath of the meeting, the government strategy suggested that "good governance" was to be the key in order to reduce the sense of "deprivation and alienation" and work with all families under poverty alleviation schemes. In terms of policy responses, PM Manmohan Singh said that the local police had to be strengthened as "they are in the vanguard of the fight against naxal violence."[265] Apart from police, he said that special task forces needed to be set up and intelligence gathering had to be improved. And coordination between states improved. Further, "such violent movements have huge societal costs...such extremism is a threat to our democracy, to our way of life." He also said that

Chief Ministers could consider, at the same time, in reducing the burden of debt on the rural poor tribals...They could initiate another wave of rural reforms, which can ensure employment and land to the poorest in these areas. They could promote local participation in governance...The police response is necessary so that the obligation of the Indian state to uphold public order is fulfilled. However an effective police response does not mean that we need to brutalise the Indian state. Legitimate needs and aspirations...should be examined with due care and due sympathy. We are

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[264] Lok Sabha, November 29, 2005, Winter Session, Government of India.

[265] Lok Sabha, April 13, 2006, Budget Session, Government of India.

dealing after all, with our own people, even though they may have strayed into the path of violence.

In other words, the central government continued to relegate bulk of the responsibility to the state governments even as it added that they were dealing with 'our won people' who might have 'legitimate' needs and demands.

The government continued to reiterate that the issue was "not merely a law and order problem; the policy is to address this menace simultaneously on political, security, development and public perception management fronts in a holistic and coordinated manner."[266] The addition of "public perception management" was a new introduction in the policy discourse of the state, and indicated that the government was now keen to match Maoist propaganda with its own. Dialogue as a policy was acceptable to the government, but made clear that "there will be no dialogue with Naxalites unless they agree to abjure violence and give up arms."[267] The minister also tabled in Parliament in March 2006 a 'status paper on the naxal problem'.[268] The paper outlined that "the Naxalite leadership continues to pursue their plan to wage protracted people's war through armed struggle to capture political power. In the recent past, Naxalite groups seem to lay greater focus on organising along military lines. They are also acquiring contemporary weapons. Their constant effort is to upgrade technology and sophistication of their weaponry and techniques." Other ministers pointed to a Naxalite-politician nexus and said that "at the time of elections, some people accept the assistance of Naxalites in order to emerge victorious in elections."[269]

There was also some reference to the conflicts in Punjab and Kashmir which provided examples of successful counter insurgency:

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[266] Home minister Shivraj Patil, Lok Sabha, May 22, 2006, Budget Session, Government of India.

[267] Lok Sabha, May 22, 2006, Budget Session, Government of India.

[268] Full text of the paper available at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/06mar13_naxal%20problem%20htm Accessed on September 3, 2014.

[269] BJP MP Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Lok Sabha, May 22, 2006, Budget Session, Government of India.

I would just like to go back to the situation in Punjab in the 1980s and till the mid-1990s. It appeared that terrorism would tear this country apart. It was a serious threat. Still, we were able to ride the wave of terrorism, restore normalcy in Punjab. If we did that, it was entirely because we followed a democratic process. We encouraged a democratic style of Government. I remember that the Punjab Chief Minister became a martyr to the cause of restoring peace in the strife-torn State. He was assassinated. But his assassination proved to be a wonderful contribution to the cause of peace in this country and in the State of Punjab. Even in Jammu and Kashmir, which has seen terrorism for a very long time – almost now two decades – we are in a position to win this war. If we are going to win this war, it is once again because of a process of democratic functioning that has been there for some time now. It is this democratic functioning that gives the people of the State, the people of this country an inherent faith in the administration. [270]

By 2008, the Centre was calling for increased role for itself in dealing with the naxal issue and sanctioned added paramilitary forces to deal with the naxal conflict. PM Manmohan Singh said,

The problem has acquired such scale in some regions that it cannot be dealt with by individual state Governments. We need better coordination between State Governments. We also need better coordination between States and the Centre….To deal with the challenge; many States have set up specialized and dedicated forces. The Central Government has, on its part, sanctioned 15 additional battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force and created 10 specialized Command Battalions for Resolute Action which are trained in jungle welfare. It has also been decided to give financial assistance to State Governments to raise India Reserve Battalions. The command and control mechanism of the Central Police Organizations is being streamlined and the intelligence machinery of the Centre is being strengthened. We are also giving special attention to modernization of State Police Forces and their training. [271]

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[270] BJP MP Nikhil Kumar Choudhury, Lok Sabha, December 5, 2007, Winter Session, Government of India.

[271] Lok Sabha, September 17, 2008, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

The annual report of the home ministry of 2008-09 stated that "the view and the policy of the Government is that for dealing effectively with the naxal problem, an entirely police and security oriented approach is not enough. While it is necessary to conduct proactive and sustained operations against the extremists, and put in place all measures required for this, it is also necessary to simultaneously give focused attention to development and governance issues…"

At the annual conference of police chiefs in 2010, PM Manmohan Singh reiterated that the naxals were 'our own people' and stressed that dialogue was possible if they gave up violence:

> While we have made good progress in terms of recruitment and setting up of better institutional arrangements for intelligence, investigation, coastal security and counter-terrorism, the problems we face remain daunting. We need to do much more to meet the challenge of Naxalism…We recognize that the Naxalites are our own people and are ready to talk to them provided they abjure the path of violence. We also stand committed to making special efforts to develop the areas affected by naxal violence, many of which are inhabited predominantly by our tribal brothers and sisters.[272]

Following the attack by the Naxals in Dantewada in April 2010, the issue made it to national headlines and led to a renewed focus on the Maoist groups by the Centre. Home Minister Chidambaram said, "If this tragedy is not a wakeup call then nothing can wake up this country and this Parliament" and said that the incident should "make us more determined, resolute and fearless" in dealing with the adversary. He also said that it was important not to "fall prey to some romantic version of a Left wing movement", adding "I have no fear. I do not fear the Naxals."[273] This event had the impact of widening the discourse on security policy to combat Naxalism. There were already at this stage media speculations of a plan to induct the Army in what was termed by the media 'Operation Green Hunt', essentially a military offensive against the Naxalites. Although such a policy plan was denied by the home minister, it added to the debate on the best way of dealing with the naxal conflict. The vehement denial of

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[272] Lok Sabha, August 26, 2010, Monsoon Session, Government of India.

[273] 'I do not fear the Naxals: P Chidambaram', *Midday*, April 16, 2010.

using the army suggests that the government had not yet managed to entirely delegitimise the Naxal conflict. This, along with a constant reassertion that the Naxals were 'our own people' were unable to justify the use of any widespread military force.

On September 13, 2010, the PM held a meeting with the commanders of the armed forces. At the meeting he said, "Naxalism is a serious challenge to our internal security. We will do all that is necessary to protect each and every citizen of our country, and deal firmly with those who resort to violence. This is a collective task involving the Centre and the States. At the same time we have to accelerate our development efforts in the naxal affected areas and make our administrative machinery more sensitive and responsive to local concerns."

The government also introduced more centrally sponsored schemes in dealing with Naxalism. Many of these were aimed at development and upliftment of the tribal areas. In November 2010, the home minister presented a report card of the functioning of the ministry during the year. In his speech, he said,

> On the LWE front, the CPI (Maoist) continued its armed aggression against the State and innocent people...Apart from targeting so-called 'police informers', the Naxalites have now started attacking the families of policemen with the object of discouraging any one from providing assistance to or joining the police force…The Naxalites continued to target infrastructure…The Government's response to the challenge of Left Wing Extremism remains a two-pronged approach…[274]

By 2010, the military thrust reached a new high when the government introduced a specially trained force for combating naxal violence.

> The view and the policy of the Government is that for dealing effectively with the naxal problem, an entirely police and security oriented approach is not enough. While it is necessary to conduct proactive and sustained operations against the extremists, and put in place all measures required for this, it is also necessary to simultaneously give focused attention to development and governance issues…Government's approach is to deal with Left Wing

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[274] P Chidambaram, November 30, 2010.

Extremism activities in a holistic manner, in the areas of security, development, administration and public perception… Ten Battalions of Specialized Force trained and equipped for counter-insurgency and jungle-warfare operations, named as Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA) are being raised as a part of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)…[275]

As the above discussion on policy discourses shows, the government's main approach to Naxalism has been through development and security related measures. It also considered the issue to be primarily the responsibility of state governments but towards the later years took on an increasing role in monitoring the issue and in assisting states with additional financial and military resources. There was certainly an acknowledgement of the failures of existing governance and development models and successive policy papers and reports gave detailed directions where these were fuelling the conflict, but these did not detract from the fact that the government considered the Naxalite groups to be illegal and indulging in undemocratic violence and against which military force was necessary. The rising levels of Naxal violence certainly added to the threat perception and left the Centre scrambling for an appropriate response but the use of force has been a controversial issue. The legitimization of force appears in the statements of the prime minister and home ministers who repeatedly call for increased use of force, but importantly, the use of the Army was not a legitimate policy option. Instead, the focus was on police and paramilitary forces. Modernisation of police forces and strengthening and creation of paramilitary forces as part of counter insurgency also give credence to this view. Dialogue as a policy was not sustained and the Centre only encouraged it to the extent that the groups gave up violence as a precondition. Implementation of some of the more radical policy measures such as reducing corruption and improving governance remained abysmal even as the security related measures materialised. By 2010, there was a new policy discourse centred on a 'clear, hold and develop' strategy that aimed at flushing out the Naxalites from the tribal areas before establishing control and injecting economic development packages.

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[275] Annual report of the Ministry of Home Affairs, 2009-10, Government of India.

Conclusion

The naxal conflict, though not new to the government, has in its present avatar caused much concern to India's internal security. The causes of the conflict have largely been ascribed to economic causes and as the discourses show, poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment have been considered responsible for the spread of the movement. Detailed critiques of the development patterns were remarkable so far as they acknowledged the role of the policies in creating unstable economic models but the Naxalites were also held responsible for hindering development by targeting the government's infrastructure projects. The identification of Naxalites as left wing extremists who were exploiting poor tribals went hand in hand with the tribals being 'misguided' and the government considered it its duty to treat them as their 'own people' who needed to be brought back into the mainstream. The government also sought to delegitimise the Naxalites as 'Maoists' for they claimed that in reality the Naxalites were anti-tribal and anti-development.

The thrust of the government's policies was on the twin pillars of security and development, which allowed the government to deal with naxal violence with a heavy handed approach while at the same time channelling more and more resources for economic development to wean the tribals away from the Naxalites. In terms of policy implementation, it is clear that the security-centric approach has been predominant. Security policies included increasing the strength of the police and paramilitary forces and in equipping the states with additional military equipment, vehicles, forces and creating a specially trained commando force trained in jungle warfare to tackle the Naxalites. Discourses on causes and policy also show references to governance and administrative failures in the areas affected by Naxalism but these appeared more as lip service rather than any meaningful implementation on the ground.

By the end of 2010 it was also clear that the Centre was beginning to take on added roles and responsibilities in countering the issue, in stark contrast to the earlier approach of leaving it to individual state governments. The 'clear, hold and develop' strategy, introduced by the home ministry in 2009, borrows much from the 'clear, hold, build' strategy of America's counter insurgency policy document, indicating a tendency to view the issue from the prism of international counter insurgency. For some MPs, the naxal issue was far greater than terrorism: "I really feel that the threat of naxal

activities today is even more serious and sinister than the threat posed by terrorism which is imported from across the border…"[276] The securitisation of the conflict can be seen further in the discourses towards the later part of 2010 when references were made to alliances between the Naxalites and the Lashkar e Toiba.[277] If the government was open to the prospect of dialogue with the Naxalites, it was entertained only after they gave up violence and arms, a policy it has followed with rebels and insurgents across different conflict zones in the country.

To sum up, official discourses on the naxal conflict suggest that while it is regarded primarily as an economic conflict, there has been an over emphasis on security related policies which have been legitimised as necessary due to the threat it has posed-measured in terms of the targeting of state officials and institutions, infrastructure damage, links with foreign outfits albeit to a lesser degree, and to the spread of the movement across large parts of the country. On the other hand, due to the assessment that the Naxalites were essentially their 'own people' the use of the armed forces like the army and air force, and the use of legislations such as AFSPA have not been legitimised. Further, the role of the Centre has been limited in the fight against the Naxalites, even though there has in recent years been an increasing role, but the resistance of state governments has meant that a comprehensive, synchronised nation-wide policy against the naxals has been lacking. The blame game between the Centre and state governments in dealing with the Naxal issue has persisted and added to the policy confusion. It was hoped that the elimination of top leaders of the naxal movement in recent years would crush the movement but so far this has not been the case. Every case of violence by the Naxalites has been met with a renewed focus on the security-centric approach and is likely to continue in the absence of a clear policy of dialogue and inclusiveness at the national and state level.

The typology of the conflict as an economic conflict and the identification of Naxals as terrorists has meant that in the absence of a acknowledging any political demand, the Centre relies on force to deal with the violence. The inability to distinguish between

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[276] BJP MP Nikhil Kumar, Lok Sabha, December 5, 2007, Winter Session, Government of India.

[277] These references were made by Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh (http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-05-20/news/28446029_1_maoists-chhattisgarh-naxal-infested) Accessed on 15 October 2014.

moderate Naxals and extremist ones, as was done in the case of Punjab and Kashmir, and the lack of a contained territory from which they operate has made the conflict that much more difficult to manage. With both the Centre and the state governments keen to 'eliminate' Naxalism, the terrorist discourse has, by focussing on violence of the Naxals, legitimized the use of the force.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis examined conflict resolution policies through a discourse analytical methodology that elucidated the process of identity formation and conflict framing within the discourses of the political elite. Conflict discourses provide crucial inputs into the dynamic process of legitimization and delegitimization. This study looked at three internal conflicts in India-Kashmir, Punjab and the Naxal conflict to gauge India's internal security policy formation. In representing conflicts and defining them the Indian state was not only legitimizing its policies in these regions but also carving out an identity for itself. Defined sometimes by its status as a democracy, sometimes as a sovereign state, or sometimes as an economic superpower, for example, the Indian state's perception of Self can be discerned in the process of legitimization. The process of assigning legitimacy is indeed a crucial part of policy making especially for conflict management.

This thesis looked at the legitimization of policies through official discourses on the conflicts in Kashmir, Punjab and the Naxalite conflict. To do so, this study asked the following questions

How are internal conflicts represented by the Indian state?

What are the forms of identities conferred upon various actors in domestic conflicts? Does this change over time?

How are policies legitimized in conflict situations?

Is there a pattern in India's internal security strategy? The thesis shows how through a discourse analytical methodology, conflict and peace processes can be better understood. The idea that it is through conflict framing and identity articulations that the state legitimizes policies, draws attention to the way discursive changes can be studied to understand conflict transformation.

Conflict representation and policy legitimization

One of the earliest processes of legitimization occurs in the representation of the conflict. Where Punjab and Kashmir were, in the early phase of the conflicts, identified

as secessionist conflicts, the Naxal conflict was from the beginning perceived as an economic one. This representation is important to analyse the policies that were instituted. Whereas in Punjab and Kashmir elected state governments were dismissed and central rule established, the economic dimension of the Naxal conflict, and its geographically scattered nature meant that the policy thrust was on development and economic measures. However, what was common to all three conflicts was their representation as threats to national security, legitimizing a security-centric approach through the use of force. Violence by the naxals has resulted in the government terming it one of the most serious internal security threats and made force a popular policy approach. India's own ambition of being an economic superpower is reflected in the way the discourses on conflict, in more recent years, have attributed lack of development and unemployment as the main causes for the conflicts in Kashmir and the Naxal areas.

Broadly, the discourses on conflict causes can be seen to fall into three categories-the territorial/secessionist discourse, the political discourse, and the development/economic discourse. Each of these may be reflected in a particular conflict, or a combination of two. One discourse can also destabilise and give away to another hegemonic discourse, over time. In terms of legitimacy, the first category-that of secessionist conflicts is almost entirely delegitimised, the other two can be framed as having varying levels of legitimacy.

As Chapter three demonstrated, in Punjab, the immediate reaction of the Indian state was to frame the issue as a territorial one; the demands of the Sikh actors were considered to be secessionist in nature and hence delegitimized. The dismissal of the elected state government that followed was one of the ways for the Centre to impose its authority and enable a security centric policy to manage the unrest. The use of the Army in Operation Blue Star in 1984 is reflective of this approach. The external link in the Punjab conflict-that of Pakistan's involvement, appeared frequently in the discourses on causes of the conflict– possibly the most delegitimising allegation that can be made in the context of Indian domestic politics. The assertion that it was Sikhs living abroad who were fuelling the conflict was also prominent. This, in addition to linking the dispute with Pakistan, denied the existence of genuine domestic grievances.

By the mid-1980s, the secessionist discourse was gradually giving way to a political discourse as the dominant articulation of the causes for the conflict by New Delhi. This came about partly due to a change in leadership at the Centre following the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. In terms of discourse, this was reflected in the way the demands of the Sikhs in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution were transformed as being secessionist to being considered negotiable. Further, the Akalis, who had been the main political representative of the Sikhs in Punjab, were now recognised as a legitimate voice with which to negotiate, a far cry from the early 1980s when the discourse pointed to the demonizing of the Akalis as being hand in glove with extremist Sikhs led by Bhindranwale. Around this time there was also a distinction being made between moderate and extremist Akalis-implying that the former were to be negotiated with, whereas the latter were to be excluded. Akali leader Longowal, who had been charged with sedition in 1984 and jailed, was released in 1985 under the Rajiv Gandhi government and chosen as the Sikh leader with whom to negotiate. The separation of moderate and extremist Akalis in the mid-1980s paved the way for dialogue culminating in the Punjab Accord of 1985. Discursive changes in the aftermath of the 1985 Punjab Accord located the causes for the continuing unrest in a broader, non-exclusive demand for greater state autonomy. By 1985 the issues being raised in Punjab were increasingly being referred to as issues of federalism affecting other states as well. This tendency to view demands in conflict as similar to issues being faced at an all India level is another way of deflecting attention and moving from the specific to the more general. Another change in the discourse during this time was the policy suggestion of elections, which were finally held in 1985 and brought an Akali government to power until 1987. What this shows is how the conflict went from being framed as a secessionist conflict to a political one, and how previously unacceptable demands were later ready to be negotiated.

Chapter four showed how in Kashmir, likewise, the early phase of the conflict reflected a tendency by the Indian state to frame it as an externally sponsored issue due to interference by Pakistan. This heightened securitisation was able to legitimize the dismissal of elected state government and impose direct rule from New Delhi. In representing Kashmir as a territorial conflict between India and Pakistan, secession became the dominant representation of the causes for the conflict, and was therefore outlawed. Other discourses, such as the political discourse ascribing causes to political

reasons, were marginalised. The inability of the Indian state to recognise political grievances of the Kashmiris exacerbated the distrust between the two and made matters worse. Through its heavy handed approach, its use of the army and paramilitary and the widespread human rights violations through fake encounter killings, missing and disappeared Kashmiri youth, and detention, the violence that began in the late 1980s reduced by the mid-1990s, albeit at a high human cost. If the conflict was defined as a territorial dispute, the Kashmiri rebels were identified as anti-national, subversive, fundamentalist and terrorists. The implications for policy of this identification of rebels meant that the State considered dialogue a possibility but made it conditional on them declaring their allegiance to the country and to giving up their weapons and violence. Talks with Pakistan were entirely delegitimized.

The insistence on holding any dialogue within the parameters of the Constitution was also feeding into the denial of any legitimate political grievances of the Kashmiris. This is also reflected in the discourses on Article 370 of the Indian constitution which guarantees a special status for Kashmir. Discourses of members of the BJP reflect a general disdain for the special status to the point of suggesting that it be done away with, so as to remove the 'psychological barrier' that prevented the complete integration of Kashmir with the 'mainstream'. What these discourses were doing was to deny the historically special relationship that Kashmir had with India and project Article 370 as a hindrance rather than a political safeguard. For the ruling Congress though, the discourses on Article 370 show a linking of the provision with India's secular commitment. What was not questioned in either discourse was the political inclusion of Kashmir in India.

This dehistoricization appears both in the discourses of the political elite on Punjab and Kashmir. The reimagining of these conflicts as contemporary phenomena served also to enable short term solutions rather than a long term commitment to conflict resolution.

Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, which enables the President to dismiss an elected state government and impose direct rule from New Delhi in special circumstances, has been used frequently by the Centre in Punjab and Kashmir. The elections of 1985 brought to power an Akali government but as violence continued, the discourses once again point to the linking of the Akalis with extremists, hence, being untrustworthy. The dismissal of the government in 1987 reflects this change in

articulation. In Punjab, this created a window of opportunity for the Centre to launch a brutal crackdown on 'extremists' in Punjab in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Legitimization of emergency President's Rule in the early 1990s occurred through the assertion that violence was leading to a breakdown of law and order and the inability of the Akali government to control it. 'Terrorism' was the dominant prism through which the conflict was represented; and the use of police and paramilitary forces was rampant and resulted in severe human rights violations. By 1992-93, elections were held and violence quashed; for the Indian state this signalled a return to 'normalcy' in Punjab.

In Kashmir, if the discourses identified Pakistan as the main cause for the conflict in the early 1990s, there were indications of political maladministration in the state as well and these discourses emerged stronger and more hegemonic by the middle of the 1990s as violence was suppressed. This occurred simultaneously with the attempt to bifurcate the issue as being bilateral between India and Pakistan on the one hand, and on the other, an internal issue between India and Kashmir, what India termed as its 'domestic' issue that was not open to outside intervention. Elections became the favoured mantra for the political elite as a panacea for the Kashmir problem. By linking the discontent in the state to political maladministration, the government was promoting elections as the solution to the conflict. The dominance of the political discourse during this time enabled the construction of the conflict as an issue of governance.

A shift in the policy discourses in the mid-1990s, reflected in the willingness of the Indian state to engage in dialogue, can be located in the broader context of international attention to the human rights violations, as well as to the success the Indian state had in quashing violence through force. In this atmosphere, the secessionist discourse was giving way to the political discourse. The proliferation of groups and weakening of the indigenous Kashmiri movement led by JKLF had by this time given greater credibility to India's claim that the conflict was being sponsored from across the border. Dialogue was a contentious issue, as some considered it to be demoralising for the security forces while others made it conditional on the surrendering of violence and weapons, and of being within the existing constitutional framework. The proliferation of groups also served as an excuse for the State to avoid dialogue and instead hold elections. Dialogue between India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri groups was also ruled out for accepting a separate Kashmiri presence in such a trilateral engagement would mean the acceptance

of the issue as an international rather than bilateral or domestic one. Elections as a conflict management strategy are also a vital part of a State affirming and legitimizing its democratic credentials and has been used by the Indian state as a favoured policy. By the end of the 1990s this was established in Kashmir and henceforth any issue affecting the state was deemed to be an 'internal matter' to be resolved by India alone.

The Kashmiri identity was likened to any other regional identity in India, suggesting that it was not a unique political identity with its own history of separateness, but at par with other identities that were legitimate albeit subordinate to the greater Indian identity. If the National Conference was framed as anti-national in the 1980s, by the mid-1990s, the discourse recognised the party as a legitimate political voice of the people of Kashmir; it was now the 'pro-Pakistan' groups that were demonised and delegitimized. The idea that the ordinary Kashmiri was being 'misled' by these groups served to further the notion that there were no legitimate reasons for the Kashmiri grievance. As with Punjab, the issues affecting Kashmir began to be equated with all India problems of autonomy and federalism.

Reading between the discourses on identity in Kashmir, it is clear that 'secularism' as a nodal point has served much of the state's thinking in the state. The need to protect the State's idea of secularism ties in with the notion that the Kashmir conflict is seen primarily through the prism of religion and that the religious identity of the Kashmiris is given priority over other forms of identification. Moreover, the potent mix of a distinct religious identity, and the issue of territory, hark back to the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, and is hence approached through an intensive security paradigm. In this, Punjab and Kashmir share similar conflict management trajectories.

Both Punjab and Kashmir show that elections form a core part of India's internal security strategy. The establishment of a working state government has become synonymous with the return to 'normalcy' and a triumph of democracy. This singular definition of democracy as defined as elections ignores the complexities that democratic governance encompasses-accountability, justice and human rights. The establishment of elected state governments in both Punjab and Kashmir in the 1990s signalled the end of the conflict—in Punjab almost entirely and in Kashmir as a settlement of the 'domestic' dispute, although not in its entirety. The brutal suppression of violence was considered necessary in bringing terrorism to an end in Punjab, and in

many ways, Punjab did serve as a blueprint for future conflict management. Its 'success' was measured in the reduction and elimination of violence and the functioning of an elected state government.

As far as the Maoist conflict is concerned, the discourses have centred on the conflict being essentially about economic imbalances and lack of development affecting the poor and tribals.

Further, the nomenclature of 'left wing extremism' also gives the impression that the conflict is considered to be driven by extremist ideology and is hence delegitimised. This is also reinforced in the discourses on the chosen means of the Naxalites-essentially; violence is the deciding factor in delegitimizing movements. However, along with this, identity also plays an important role in the framing and treatment of these conflicts. The government's emphasis on security and development as the twin pillars of policy to deal with the naxal conflict suggests that even though the root cause may have been identified as primarily economic in nature, counter insurgency was a crucial part of managing the conflict. To that end, the use of specialised police and paramilitary forces with specialised military equipment and force was integral to the policy of the State. The relative confidence that underlies the discourses of the State in its ability to manage the naxal conflict point to the simplification ascribed to its causes.

One of the main differences between the naxal conflict on the one hand and Punjab and Kashmir on the other, was the framing of the latter two conflicts as ethnic/religious, with territorial secession being identified as a core demand. Further, these conflicts were framed as being driven by external agents-Pakistan for Kashmir and diaspora Sikhs and Pakistan for Punjab. Another important difference is the Centre's representation of the Naxal issue as largely a state-specific issue, though in recent years there has been a greater involvement by the Centre in the management of the conflict. The early 2000s reflect a tendency of the Centre to view the Naxal issue as a 'law and order' and 'police' issue, and therefore under the ambit of the state governments. By 2005 though the discourse changed and the Centre admitted it had not managed to contain violence to the extent that it had in Kashmir and the north eastern states. By 2008, the Centre was calling for an increased role for itself in countering the naxal issue and this was soon followed by the induction of specialised central paramilitary forces in the naxal affected regions.

Identity and policy legitimization

The identities of the actors in conflict also play a crucial role in the State's legitimization strategies. Who the State negotiates with is an important indicator of the recognition it gives certain groups. In identifying the actors in internal conflict situations as secessionists and anti-nationals, the State was delegitimizing them and reclaiming the narrative so as to frame these conflicts as undemocratic.

In Punjab, the Akalis were initially identified as a singular entity and talks held with the leaders, even though these made little progress. By the mid-1980s, the Centre had demarcated the 'moderate' Akalis from the 'extremist' ones and chose the former to negotiate an Accord with. The failure of the Accord to resolve the conflict once again had the government declare the inability of the Akalis to restore law and order in Punjab, delegitimizing the Akalis from political dialogue. In Kashmir, a similar tactic of dismissing an elected state government and installing direct rule from New Delhi on the pretext that the ruling party was hand in glove with the extremists and not able to quell violence meant that political dialogue was foreclosed. The National Conference was termed anti-national, but this discourse changed by the mid-1990s when the party decided to contest state legislative elections. The causes of the conflict began to be framed as issues of greater autonomy; in this lexicon, autonomy was legitimate so long as it was within the parameters of the constitution. There was also a recognition by the home minister in the late 2000s of the political failures of the Congress party in Kashmir suggesting a turn to the framing of the conflict as a political conflict. It is also pertinent to note that Kashmiri youth were identified as disgruntled youth who were in despair due to a lack of economic opportunities. Policy discourses now reflected a need for greater economic incentives to push development in the state. The Maoist rebels have been referred to as 'anti national', 'anti-development' and as 'left wing extremists', reflecting that the conflict has been viewed as essentially economic and ideological. The stress on the demarcation of the 'extremists' from the poor and tribals who they 'take advantage of', suggests that the government has been keen to delegitimise the rebels and the support base they claim. For the State, the apparent popularity of the Naxal movement amongst the masses is a farce, the former exploiting

the latter to pursue undemocratic goals and preventing development and progress through their violence.

In terms of dialogue, in both Punjab and Kashmir, the government held selective dialogue meaning that there were bound to be spoilers. Moreover, the conditions imposed on dialogue, and the rigidity on negotiating only within the constitutional parameters foreclosed the possibility of meaningful resolution. The failure of dialogue was pinned on the insincerity of the rebels, and as Punjab shows in the aftermath of the Punjab Accord, dialogue was often seen as futile and hindering the counter insurgency efforts of security forces.

As the identity discourses show, extremists can be of two kinds—religious extremists or fundamentalists and left-wing extremists. Thus, religion and ideology are nodal points around which the extremist identity discourse is fixed. Religion also serves the process of creating a Self-Other dichotomy. In both Muslim-majority Kashmir and Sikh majority Punjab, the potent mix of religion and territory created tension for the Indian state, as its idea of a secular Self was also threatened. In Punjab, as the discourses show, attempts were made to play down the separateness of the Sikhs by insisting they were part of the larger Hindu fold, and the Sikhs were blamed for claiming otherwise. In Kashmir, the Otherness was far more stark, as the Muslim Kashmiri could not be subsumed under the Hindu Self. The appeals to then highlight the inadequacies of Pakistan's version of Islam in order to portray the tolerant, peaceful version of Islam in secular India.

Identity discourses also show a process of differentiating between the militants and the 'ordinary people' and the latter are, across the three cases, represented as being passive actors who were being exploited by the former. In the case of the Naxalite conflict, in delineating the ordinary people from the Maoists, the government has been keen to stress the exploitation of the former's genuine economic grievances by the latter through illegitimate means. That the Centre recognised that the tribals and poor in the naxal affected states were facing economic hardship allowed for a developmental approach to the conflict-essentially by introducing schemes and packages to ensure economic growth and employment. However, the Naxalites were also referred to as 'our own people' perhaps suggesting that the inability to fix a separate religious/ethnic identity onto them made it easier for them to be part of the 'Indian mainstream'.

Patterns in India's internal security strategy

The reactive nature of India's approach to conflict, primarily through the use of force is legitimised through the framing of the conflicts as national security threats led by anti-national extremists. In more recent years, the conflicts in Kashmir and Naxal areas have been ascribed to economic dissatisfaction, and policies reflect this need to push greater economic development and create employment for 'misguided youth'. Further, the Indian state's national identity-defined as secular and democratic - is constructed and maintained in the discourses on insecurity and security.

In studying India's internal security policy from a discourse analytical perspective, patterns of legitimization and delegitimization have been observed. The representation of conflicts and identities are crucial in this process. Conflicts that are represented as secessionist are completely delegitimized, and are approached in a security-centric manner also encompassing dismissal of elected state governments and imposition of President's Rule for extended periods of time. The transformation of such conflicts to political issues, or economic or development related conflicts, widens the policy options but elections and the establishment of an elected government appears to be the preferred approach and one that leads to an apparent resolution of the conflict for the State. Alongside this, economic and development packages are considered to be the answer to the problems affecting the people in these conflict settings. The identification of rebels as terrorist, anti-national, or extremist makes them ineligible for negotiations, albeit the State has often emphasised its willingness to talk if such groups gave up violence. What is also considered legitimate is if the talks are held within the ambit of the Indian Constitution. Common to the state's strategy is the demarcation of moderates and extremists, and the readiness to engage with the former while delegitimizing the latter, often through detention and arrests. Where former 'extremists' have been legitimized is when they have given up violence and joined the 'mainstream' by contesting elections, thereby affirming their democratic credentials to the State. Another important way of delegitimizing movements has been through reframing the mass popularity that these movements enjoy as the actions of misguided or economically frustrated youth or the poor/tribals. Ascribing them a degree of passivity lends to the State's discourse that these people have been exploited or have chosen such a path out of sheer desperation, and that it was the paternalistic State's duty to therefore bring them back to the 'mainstream'.

The use of violence is considered necessary in the fight against violent extremists and irrespective of the causes ascribed to these conflicts, is a legitimate policy option. The difference in degree though depends on the type of conflict it faces—the State found it easier to use the Army and special powers in territorial/secessionist conflicts as in Punjab and Kashmir whereas, in the Naxal areas, the use of the Armed forces has been a matter of contention amongst the political elite. This is not to suggest though that force has not been used in Naxal areas; in recent years, the creation of specialised paramilitary forces and the training of police units has been extensively promoted, and widespread human rights violations by the security forces has gone hand in hand with this coercive power. As an internal security threat, the Naxal conflict has been particularly perplexing for the Indian State—delegitimising it as an undemocratic and violent conflict has not weakened it and as an ideological conflict, the State has been compelled to match the 'Naxal propaganda' with its own. Moreover, the frequent resort to elections as a conflict management strategy is not a relevant policy option for the Naxal conflict, as the avowed goal is to revolutionise rather than participate in the existing political framework.

The patterns in India's internal conflict strategy suggest that discourses are not linear; there is no simple transformation of conflict from secessionist to developmental. Conflicts can go from being represented as secessionist or terrorist to political and back again, as can be seen in both Kashmir and Punjab. Discourses are circular and complex processes, that can move in either direction. This is an important observation, as it holds promise for presently entrenched conflicts such as Kashmir where even though it is seen as a terrorist motivated, or Pakistan sponsored conflict, it has the potential to be represented as a political issue, thus deserving of a political solution.

For the Indian state, 'normalcy' exists when it has succeeded in crushing violence and has established an elected state government. At this stage, the conflict is deemed resolved, as the case of Punjab shows. Likewise, in Kashmir, whatever outstanding issues remain, are largely external and involve Pakistan, any other issues are indicative of demands similar to other states, such as issues of autonomy and economic development. The argument in the state's discourses of the late 1990s that "tourists have returned" and that hence "peace has returned" also suggests how Kashmir

occupies a territorial significance in the mind of the Indian political elite.[278] The internal conflict is represented as resolved and the state government is considered the legitimate representative of the Kashmiri people and the channel through which their demands are voiced.

Conflict discourses and the potential for future research

To sum up, this thesis showed how conflict framing plays an important role in legitimizing policies. The typology of conflicts, as well as the range of identities that actors are conferred, have much to do with the management and resolution strategies of the state. Elite discourses reflect the ways in which certain types of conflicts and certain identities of rebels are outlawed, how these change over time and the accompanying policies that are in the process legitimized and delegitimised. While violence by rebels is always delegitimized, the policy response is also influenced by the conflict typology and the identity of the rebels.

In terms of typology, secessionist conflicts are entirely delegitimised; political and economic conflicts on the other hand can take on varying levels of legitimacy depending on the actors and their tactics as well. So, for instance, economic conflicts led by 'left wing extremists' could still be delegitimised due to their use of violence. Using force against 'extremists' is then a legitimate policy option, but even here a distinction can be observed between religious extremists and left-wing extremists. Moreover, the existence of religious extremists in border areas is almost always sure to guarantee the use of the Army, as territorial integrity becomes more important than human security. Dialogue with such extremists is actively discouraged as the discourses show. The operation of left-wing extremists such as the Naxalites, on the other hand, are also constructed as national security threats albeit to a lesser extent. That the Naxal conflict has been represented as India's most serious internal threat has not been able to legitimise the use of the Army, is also indicative of the tension felt by the state in portraying them as the Other. This spectrum of identities creates multiple Self-Other dichotomies—as various perceptions of Self and Other tussle with each other in legitimizing and delegitimising policy options.

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[278] PM Vajpayee's statement in the Lok Sabha, August 4, 1998.

A deradicalisation of identities takes place through the separation of moderates from extremists; so the transformation of the Punjab conflict can be gauged at one level through the recognition of a moderate faction of the Akalis, just as in the case of Kashmir, This also occurs simultaneously with the process of framing the conflict as a political rather than a secessionist issue. Territorial demands then transform into demands for greater autonomy, and are represented in political discourses as being all-India issues of federalism rather than historically political issues specific to these conflicts.

Underlying these conflict discourses is an affirmation of the State's own identity. That the State represents itself as democratic, united, sovereign and secular even if these are unrealised ideals is clear in the conflict discourses. Its tendency to view Kashmir and the Naxal conflicts in more recent years as issues of economic development feeds into its projection of India as an emerging economic superpower. The earlier rigidity on state autonomy that existed in the 1980s has given way to more flexibility since the coalition era that began in the early 1990s. To that extent, the multiplicity of regional political parties is no longer considered a threat to the Centre.

What does this mean for the future of conflict resolution in India? Does the rise of Hindu nationalism in recent times, and the sweeping majority of the BJP in the 2014 general elections in India signal a shift away from the previous policies of the Congress led government? Looking at the discourses of Prime Minister Modi on Kashmir, it is clear that there is a continuation of the discourse on causes of the conflict-as being a 'proxy war' waged by Pakistan and that the issue in Kashmir was that of 'terrorism'.[279] Moreover, at the internal level, it continues to be stressed that what the Kashmiri youth needed was economic development and that development was the 'sole solution' to all problems.[280] Despite its historical opposition to Article 370, it is unlikely that there will be any scrapping of this constitutional provision, since the Indian state can continue to exert its power and hegemonize the terrorism/development discourse to its advantage.

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[279] See Prime Minister Modi's speech to the armed forces during his visit to Leh on August 12, 2014. Available at http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx Accessed on May 27, 2015.

[280] See press release in the aftermath of Modi's inauguration of a hydropower station at Kargil on August 12, 2014 available at http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx Accessed on May 27, 2015.

The naxal conflict, likewise, exhibits discursive continuity by the Indian state. Speaking at a project inauguration in the state of Chhattisgarh, PM Modi said that 'violence has no future' and that 'development is the only road to solve your problems'. Further, drawing on the conflict in Punjab and how it had ended he said, 'this (Maoism) too will end.[281]

In terms of future research, while this study provided a detailed analysis of India's internal security policy, in concentrating on the discourses of the elite, there are limitations in understanding the challenges elite discourses face. A broader study in which discourses of the media, NGOs and rebels themselves are analysed would greatly enhance the understanding of India's internal security policy. The interaction of these alternate discourses with each other, and the resulting changes these undergo would be closer to looking at the larger picture and context within which the discourses jostle with each other to achieve legitimacy. It might also be helpful to use a similar analysis to study the conflicts in the north-east as well as a detailed analysis of the Naxal conflict over a longer time period. Discourse analysis is still an underutilized methodology for studying conflicts and conflict resolution. This study showed how such a methodology can be applied in the study of conflicts and the processes through which democracies exert control within their borders.

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[281] PM Modi's speech in Chhattisgarh mentioned "When bloody battles were on in Punjab, did anyone think that it could end? I am sure that the people who have taken the wrong path on this land will also sooner or later see humanity emerge from within them" - See more at: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pm-narendra-modi-to-visit-dantewada-today/#sthash.iBSiGtqO.dpuf Accessed on May 27, 2015.

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