

Peace promoting or spurring tension further?

How *The Indian Express* frames Prime Minister Modi's
speeches in regard to identity groups in India

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Abstract

Political leaders affect the ordinary citizen's perception of the world, making them important to study in relation to the upsurge of tension and conflict. In this specific thesis the focus is on how *The Indian Express* frames the discourses of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India concerning the relationship between Hindus, minorities and Non-Hindus. The analysis is done through an interrelated analysis of the theoretical framework of Sandra F. Joireman (2003). Through the perspective of *instrumentalism*, an understanding of ethnicity that views ethnic identification as a tool for elites and leaders in pursue of a political or economic goal, the meaning of the framed discourses are withdrawn and discussed. With the result that when PM Modi mentions other identity groups in India he does so mostly in a positive light still trying to create bond and emotional ties. However, the thesis discovers how there is an underlying, ulterior motive indicating that he uses identification as a tool in pursue of political goals. In concluding remarks it is argued that PM Modi first of all is promoting peaceful means in relationships between different groups.

Keywords: Prime Minister Modi, Identity groups, Instrumentalism, Political Leadership, India

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1 Introduction

Political leaders all over the world play a huge role in the shaping of our conception of the world that we live in today, both regarding peaceful development but also for the emergence of tension and conflict in societies. Not least controversial statements made by different head of the states. Therefore it becomes highly relevant to analyze leaders discourse on the official arena such as the media. This specific study will center on the head of state since 2014 in India, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is still in office. India is a multiethnic country, with a majority of Hindus but also consisting of minorities such as Dalits, Muslims and Sikhs. The history of India has been plagued by many clashes between the different groups.

Through a discourse analysis I will study how *The Indian Express* frames Prime Ministers Modi's¹ speeches involving different identity groups and analyze the framing through the viewpoint of instrumentalism as a way of looking at ethnicity, a theoretical framework based on the scholar Sandra F. Joireman (2003). This with the purpose to understand whether PM Modi is spurring tension between different groups through the given discourse or if he promotes peace. In contrast to instrumentalism, primordialism and social constructivism will be included as alternatives, to increase the validity of the study and also bring better understanding in the analysis of why instrumentalism rather than primordialism or social constructivism is more fit in shedding light on how the different identity groups in India are framed in tension between ethnicity/identity groups and PM Modi's discourse. To clarify it will be the media's reporting and discourse about PM Modi's speeches that will be studied, and not his original speeches.

First of all a presentation of the purpose and research question is relevant thereafter follows the related previous research which is discussed in how it creates an inlet for this thesis. Thereafter the theoretical framework will be presented completely including operationalization with clarification of specific definitions such as identity groups and nationalism. Thereafter comes the part about method and material, introducing the discourse analyze and how it will be used in relation to the operationalization as well as the chosen primarily material and remarks on the rest of the material. The essence of this study is furthermore what follows with the analysis of articles about PM Modi's speeches regarding different groups and nationalism. Thereafter follows a complete discussion in concluding part, where the research question becomes answered with the concluding remarks that a first glance at the framed discourses demonstrate a peace promoting standpoint but when going deeper into the discourses hidden

¹¹ Hereafter mentioned as "PM Modi" only.

motives becomes distinguished. Even considered the ulterior motive, one could still argue that PM Modi is more peace promoting than spurring tension further.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The ambition with this study is to identify whether or not PM Modi is further spurring the hostilities between identity groups in India or if he is promoting peace in media's framed discourses on his speeches surrounding the domestic politics in concern of the different identity groups in India. Through the research question:

“How are different discourses of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches and contexts framed in media regarding the relationship between Hindus and other identity groups in India?”

World leaders play a huge part on the international arena. Both in practical terms of what they do, but also in how they create different discourses regarding the world we live in. These different discourses affect ordinary citizen's conception of the world and as will be discussed further, influence how they act in specific context. With this in the back of our head, it becomes important to disclose how these discourses arises and in what purpose. To create awareness in how leaders are able to manipulate the masses, if they wish.

Regarding the applicability for Peace- and conflict studies, it is two-folded. First one being the importance leaders possesses in framing of conception, here in relation to conflict which also includes the role media has in framing these conceptions. Secondly to further contribute to the study of group identities and how to understand the complexity between different groups, here specifically focused on India.

The research will not directly review original speeches and statements made by PM Modi but the discourse that media frame regarding those, this will help to contribute with a broader context involving other actor's viewpoint as well. Depending on perspective, making the thesis even more interesting and still becomes relevant within the field since the thesis will focus on media's discourse that has a wide public that includes ordinary citizens and their perception of the world.

1.2 Previous research

To further indicate this studies up-to-date relevance, it is also important to legitimate with previous research, both to get more in depth knowledge about the field as well as prove how this study will contribute further. Paul Brass (1991) has

written a few studies on India, ethnicity and nationalism and is also used by Joireman (2001) regarding the theoretical literature for this study. Shakuntala Rao (2018) has contributed with a study of PM Modi's twitter-account in relation to the social media's significance regarding nationalism and democracy. Richard D. Mann (2016) did a research regarding how *The Times of India* frames Sikhs in the crisis involving certain event between 1983 and 1984 and how the media contributes with stereotyping Sikhs to be inherently violent, pre-modern and dangerous to the state of India (2016: 120). Abul Majid (2015) examines secularism in India and how the different minorities are affected by two faces of Indians (especially Hindus), both trying to maintain an appearance of equality and at the same time the minorities and non-Hindus are experiencing India as non-friendly and aggressive. Even though these authors might seem non-related to one another, they in one way or another become relevant together; and in so doing, create both an opening for this thesis as well as relevance in the field.

Paul Brass has contributed with tremendous work on ethnicity and in "Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison" (1991), he argues that ethnic identity is itself a variable and not something fixed or given. Brass (1991) theoretical argument consist of two central ideas, the first one is that it is the elite competition that is the basic product in triggering ethnic conflict under specific conditions. This arises from broader political and economic environments rather than cultural values of the ethnic group in question (Brass 1991: 13). The second central idea argues around the critical role of the relationships established between the elites and the state. Primarily focus on the roles of collaborators and opponents of the state authority as well as state intrusion into regions inhabited by distinctive ethnic groups (Brass 1991: 14). When Brass discuss the ethnic variability he mean that cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage. They become identification markers for the members of the group and are called upon to create political identity and can be shifted regarding the political circumstances (Brass 1991:15). Since the theoretical framework that this study is based upon refers to and use Brass repeatable times, it becomes important to oversee his study as well. His study also becomes relevant since he discuss the variability of ethnicity and how it can be framed by political elites, which is exactly what this study research around.

Shakuntala Rao (2018) came out with a study that focus on PM Modi's rhetorical nature regarding his "selfie nationalism" as socially mediated form of governance and whether or not this "selfie nationalism" move India closer to being a delegative- rather than representational democracy (Rao 2018: 168-169). He does a rhetorical analysis on PM Modi's Twitter account between 15 April and 15 August 2017, regarding 1 230 tweets (Rao 2018: 166). Rao argues with background in Modi's brand of "selfie nationalism" and the increasing rural-urban polarization that India is comparable to O'Donnell's (1994) "delegative diplomacy". With "delegative diplomacy" the idea is the paternal figure of the state is supposed to take care of the whole nation and his or her political base is a movement that tries to overcome the factionalism of a multiparty system. In this system, institutions such as press, courts, legislatures are inconvenient for the

governance and needs to be undermined. Rao argues that Modi has succeeded to establish himself as a delegative democratic leader, strongly individualistic and constantly undermining the press, legislative bodies and judiciary. Though he still trust on the voters to choose him, irrespective of their identities and affiliations as well as declare himself as the most fit individual to take care of the future of India (Rao 2018: 179). Rao becomes relevant for this study based on several factors, he is one of few previous researchers that focus on Modi and his rhetoric on social media with up-to-date sources, he also study Modi as a political leader even though with a different theoretical framework compared to mine. This creates both an inlet for me but also show the importance of these kind of studies.

Richard D. Mann (2016) argues that *The Times of India*, leading English language newspaper in India, had important impact on the stereotyping of religion and violence during the crisis in Punjab 1983 and 1984. It contributed with stigmatizing Sikhs as well as justifying state-based violence against Sikhs (Mann 2016: 120). He question *The Times* and the facts they present regarding Sikhs (Mann 2016: 140). With background of Cavanaugh's analysis of the myth of religious violence, Mann argues that the Sikhs are presented as the violent Other compared to the national secular Hindu, blaming them in agitating tension that the secular nation-state then needs to suppress, with violence if needed. Mann concludes that the framing of news report of Sikhs is not the accurate portrayal of events and their causes rather an attempt to sway public option in favor for the political leaders at that time (Ibid). Even though Mann's article focus on a different political context, with a strive for a more secular state of India under the rule of Indira Gandhi, it is non the less relevant. The focus is on both a specific ethnic- religious group and on how the media frames the reality, in order to affect the public. This is something that this study also analyze through the theoretical framework for instrumentalism and in how framing of discourses is used to influence people in one direction, to a specific purpose.

The last previous researcher to be briefly discussed without draining the study is Abul Majid (2015), who becomes relevant since Majid research on minorities and non-Hindus in relation to the working of secularism in India. The definition of a secular state according to Majid means that the state treat all citizens as equal irrespective of religion, caste, and creed. It is the separatism between religious activities and those of the state where the state cannot be involved in any interpretation or reform of religion for the safety of all citizens (Majid 2015: 107). Majid argues that minorities always been under constant threat under Hindu majority government and even more now under the rule of BJP (the Hindu-nationalistic party) (Majid 2015: 107-108). He concludes that India's still has ongoing negative policies towards minorities which needs to be change in order to become a "civilized state" in accordance with secularism (Majid 2015: 115-116). The reason why Majid is included and relevant in previous research is because he contributes both with some background in the complexity of multi-ethnic society and India and demonstrate that there is still ongoing conflict between groups which open up for this studies contemporary relevance. Overall the previous research that is contributed is all in their way relevant for the course of this study, but it also opens up for further study in the subject.

2 Theoretical framework

The theory chosen for this study is Sandra F. Joireman's (2003) formulation of *instrumentalism*, in regard to nationalism and political identity. Since the research will focus on a specific leader with a contested past and present in relation to nationalism and identity, the chosen theory is highly relevant for the course of this study. Joireman upholds that "Almost all "ethnic" conflicts are better characterized as nationalist conflicts, because nationalism is ethnic identification that has in some way become politicized" (2003: 146). In the analyzing parts of this study I will connect this theoretical framework with the discourse PM Modi uses in the public sphere, to be able to scrutinize whether or not his framed discourse is friendly or unfriendly framed regarding identity groups in India.

2.1 Instrumentalism: ethnicity as a tool

Instrumentalism analyze the ways in which ethnicity is manipulated and applied by elites to achieve political goals or political mobilization (Joirman 2003: 36). Ethnicity is a tool used for some specific political end, which implies that instrumentalism believe that ethnic identities develop while nationalism befalls as a result in pursuit of particular political goal (Ibid). From an instrumentalists viewpoint it is important with objective markers of ethnicity, such as language, symbols, customs and even appearance. Leaders use symbols as these to draw people together, in order to reach them emotionally in pursuit of their political agenda (Joirman 2003: 36, 38).

Since ethnicity is politically useful according to instrumentalists ethnicity becomes both pervasive and deeply rooted. Ethnicity can both be selected as well as manipulated to achieve specific political goals (or economic goal). Which implies that ethnicity can never be neutral. It is used in political struggles for power as different groups tries to pursue their own interests (Joireman 2003: 38). Ethnicity also contributes to individual advantage, where individuals gain from connection with particular groups. Therefore self-interests become a motive for ethnic identification with an end in nationalism. These self-interests are of course seen as different depending from individual to individual and what the specific individual stands to gain (Joirman 2003: 39).

Basically through the perspective of an instrumentalist, is that ethnic identification exists because it provides some benefit. A group does not only exist per se rather the solemn purpose of a group to exist is with a particular goal in the forefront. Ethnic groups that exist have particular politically goals which in turn leads to ethnic identification. It is this identification that creates and develop

different organizations in pursue for the good of the group (Joireman 2003: 41). Ethnic identity has a practical political uses, it becomes important to use either because of circumstances or the role of elites in manipulating identity (Joireman 2003: 37).

2.1.1 Political Leadership

It is concluded that ethnic identity is a path to some sort of political benefit. Therefore it becomes relevant for instrumentalists to study the role of leadership in the mobilization of people towards ethnic identification and a political goal. In every political movement, the leader is crucial. Since ethnicity according to instrumentalists resonates with most people, it becomes a powerful tool in the creation of incentives for political actions (Joireman 2003: 41-42). Leaders automatically acquire an influential role in rhetoric and in defining the boundaries of who belongs to a group and who does not. A leader therefore has the power to include and exclude and identify who is “us” and who is “them” (Joireman 2003: 43).

2.1.2 Defining the Other

To continue on the split between “us” and “them”, ethnicity becomes the dividing factor. Since ethnicity is all about personal identity as well as belonging and establishing a group, with whom one feels emotionally tied. To define “the other” therefore becomes a political strategy, it is an instrumental use of identity. Most often “the other” is cast in negative light (Jorieman 2003: 43-44). This identity might also be applied to a group of people even though they themselves not necessarily choose that identity (Ibid). Joireman use the argumentation Fredrik Barth use regarding identity; that identity is foremost concerned with the constructing of boundaries between groups, it becomes important both to define who one *is not* as to define who one *is* (Ibid).

2.1.3 The state and mobilizing of nationalism

As elites use ethnic identification in pursue of some specific goal, the goal of nationalism is also to achieve some political end. This in turn means that nationalism should not be as evident as in the political actions of the state. Joireman (2003: 46) argue that we find presence and manipulation of ethnic identities within the state which according to her becomes an effective state, which mean that the state is effective if it is able encourage nationalist sentiment within its population. Therefor a state that has the ability to manipulate ethnic identities to its interests is also able to combat sub-state ethnic identities (Ibid). The state is in need of the citizens support, which it can maintain through threat and force or voluntary cooperation, where voluntary support is a better option.

Therefore the state encourage psychological or emotional attachment to the state, which in turn instills obligation in the population. Thereafter it becomes easier for the state to use nationalism to pursue its own goals (Joireman 2003: 46-47). As is written in the inlet of this theoretical framework, ethnic conflicts becomes better understood as nationalist conflicts. Both are used as tools in the pursue of political goals.

2.1.4 Potential solution for identification conflicts

Joiremam (2003) argue that instrumentalism is flexible in regards to conflict between groups since it focus on the goals and interests of the elites. It means that instrumentalism does not view the deep-rooted nature of ethnic and nationalistic conflicts, instead the focus lays on the flexible nature of political goals (Joireman 2003: 155). This makes instrumentalism as perspective more hopeful in regard to resolution to national conflict, since the incentives in a conflict could be changed somehow in order to make it less desirable for elite groups or leaders (Ibid).

2.2 Primordialism and Social Constructivism

Joireman (2003) in her study also discuss primordialism and social constructivism in ways of understanding ethnicity. Where primordialism is the oldest way of thinking about ethnicity and social constructivism and instrumentalism both are relatively new approaches to understand the politics of ethnicity. Primordialism and social constructivism will be included to demonstrate why instrumentalism becomes the most relevant way of thinking in accordance with this specific thesis.

2.2.1 Primordialism: ethnicity as unchangeable

To begin with most primordialists define ethnicity by the connection with blood ties or kinship (Joireman 2003: 19). Ethnicity is according to them historically rooted with a particular homeland. In accordance with primordialism the Nation is seen as something old with deep roots in both human biology and historical antiquity. Ethnic identities are determined at birth and are therefore unchangeable (Joireman 2003: 20).

2.2.2 Social Constructivism: fluid nature of ethnic identities

Social constructivism is closely linked to instrumentalism since it identifies the role of political (and economical) factors in shaping ethnicity. It view ethnic identification as something fluid, people can choose their ethnic identity based on their ethnic identity set in addition with their own preferences formed by

economic, political and social conditions (Joireman 2003: 54). It differs from instrumentalism in that they do not view all ethnic expressions as something opportunistic (Ibid). Ethnicity is something that becomes manufactured rather than ingrained, but compared to instrumentalism there is no need for economic or political goal for it to be formed. How it differ from primordialism is in the way ethnic groups are created (Joireman 2003: 56).

2.3 Definitions

It is always important to define specific concepts to make the reader understand exactly what the author mean when talking about it. In this study the foremost important concept to define is ethnic and religious groups under political identity group as well as plead for how I have chosen to use the concept and why. The purpose of this study is to examine how PM Modi frames his discourse regarding different groups in the society of India. This includes both religious and ethnical based groups. Since identity groups according to Joireman (2003) indirectly connects closely to nationalism, this is concept is in need of definition as well.

2.3.1 Political identity groups

Since there are different types of identity categories such as regional, religious, racial and linguistic according to Joireman (2003: 2), a group therefore becomes a collective which people thereafter are identifying with.

Since the focus of this study is on different groups which include both religious and ethnic groups in India, different minorities and non-Hindus, it is more appropriate to gather these different groups under the term political identity group. Joireman (2003: 9) repeatable time mentions, to belong in a group means to create a political personal identity. She argues for understanding of the role that individual political identities can play in politics and mean that political identities are important for the state (and in international politics). Since the state need to be able to manipulate political identities within the borders as well as manage movements once they develop. Joireman concludes that it is important to use political identity (and nationalism) in our analysis of state politics cause it leads to a more accurate understanding (Joireman 2003: 156-157). “These identities cause people to make political decisions that we cannot comprehend without understanding why people carry particular ethnic identities and how they become politicized” (Joireman 2003: 157).

2.3.2 Nationalism

Basically nationalism brings culture and politics together in a common purpose. When Joireman (2003: 9, 12) discuss nationalism, she argues that nationalism is

politicized ethnicity. Nationalism is an emotional or a psychological attachment to a group, which become a shared fundamental identity (Joireman 2003: 46). Further the group to which that psychological or emotional attachment applies includes all citizens of a particular state, where the state needs the support of the citizens in order to rule (Ibid).

2.4 Operationalization

Since instrumentalism mean that elites and leaders use identities to achieve political goal, the following analysis therefore must analyze identity as a tool through the role of the leader, in this case PM Modi. How one views the other is an important part of instrumentalism, where the political leader plays a huge role in framing *who is* and *who is not*. Therefore it becomes appropriate to operationalize the theoretical framework of instrumentalism in terms of how media has framed Modi's speeches about Hindus and other groups in India.

- (1) Is it framed as inclusive or exclusive when speaking about other identity groups, such as Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs and Christians.
- (2) *Who is* and *who is not* regarding the identity groups, are all groups included under the term Indians.
- (3) If there exist "the Other", is it cast in negative or positive light.
- (4) Are specific markers of the group used, such as language, symbols, customs and appearances
 - a. To create emotional ties and draw people together.
 - b. To create boundaries in relation to other groups.
- (5) Most importantly; is there a political goal or benefit embodied.

To validate this study and demonstrate why instrumentalism as chose of theoretical framework to best understand medias framed discourses of PM Modi, the study needs to include the alternative ways of define groups which Joireman (2003) also mention as primordialism and social constructivism.

Primordialism define ethnic identification as:

- (1) Unchangeable and given to us at birth
- (2) With historical roots and where the Nation is something old.

Social constructivism base identification on:

- (1) Something fluid:
 - a. based on *given* ethnic identity
 - b. on imprinted surroundings, such as economic, political and social conditions.
- (2) Do not view identification and expressions as existing based on opportunistic grounds.

These measurements will be operationalized together with the method of chose, discourse analysis that will be discussed in the next section.

3 Method & Material

In this section the method selected, discourse analysis, will be discussed and established in how it will be used in the analysis combined with the theoretical framework. Thereafter follows a section with the methodological limitations that has followed in the process of making this thesis as well as consideration over the material.

3.1 Discourse analysis

In accordance to Börjesson and Palmblad (2007) the language we use *does something* with the world, meaning that it evokes or constitute our reality (2007: 10). It is different discourses that create our conception of the world. These discourses later orient how people act. The languages which we use offer alternative versions of the world, where it is possible to create arguing and rhetorical contexts (Börjesson & Palmblad 2007: 10, 12). Accordingly this framing of discourses relevance in the creation of our conception of the world becomes relevant when given focus on how leaders use different discourses to create and persuade their conception of the world. That is why the use of discourse analysis in on how media frames PM Modi's public speeches, becomes appropriate to be able to analyze how the discourse frames the reality for India's population. More specifically which discourse is used surrounding India's different groups of identity. It becomes relevant to view the discourses that focus on identities and the trustworthiness of the rhetoric that the actor/s uses (Börjesson & Palmblad 2007: 15).

All together this forge incentives for the discourse analysis that follows. The discourse analysis in combination with the operationalization for the theoretical framework together constitutes the analysis tool which will be applied in the analysis part of this thesis. The combination of method and theory implies an interrelated analytical framework forged with the intention of analyze the aim and question of the thesis as a whole.

3.2 Methodological Limitations

The reason why I determined to pay attention to India, identity groups and PM Modi is based on the unique characteristics of India's multi-ethnicity. It creates many different openings to deepen our knowledge and understanding of identity

groups. This becomes important for the study of Peace and Conflict, since a broader understanding generates more potential for problem-solving and less incentive for misunderstanding that further may heighten tension or conflict between groups. This concerns both the case of India but also other conflicts surrounding identity groups around the globe. It will furthermore demonstrate identities influence on conflict as well as the contributing role leaders might play.

The time limitation is based on PM Modi's time in office. He became the Prime Minister of India in 2014 and is still in office today, regularly it is not recommended to carry through a study on ongoing events but since this thesis specific focus is on specific discourses in articles in media the thesis focus on the media reporting between the years of 2014-2018. PM Modi has been active before within Indian politics but the limitation will be on his framed discourse during his time in office as the Prime Minister. It also becomes more up-to-date.

To further limit the study the focus will be partial; it will be on the Hindu identity group with PM Modi as the solemn representative. Of course this will create a specific picture of the Hindu's as a whole, even though it is only one man that is studied. But since PM Modi is in a great power position his discourses becomes very influential and important to analyze to further understand the complexity of multiethnic societies in India and also the role leader have in conflict.

The material used for the empiric part needed to be in English, because of language limitations regarding Hindi. This automatically limited the alternatives of which online newspaper to use. Further the selection of newspaper was based on that *the Indian Express* is considered one of few that is not biased in the direction of governmental friendly.

3.3 Material

The primarily material in this study is based on thirteen articles from *The Indian Express*. The newspaper is one of the biggest in India and is said to reach out to more than 19 million of India's population. It is an English-language Indian daily newspaper and their slogan is "Journalism of Courage". According to media bias check The Indian Express is considered to be minimal biased and use very few loaded words. The reporting is considered properly factual based and sourced.

Regardless of belonging, the Indian Express reaches out to a broad public and therefore automatically contributes with specific discourses surrounding their reporting. In this case, the framing of PM Modi's discourses surrounding different identity groups in India. Independently of the material in use, it produces claims on contributing discourses on the real world, the articles are part of constructing a perception (Börjesson & Palmblad 2007: 17). This combination serves as a justification for the use of my selection of material, the Indian Express has a broad public and implicit supply the society with discourses on PM Modi's stand on India's multiethnic society. The selection of articles is based on specific search words, such as "PM Modi Muslims", "PM Modi Hindi", even "PM Narendra

Modi” to further the selection of articles since there seems to be few articles even none that actually mention PM Modi in correlation to specific identity groups only in the headline. This is also a problem that has been present through the whole process, to find qualitative material that frames PM Modi in his discourse regarding Hindu’s and other groups. The problem of gathering material has both been time-consuming and also in some aspects might dismantle the quality of the study, and therefore mentioned here.

Except the primary material that is the empirical data for the analysis, there exist secondarily material as well. This material is used for the rest sections of this thesis, foremost regarding the theoretical framework, the method and the background.

4 Background

To understand the context of this study better, the following will contribute with some background knowledge both about the current Prime Minister of India who is the focus for this study and also about the contemporary politics in India with focus on the leading party BJP and briefly about the opponent Congress. It will also include context regarding the tension that exist between different groups in India. This background further call for how this subject is relevant within Peace-and Conflict studies.

4.1 Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Narendra Modi came into office as the Prime Minister of India the 26th of May 2014. He was born in 1950 in a small town in Gujarat and he grew up in an impoverished family which is said to have taught him “the value of hard work but also exposed him to the avoidable sufferings of the common people” (PM India: 2018). This has encouraged him from young age to work for the people and the nation. He is declared as the “People’s leader”, with the purpose to solve their problems and he tries to work close personal connection both on the ground as well as with an online presence. He is also known as India’s most techno-savvy leader, very active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and so on (Ibid).

In 2001 Narendra Modi was appointed by his national party in the state Gujarat as chief minister of Gujarat. This was his first-ever political tenure. Before that he had only worked with different administrative positions within BJP, a back-room worker and strategist that never before had stood for public office (Marino 2014: xv). Some months into Narendra Modi’s appointment as chief minister a bloody communal riots broke out. Between February and March 2002, the state of Gujarat suffered cruel clashes between Hindus and Muslims with the death of 790 Muslims, 254 Hindus and with 223 people missing (Ibid). Modi was the one who was held widely responsible, some opponent also accused him of being the one who orchestrated and planned the riots. Modi was even denied visa by the United States in 2005 (Marino 2014: xv-xvi). Until very recently the stone image of Modi has been unchallenged and not been changed significant. He was re-elected as chief minister in Gujarat, later on in December 2012 during assembly election, it is said that a quarter of the state’s Muslims even voted for him though the uneasiness remains (Marino 2014: xvi).

4.2 Contemporary Politics in India

Except the leading role we find the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in, the leading party Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) plays an immense role in discourse building as well. As PM Modi, BJP has occupied the government power since the election of 2014 (BJP: 2017). BJP demonstrate the emergence of Hindu nationalism in India, that has become more intense since a wave of Hindu-nationalistic movement in the 1980s arose. Last time BJP came into power was in between 1998-2004 as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) (Van Dyke 2010: 67, 74-75).

The ideology and the vision of the BJP is the *Hindutva* ideology. The party see themselves as part of a larger structure, they grew out of a pre-existing organization called the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) which was founded already in 1925 in context of Hindu-Muslim riots and is still active as organization today (Van Dyke 2010: 75). The original thought was to defend Hinduism against the perceived Muslim threat and build a nation grounded in specific Hindu culture (Ibid). Closely linked is also the organization The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), that advocate for activities that advance the Hindu causes, such as creating agitations around disputed places and protesting so-called forced conversions and organizing attacks for example on the Christians churches in Gujarat (Ibid).

Agitation is used by BJP as a method both of creating support but also focus on building up grassroots organization. An important example, that created emotional response to an upsurge of Hindu nationalism sentiment, was BJP commitment to join VHP in a campaign to build a Hindu temple to Lord Ram (Hindu god) in the late 1980s. In the following grand processions and ceremonies as well as comprehensive media coverage gave rise to the “Ram Wave”/the Hindu nationalism sentiment. Later on, Post-Ram Wave tactics have been used to gain advantage. Even though on the national level BJP has played down *Hindutva* in the interests of coalition building, communal tension and violence has still worked in favor of BJP. In the aftermath of cruel anti-Muslims riots in the state of Gujarat, the BJP won an electrifying victory in the election in that state 2007. But before the victory in the national election 2014, BJP has foremost adept their politics in coalition building while still disdained by the opponent, the Congress . But the slogan frequently used by members of BJP is still Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan (Van Dyke 2010: 75-76: Express News Service: 2014-06-02).

The Indian National Congress had their heyday between 1960s and 1970s, especially during the rule of Indira Gandhi (Brass 2010: 2-3, 18). They were are national one-party dominant system until 1980s when it was replaced by a multiparty system, shaped in three-front, but dual coalitional system with the Congress and the BJP the principal protagonists. BJP has been the driving force in the competitive development (Brass: 2010: 3). The Congress is the one who led India to independence from Great Britain (Ibid: Marino 2014: xvii). They are considered as secular party with a social liberal platform on the center-left of Indian politics. Their core idea is to lift all levels of society (Ibid). Especially under Indira Gandhi’s time, came improvements about for the most marginalized

in the society; improving living quarters and nourishment, elementary education and health (Brass 2010: 18). Today they serve as a critical voice against Modi and his BJP, their leaders are always commenting on what is beneath the official speeches made by the PM and ruling party (PTI: 2017-02-20).

4.3 Minorities and Non-Hindu groups

India is a multiethnic society and one of the biggest countries in the world including many ethnicities and religions. The majority of India's population is Hindus (approximately 79%), the remaining consist of groups such as Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits and many more. Since the independence of India in 1947 the country has been plagued by a number of intra-state conflicts, both with cause in territorial claims and also tension between a number of ethnic and religious groups (UCDP: 2016). The intra-state conflicts include conflicts based on one-sided violence both by the government and a wide range of rebel groups against civilians (Ibid).

Conflicts based over territory claims is primarily over the status of different areas which ethnic or religious groups wish to claim, either as separate or independent states. This concerns areas such as Punjab/Khalistan (government fighting Sikhs) or Kashmir (government fighting Muslims). Though most of these territorial based conflicts have taken place in the Cold War or post-Cold War eras. In the present the tension between large number of ethnic and religious groups that populate India is more prevailing. This tension has also given rise to a number of non-state conflicts, which primarily have clustered on the Hindu-Muslim divide (UCDP: 2016). Different Hindu-nationalistic groups have had significance in those contexts, with the idea that India should be completely Hindu-based. These groups have often spread anti-Muslim disinformation (Greek & Engström: 2016-08-25). Hindu groups are more frequently lynching people for eating beef and have become more common since BJP (leading party in India) and Narendra Modi came to power (Amnesty International Annual Report 2017).

5 Discourses on the Other: Identity Groups

In this section the topic of this thesis will be analysis through the interrelated analytical framework of the method, discourse analysis, and the theoretical framework. Through the following thirteen articles gathered from *the Indian Express* the discourse that becomes apparent in media in regard to PM Modi speeches will be analyzed with help of Joireman's *instrumentalism* foremost and discussed in contrast to *primordialism* and *social constructivism* when needed. In purpose of answering how the framed discourse affects the relationship between Hindu, minorities and non-Hindus in India. With the purpose to scrutinize if the discourses are framed as peace promoting or spurring tension in relationship between the different groups of India's multi ethnic society.

5.1 Discourse about different identity groups overall

On the 19th of February 2017 at a rally in Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, the PM Modi held a speech where he critiqued the ruling party in that specific state of being biased in their treatment of different communities according to *Indian Express*.

"If a village gets a graveyard, it should get a cremation ground too. If there is electricity during Ramzan, there should be electricity during Diwali too. If there is electricity during Holi, there should be electricity during Eid too. There should not be any discrimination," the Prime Minister had remarked." (Indian Express: 2017-02-20).

Here PM Modi distinctly portray different identities and their practices but in an inclusive manner, without shedding a negative light on the other, or their practices. Withdrawn from the specific quote *Indian Express* uses, it does not seem as if PM Modi tries to define *who is* or *who is not*, rather he speaks about them all without any specific definition. But what the article further contributes with is the context of that speech, where, why and what, where it becomes apparent that PM Modi did this speech when election was approaching. Furthermore he has been campaigning frequently for the BJP party in that area (Uttar Pradesh) during that time (Indian Express: 2017-02-20). Here is where the last, most importantly factor of *instrumentalism* becomes visible, that leaders use ethnic identification as a tool to achieve a political goal and in this example to

gain votes in upcoming election. Even though in this case identification of the other is apparent, it is not exclusive, it creates boundaries since different practices are mentioned but not in a negative light. But the political goal is visible. Here the mentioning of identity groups becomes a tool, in drawing the people in against another political opponent. One could argue that it is possible to apply ethnic identification according to *primordialist* view, since PM Modi present different belongings as what could be analyzed as something constant. He present different practices and symbols without trying to change them since he mean that there should be no discrimination between. Though one should consider whether PM Modi mention these practices and symbols to create emotional tie and understanding, therefore manipulating or take advantage of identities in pursue of a political goal, votes.

The same quote is used in another article in *the Indian Express* as well, this time it is written with the background of how BJP (the leading party) has commented on PM Modi's speech at the rally in the Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh. They hope that the speech PM Modi held will polarize the voters in the party's favor, imagining that Hindu's across the different castes will consolidate in benefit of the party (Liz Mathew: 2017-03-01). In another article written from the perspective of the Congress² commenting on PM Modi's speech also view it as a straightforward appeal in aim at communal polarization. This because they view the "graveyard" speech as counter-posing in purpose of communal sentiment (PTI: 2017-02-20). This implies further that the "graveyard" speech PM Modi held has more to it than just being a speech of non-discrimination. The discourses given indicate that it is more behind the curtains. Even though PM Modi does his own thing, as Rao (2018) argues that PM Modi is a strongly individualistic leader furthering his "selfie nationalism", he is still connected with his own party BJP and as one of the articles mentions works in favor of it. Whatever the cause, the use of identity groups seems to be a strategic move for the benefit of him or the BJP. It also becomes evident that PM Modi might officially say something, but has unspoken, behind the sentences meaning.

Another context when PM Modi addressed at a student convention in September 2017, he told the young students to celebrate India's diversity.

"Does it ever occur to us to celebrate Tamil day in a Haryana college? That a college in Punjab decides it will celebrate Kerala day? We (students) will sing their songs, dress like them...", he said. These festivals will help make 'Ek Bharat, shreshtha bharat' (One India, great India), he said." (PTI: 2017-09-11).

Here *the Indian Express* frames the discourse which portrays PM Modi as embracing and promoting of India's diversity and pushes the students to learn and be creatively from each other and others (Ibid). PM Modi demonstrates great awareness about different groups and practices but at the same time, he does not talk about others in a negative light. He includes all different practices, independently of group and markers. In this context a clear political goal is not to

² Opposition party to the BJP (View Background: 4.2 Contemporary Politics in India)

be found, since there seems to be no clear underlying motive more than to personate himself in a better light, as a Prime Minister for all. Even though in itself that is a hidden agenda and a political goal, but at least it is peace promoting regarding the multi ethnicity in India.

5.2 Discourse in regards to Hindu-nationalism

When PM Modi made his first visit to the BJP headquarter after being sworn in 26th of May 2014, he held a speech saying that 550 million voters will help guide him to find India's rightful place on the international arena. When he spoke to the party workers he said:

“Had there not been a common strong undercurrent across entire Hindustan, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, there would not have been a clear majority. This demonstrates the understanding about the need for stability in the minds of the ordinary voter. [...] This is first election where electorate has given a verdict rising above the caste and regional equations” (Express News Service: 2014-06-02).

Kashmir is the state furthest up north while Kanyakumari is the state furthest down south, including the whole of India, except PM Modi in this speech instead use Hindustan as name and identification for the country instead. This directly implies that the state belongs to the Hindu's of the country, thereby excluding all other minorities and Non-Hindus only by mentioning the Hindu-nationalistic goal under the name Hindustan. Even though he does not mention other groups, he automatically exclude them by only naming “Hindu[...]” in relation to the nation and country of India. This become evident in terms of the Hindu-nationalistic preferences stated.

In accordance with the set variables for *instrumentalism* the discourse media frames about PM Modi's speech speaks its clear mind. Other groups more than Hindu's does not become included in the Hindu-nationalistic frame of the country. Since the country is not mentioned by its name, India, there is no possibility to include all under the term “Indian”. Instead the country becomes mentioned by Hindustan, where one only can be a “Hindu” to be fully included. This becomes impossible for someone identifying as something other than “Hindu”. The Hindu-nationalistic discourse is evident in several other articles for example when PM Modi's choose to hereafter only speak Hindi in international meetings with other leaders, even though he speaks English and has done it before in similar contexts (Pranab Dhal Samanta: 2014-06-05). This with the context of the Modi government reiteration that Hindi should be used compulsorily on social media accounts for the eight Hindi-speaking states and central government employees. Even though this guideline only affects the states with Hindi as the “major language” (Express News Service: 2014-06-20). When Modi addressed Indologist, Hindu language students and Indian community members he said:

“A language imbibes the feel of the era and tradition through which it travels. Languages have big heart..Language is key to the development of personality,” said Modi (Press Trust of India: 2014-07-07).

According to the same article PM Modi also acclaimed the importance of Hindi language and that the importance was going to increase as India moves on of economic advancement (Ibid). But in another context, at the 10th World Hindi Conference in 2015, PM Modi argues that language should be including and not excluding. “Language should unite” (Milind Ghatwai: 2015-09-11). This he meant in the purpose of enriching Hindi by assimilating words from other Indian language and dialects (Ibid).

There are different perspectives how to approach the different contexts and analyze them. The overall theme of mentioned speeches and discourses contribute with framing of a nationalistic drive by PM Modi. But then PM Modi compensates by talking about inclusiveness even though the discourse might say something else. He argues that language, Hindi, should be included in that it should assimilate other Indian language and dialects. The meaning that can be withdrawn from this is two-folded, firstly it includes all of the different languages spoken in India but secondly, it contributes with *who is* and *who is not*. That means that he is including in his speech presupposed that Hindi *is*, there is a clear boundary between Hindi and other languages. If not assimilated it becomes apparent *who is not*. Language becomes a clear marker since PM Modi mean that Hindi is a part of the path leading to India’s prosperity. It also becomes evident that this is used to pursue a political goal, might it be the prosperity of India’s future or the Hindu-nationalistic move. It is important to remember that India is not like any country regarding language, because they have had English as the official language since the Independence from Great Britain with Hindi-speaking majority, but in the country as a whole they have 122 major language and 1599 other languages (Census of India: 2018).

Through the discourse apparent through the media discourse of PM Modi, one could view identification as something fluid in accordance with *social constructivism*. Since it becomes clear that the identification marker: language, is changeable since it is possible according to PM Modi to assimilate other languages, it is possible to unite them into one. This means that *primordialism* with the view that ethnic belonging is something unchangeable, cannot be applied and help explain this part of the discourse. But *social constructivism* is still possible, since it sees ethnic identification as something fluid based on both a given ethnic identity but as well as social, economic and political circumstances. In the context, one could view the assimilating of languages as a political circumstance that also effects the ethnic identification. Though *social constructivism* do not base identification and expression on opportunistic grounds which *instrumentalism* does. Therefor I would argue that *instrumentalism* still becomes the best alternative to understand this form of identification, since the political benefit for a specific group and leader is evident, where identification markers and also nationalism sentiments are used to draw people together.

5.3 Discourse about different identity groups

As a response on the al-Qaeda chief's video and appeal on an al-Qaeda in India-South Asia which would free Muslims from the "oppression" in Kashmir and Gujarat in 2014 ahead of a US visit, PM Modi answered in an interview surrounding terrorism,

"Indian Muslims will live and die for India, and the al-Qaeda is "delusional" if it thinks they will dance to their tune [...]" (Express News Service: 2014-09-20).

What is mentioned in context and in the same article is the gratitude the Indian Muslim society feels towards PM Modi, and they hope that PM Modi's statement would be sufficient to keep BJP leaders away from hate speeches against their community (Ibid). In this discourse surrounding another identity group than Hindu's, PM Modi indicates an inclusiveness regarding the "Indian Muslims". He includes the Muslims within Indian identification. Through lenses of *instrumentalism* PM Modi includes the Muslims in the Indian identity and put them in a positive light. Even though one could argue that he still put a boundary since he does not completely include Muslims in the Indian identity, because he terms them as Indian Muslims. This can also have the implication of identifying them as Muslims living in India, without being included in the Indian nationalistic identity but mere a part of the society. In this specific context it becomes hard to distinguish which of the alternatives that is the right one, dependent on if one reads it literally or between the lines. Furthermore the context of the article express the relationship between US and India as not been the best, but with possibilities of improvements since they have common issue to cooperate against: terrorism. This therefore indicates an underlying political goal involved in the discourse, improvements of the India-US relationship. It is also a tactic of PM Modi to include the Indian Muslims and create boundary against al-Qaeda making the political goal two-folded.

In another discourse that regards Dalits and unrest in within their community regarding the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act because the BJP leader in Mumbai reiterated that the party would not let the reservation policy be scrapped, PM Modi indicate a peaceful approach towards the Dalits.

"Narendra Modi asked his party's MPs to spend at least two nights in Dalit-dominated villages and "restore" the faith of the community in the BJP [...] remind people that the BJP was the party that took measures to honour Ambedkar and for the welfare of Dalits while other parties limited their love for Dalits to speeches" (Liz Mathew: 2018-04-07)

It becomes evident of course that PM Modi identifies the Dalits as the other, but cast in a positive light. It is possible to retrieve a discourse that determines *who is* and *who is not* in accordance with *instrumentalism*, since PM Modi clearly speaks about Dalits and their welfare. This is an obvious marker defining the boundaries, that someone *is*, and speaking about the other. What more is that there is a clear political goal with the speech, both in pushing the BJP to restore faith and from that retrieve support from the them, the Dalits. Once again I would argue that PM Modi speaks peacefully about another identity group with a clear political purpose. The perspective of *instrumentalism* is constantly present. The ethnic identification, the acknowledgment of the other, but put in a positive, peaceful light has an obvious ulterior motive. But what is important to have in mind, is that PM Modi is still peace promoting even though he is not completely including.

In a completely different discourse, withdrawn from PM Modi's monthly radio address, the article communicate the positive tone PM Modi has regarding his government removal of a restriction of allowing Muslim women to perform Haj (pilgrimage) only in the company of a male guardian.

"He said when he first heard of the restriction, he was surprised as to who would have drafted such a rule. "Why this discrimination? And when I went into the depth of the matter I was surprised to find that even after 70 years of our independence, we were the ones who had imposed these restrictions. For decades, injustice was being rendered to Muslim women but there was no discussion on it," he said in his broadcast." (PTI: 2018-01-01)

Here PM Modi shows a clear respect for the religion and belief of another religion/identification practices. Though once again the other is identified, as Muslim women, but it is still in a positive light. Further he draws this in correlation with "[...] removal of the restriction of having a male guardian or 'mahram' may appear as a "small thing", but such issues "have a far reaching impact on our image as a society" (Ibid). Here he discuss about "our image" and the impact it has on their society, in India. In this context and with those words, it becomes possible to view PM Modi as including of all different groups in the society of India. As before, there is an evident political benefit, since he and his government want to take the credit for the good progress they are contributed with.

Another speech made by PM Modi at the Independence Day event in 2016, *the Indian Express* gathers the PM's 93-minute speech from the Red Fort, where PM Modi specifically answer to critique against his government regarding atrocities against Dalits.

"[...] stress that a society divided between low and high and by untouchability cannot sustain and call for "harsh but sensitive treatment" to address such "centuries-old evils [...]. Unity in diversity is our greatest strength. Our cultural tradition of respect for others, and assimilation is the reason why our civilisation has persisted. The sentiment of unity has struck deep roots in our society" (Anand Mishra: 2016-08-16).

PM Modi once again advance an including politics, where he tries to see beyond earlier transgression made by the society against "untouchables" or otherwise termed Dalits. Even though he briefly takes the blame on their own society he

furthermore advances that their cultural tradition of respect for others and assimilation is the reason why their civilization has persisted. Here is apologetic but at the same time he mention the other, as not belonging completely within the original Indian society, and in a way terms *who is* or more *who has been* included. At the same time, one could objectively argue that he is only stating fact and admitting past transgression and now looks bright at the future as the Indian society as more including. Though one should also pay attention to that he uses the word assimilation, which could imply that he means that one needs to assimilate to “their” society in order to experience full inclusion. Furthermore going back to the core of *instrumentalism* and why ones view group identification as a tool in the pursuit of political benefit or goal, here it obvious that PM Modi address earlier critique from the Opposition regarding violence against Dalits. Therefore this speech, even though it is once again in a peaceful manner, is still biased and probably not fully genuine.

6 Concluding remarks

When analyzing empirical data through discourse analysis, it becomes evident that one could argue back and forth about the specific meaning of the discourse and whether or not the discourse actually is what is at first glance or not. However, what becomes evident through the discourse analysis made on articles from *The Indian Express* framing PM Modi's speeches and their contexts is that different forms of identification is used as a political tool in pursue of a political goal in accordance with *instrumentalism*. Most parts of the discourses frames "the other", both in negative but mostly in positive light based on the discourses apparent meaning. If going more in depth the discourses always includes underlying, ulterior motive seen as political beneficial or as a political goal, the results even show underlying economic goal e.g. with regard to the importance of Hindi-language in relation to the economic prosperity of India. Evidently all the framed discourses gathered and analyzed end up in a political context, where the support of the citizen and voters counts both in regard for the Prime Minister per se but also the leading party BJP. The discourses used should therefore be seen as politically biased, since the PM and ruling party constantly are in need of the population's support and therefore adjust their politics accordingly. Therefore it is possible to view PM Modi's framed discourses as strategic, even in some manipulating the different groups' emotional ties in order to draw people together. Both pursuing a nationalistic goal, at the same time de facto works for "the poor" and better relationship for minorities and Non-Hindus as framed in his discourse about Dalits on Independence Day.

The scholar Majid (2015) discusses the working of secularism in India, where he concludes that there is tendencies towards it but in order for India to actually become a "civilized" country with regards to secularism there is more work to do. The problem apparent in Majid's research is the rising power of BJP, which also becomes apparent in this thesis. Even though PM Modi on a sidetrack act based on the "selfie nationalism" that the scholar Rao (2018) has studied, Modi in general and independent of the political purpose speaks in positive light about the other and even in including manners. But contradictive to PM Modi and also behind him is the leading party, BJP, who both in regards of ideology and also in their practice and speeches about other groups for example when BJP hoped that PM Modi's 'graveyard' speech would create polarization and emotional ties on behalf of the Hindu sake for their advantage, are further spurring tension. In addition even PM Modi sometimes remarks on religious grounds closely linked to the nation as whole. With this as background connected with the analysis it is evident that PM Modi is split between operating more friendly and inclusive regarding other groups and also please his party that often find themselves in

disputed contexts where they indirectly promotes dividing and creating boundaries between the different groups.

Furthermore it becomes interesting as well as relevant to move to the final part of this thesis and to answer the research question: “How are different discourses of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s speeches and contexts framed in media regarding the relationship between Hindus and other identity groups in India?” Where the overall discourse framed actually mentioned the other but does not do so in negative light indicating a peaceful approach. Even though PM Modi sometimes show evidence of creating boundaries and excluding others when speaking about Hindustan or Hindi, he obviously succeeds in gaining the support of the Indian society. One needs to consider the fact that there exist concealed political goals in the discourses given, and based on the readers own perception one might understand the discourses differently. Many times one sees the things one want, narrowing one’s perception and understanding of the world down. But with the recognition of existent hidden agendas back in our heads, it becomes possible to at least conclude that the official discourses about PM Modi create incentives for peaceful activities among the multi ethnic lines of India. What are further demonstrated are also responses from the others community, that in those discussed discourses they are showing gratitude to the PM Modi further implying peaceful activities. Still there are BJP leaders connected to PM Modi who tries to trigger conflict and tension through polarization.

The final thing to add is how the *instrumentalist* view the potential solution for conflict, and since they view identification as something flexible they therefore have a more hopeful manner than the other two perspectives. That based on the fact that *primordialism* view ethnic identification as something unchangeable, and in the analysis it becomes obvious that through the perspective of the Prime Minister the identification both assimilates and have the incentives of change, *primordialism* might not be the right way to understand this specific thesis. The same goes with *social constructivism*, even though it might be more relevant since they view identification as both something fluent that is characterized by political circumstances but does not necessarily exist for an opportunistic purpose which is highly present through the whole analysis. This means that if one only has incentives to change or affect the elites or leaders political pursuit one can direct the politic in a specific direction towards peace. PM Modi already demonstrates a more peaceful turn in his politics, but it is not sufficient when constantly trying to manage the lines of BJP. Also in consideration that PM Modi’s own motives might not be completely clear, this in regards to the complex and disputed past of the Prime Minister. In contexts the BJP obviously is trying to impinge tension between Hindus and other.

In conclusion there is still more to be said, not least concerning other newspaper discourses but also regarding other prominent leaders in India. Since India will continue to be a multi-ethnic society, involving a numerous of actors, both peace promoting and pushing for further tension and dividing, it will in the future be continually important to follow the development and trying to understand it. Discourse analysis is an important tool, as the ordinary citizen does not always analyze about what is actually being said and what the implications

are, it therefore becomes relevant to distinguish alternative discourses and how leaders and other elites might use them as they see fit.

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