The Communal Conflict In India –
Causes And Peaceful Solutions

Preeti Sahai

Author

Preeti Sahai
MCMPA - Mason Fellow 2019,
Harvard Kennedy School

Review and Editing

Mr Vijay Mahajan, Director
Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi

Preeti Sahai

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1 <u>Introduction</u>

The Hindu Muslim conflict in India has vexed politicians, practitioners and academics for decades now. The nature of this conflict and the associated violence has been evolving, yet the social narratives that seem to perpetuate the conflict have been fairly stable. Attempts at peace and nonviolence have been fewer and at much smaller scale, like neighborhoods, compared to how all pervasive the conflict is. This study is an attempt to think about peace. We find several experiments that offer hope, though most don't manage to sustain. The study points to the need for deeper research and more grassroots experiments in nonviolence and peace.

The presence of Hindu-Muslim conflicts predated the formation of independent India, though partitioned into Pakistan, a Muslim homeland, and secular India. At independence, India adopted a constitution which included 'Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion" as one of Fundamental Rights of citizens. Thus, the foundation was laid for a multi-religious, ethnically plural society and coupled with universal adult franchise, soon political identities were built on those.

This report highlights a multitude of factors influencing the Hindu-Muslim conflict both to exacerbate it and to dilute it and push towards peace. We discuss how the conflict has changed over time and has become increasingly political in nature. We contend that the Hindu-Muslim conflict is increasingly a constructivist phenomenon, evidenced among other things by the patterns of and outcomes of violence.

This document is in two parts. The first part reviews scholarly literature on the genesis of the communal conflict and creation of social identities that enable endorsing communal violence. The second part reviews literature on social cohesion and factors that lead to preventing a violent expression of the conflict.

This report charts out the complexity of the Hindu-Muslim conflict as it traverses across a few academic disciplines to develop an understanding of the conflict. The origin, nature and scope of the conflict have been contested from the Medieval times. Scholarly interest in the communal conflict in India has come from across disciplines - sociologists such as Ashgar Ali Engineer, TN Madan and Dipankar Gupta psychologists like Ashis Nandy, Sudhir Kakar, Ragini Sen, Kayyum Bohra, A. Majeed, ESK Ghosh; historians like Gyanendra Pandey and David Ludden; economist and philosopher Amaryta Sen; and political scientists such as Amrita Basu, Paul Brass, Sudha Pai and Ashutosh Varshney to name a few, have tried to examine this issue from various lenses.

The scope of our enquiry ranges across essentialist viewpoints, the core differences between how individuals in either religion develop their self-concept, and more instrumental notions of electoral incentives that deepen the conflict. A review of social-psychological perspectives shows how the idea of being either Hindu or Muslim subsume multiple other identities such as caste, sub-community, and linguistic and regional origins, when faced with threats. These threats find their source in narratives, often constructed for the precise purpose of creating ingroups and prejudice against the 'other'.

Just as threats are seen from a social-psychological perspective, they have also been treated from the lens of economics. The big picture economic changes of globalization and a push towards urbanization are leading to the creation of a variety of threats to citizens and their livelihoods, which manifest themselves in the form of the communal conflict as well. Likewise, micro changes in economics such as changes in distribution of wealth and relative prosperity across communities are seen to create disturbances, evidence of which scholars have found in the communal conflict and violence. The influence of economic changes as the independent variable, leading to communal conflict and violence has not been established unequivocally. The influence of economic changes and threats of loss of livelihoods in deepening anxieties though is a given. Electoral incentives as a determinant of communal violence bear explanatory weight, and the report attempts to discuss some nuances within this broad frame of enquiry.

The primary concern of the enquiry, however, is peace, specifically the lack of violence. The study of violence and its causes has received much more scholarly attention than the causes of peace or when violence was prevented[1]. Part II of the report continues with the rational choice approach which suggests that religious narratives are used in an instrumental manner to mobilize followers. We examine factors such as demographic cleavages, civic society institutions and the presence of human agency which can help avert violence. Some of these are given in the short to medium term, others develop in an enabling environment, with appropriate political and social institutions. Most institutions and ideas with following are amenable to be used either way - they can be invested in violence or in peace. The switch takes very little as long as certain kinds of social capital exists on the ground.

We have tried to learn from the successes and failures of different kinds of interventions to prevent communal violence. This is seen both through the initiatives of stakeholders from across political representatives, activists, religious leaders and community members and even the police department, using instrumentalities such as formation of peace committees. We have taken the lens of social capital and the formation of ingroups and outgroups to develop a grasp of the problem and its solutions. We examine how individuals interpret events and narratives to become part of a collective more firmly. We think about the narratives themselves, the economics and politics around them, and stakeholders involved in dissemination and perpetuation of the narratives.

Given the nature of the conflict, the deep-seated biases, narratives that help perpetuate prejudice, and the electoral worth of a polarized citizenry, the quest for peace is a tall order. This report tries to outline one framework that can help build and strengthen direct or operational approaches to peace and nonviolence. We try to build an understanding of what kinds of social capital enable violence and what kinds can build a bridge or link communities to ideas and resources beyond their immediate access. All kinds of social capital bring value to communities, though linking social capital is more likely to enable peace in areas and communities that cannot achieve peace on their own.

[1] Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism," 744–45.

PART I –
REIVEW OF LITERATURE ON CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Part I of this study reviews literature on the causes of communal conflict across five broad themes. The first theme looks at the role of religion and various views towards assimilating religion in public life. The second theme tries to see how communities came to be built around the idea of religion and goes on to explore linkages between religious and social identities and communal conflicts. The third theme examines social-psychological factors that may help understand the conflict and the creation of exclusive communities. The last two themes consider economic and electoral causes of the communal conflict.

The first theme traces the origin and cleavages between three deeply intertwined constructs for India, secularism, religious nationalism and communalism. The idea of secularism and its critiques have taken up enormous space in the public discourse in India. There is rich literature on the origin, relevance, limitations, use and misuse of secularism. Nationalism has two broad versions one based in religion and another in secularism and communalism is seen as an extension of a certain type of religious nationalism. We have tried to see how different forms of nationalisms have evolved and what literature says on the links between communalism and religious nationalism. This theme engages significantly with the influence of modernity on the construction of the ideas of secularism, nationalism and communalism.

The second theme addresses the sharpening of religious identities as a cause of the communal conflict. Explored here are the influence of the British rule and influences such as Hindu revivalist thought, expedient party politics from the independence to more recent times and the labelling of the conflict and violence. All these factors have fed into the conflict by increasing consciousness around social identities and the creation of in-groups and out-groups.

The third theme is around social-psychological understanding of the communal conflict. It observes how social status enables prejudice against the 'other' as we examine intergroup dynamics. Also explored here are the threats and anxieties that push people towards prioritizing somewhat homogenous identities over those that characterize them otherwise.

The fourth theme is around economic causes of the communal conflict and observes phenomena at two different levels. First, we trace a macro theme in which the overall economic trends such as rising urbanization, industrialization and inequalities are seen to generate conflict. Second, we review literature on the economic interrelationships between specific communities as factors that have contributed to conflicts. It is worth observing that no conflicts are held in vacuum, and economic attributes are sometimes mere triggers to a pre-existing set of social equations, the disturbing of which is unacceptable to the affected community.

This last theme deals with the interrelationship between electoral politics and communal violence, and how sometimes political calculus has been seen to create conditions for conflicts or make choices on intervening or not intervening to stop a communal conflict from turning violent. The evolution in the nature of communal violence and its expediency to contemporary Hindu-right wing politics has been discussed here.

2 Theoretical Approaches

The first part of this report draws entirely from the Indian context and in the study of communal conflict and violence in India, there are two primary approaches. ***Essentialism*** 'asserts that there is a fundamental difference between Hinduism and Islam, or of Hindus and Muslims, and, therefore, contemporary conflict can be traced back to 'older animosities' between these groups. Inter-religious strife and conflict were present, even endemic in the pre-modern times. Therefore, essentialists find the existence of strong communal identities even before colonialism'[2]. Scholars such as Francis Robinson, writing in the early 1970s argued that there were 'fundamental' religious differences between Hindus and Muslims in the nineteenth century 'before' community-based mobilization began. These differences were based on issues such as idol worship, cow protection, and monotheism, which created a 'basic antipathy' between the two communities, set them apart, made assimilation unthinkable, and contributed to the rise of communalism[3].

Constructivism, on the other hand frames the communal conflict from the perspective of communities whose voices were not heard in elite discourses. In the Indian context, constructivists posit that communalism hides a multiplicity of mainly political and economic causes. Constructivists argue that 'Hindu-Muslim consciousness and conflict are largely modern constructions, in which the British colonial rulers played a major role. Constructivism leads to the position that contemporary communal riots in India are deliberately engineered'[4].

Instrumentalism, which is a constructivist approach, suggests the 'purely instrumental use of ethnic identity for political or economic purposes by the elite regardless of whether they believe in ethnicity'[5]. Wilkinson[6] disagrees with most instrumental political explanations for violence whereas Brass[7] takes an instrumentalist view and argues that neither the history of communalism nor the immediate circumstances provide a satisfactory explanation to the occurrence, nature of riots and their classification as 'riots' not pogroms, or their impact on power relations.

Clarification on terminologies

Communal violence, Communal tensions, prejudices, and conflict are all distinct from one another. They are interrelated and one leads to the other, even as the latter three are 'sociological expressions of intercommunity expression have an autonomy of their own'[8]. Frequently, tensions, prejudices and conflict of a communal nature have resulted in violence in India. Examining literature on violence is crucial to understanding the nature of the tension and conflict itself.

'Ethnic' and 'Communal': The literature on communal issues in India often uses 'ethnic' and 'communal' conflict interchangeably. 'This terminological practice is consistent with the broad definition of ethnicity (that is, group identity) proposed by Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict'[9]. David Ludden envisages communalism as 'a particular formation of purposeful human activity: communalism is collective antagonism organized around religious, linguistic and/or ethnic identities'[10].

[2] Jairath, "Studying Communal Riots in India," 447.
[3] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 11.
[4] Jairath, "Studying Communal Riots in India," 447.
[5] Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 27.
[6] Wilkinson, Votes and Violence, 2.

[7] Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, 23–24.
[8] Engineer, Communal Riots in Post-Independence India, chap. 5.
[9] Varshney, "Postmodernism, Civic Engagement, and Ethnic Conflict."

3 Locating Communalism and Religious Nationalism

This section looks at various versions of nationalism from its pure conception to one that became more utilitarian in terms of keeping religious peace, to later forms where religious nationalism took somewhat aggressive forms and was equated with communalism. The reading of history to create a religious and therefore communal nationalism, which places Islam or Pakistan as the 'other' has been the subject of study of modern era scholars like Engineer and Ananth. A few scholars disagree on the equivalence between religious nationalism and communalism, though a large number speak of how they are deeply intertwined. The labelling of religious nationalism as communalism by secular nationalists is relevant for this discussion. As is the fact that the Hindu religious identity went through significant transitions in history to arrive at a place where for large numbers, Islam became the 'other' and the enemy. Scholars deliberating on the origin of communalism place it mostly in one of three segments: the nationalism of the early twentieth century; British policies; or in Indian tradition.

Some scholars like Nandy believe that religious nationalism and communalism are two sides of the same coin, while others argue that communalism needs to be seen from a wider lens. Some scholars propose that Secularism and communalism arose together inside the institutions of modernity, and further that the Indian national identity was formed in response to the British identity, and it carried an 'ethnic flavor but its precise cultural characteristics were unspecified'[11]. Fox, for instance, places the responsibility beyond modernization and also looks at the economic changes in society and the role of the bureaucracy in these changing times.

Pure Nationalism

In the 1920s, Indian nationalism that emerged stood above different religious communities and took the individual citizen as its unit. This 'pure' nationalism was in theory unsullied by caste, religion etc. Pandey contends that this form of nationalism owes its origin to the British policy of divide and rule. It was indeed conceptualized in opposition to the notion of communalism. Communalism and nationalism were therefore part of the 'same discourse' to Pandey. There were at this time, thinkers like Lajpat Rai who emphasized the distinction between the essentials of religion and the non-essentials, which ought to be discarded in the interest of a larger unity[12].

Nationalism that Subsumed Religion

The nationalists of the Gandhian era in the 1930s and 1940s envisaged their ideal political world as a new national community and recognized the need to subsume the religious and other pre-existing communities in favor of the former. This could not however be achieved by a mere exclusion of communalism from the current political questions. The nationalists, Pandey says were not able to decide whether communalism was artificial or organic, which is why they spoke of it as backward and primitive. In addition, secular nationalists misjudged the stratified character of religious discourse. He notes that however crucial the larger problems of the day were, 'an unknown factor, however, creeps in when God and the Koran are used for election purposes'[13].

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[10] Ludden, Making India Hindu, 12.
[11] Ludden, 13.
[12] Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, 236.
[13] Pandey, 254–55.

Aggressive Religious Nationalism

This form of Hindu nationalism as a concept is grounded in a communal interpretation of history by locating nationalism in the Aryan kingdoms which were established and sustained on the Vedic traditions. The reinterpretation of history to distinguish between Muslim and Hindu rulers as the invaders and defenders respectively is what marks the Golwalkar-Hedgewar[14] tradition, popularized by Savarkar[15] in the Indian political discourse as 'Hindutva'. The thrust of their ideological position is that Indian nationalism must look back for its roots in the ancient empires and the dynasties that fought against the Mughal rule were the earliest nationalists[16]. This version of nationalism was 'located and constructed on the basis of a perpetual conflict with Islam and Pakistan'[17].

Engineer argues against this Hindu nationalist view that alleges that Muslim rulers were primarily spreading Islam. The political rivalry between rulers belonging to the two different communities, he says is misinterpreted as a conflict between Hindus and Muslims. It is more an 'attempt to project the present conflict into the past, to draw legitimacy from history. History should be read in the light of the motives of its own actors' he says[18].

This conflict had a seed also in the demand for Muslim communal representation as early as 1906, when the All India Muslim League was established. The League was preoccupied with preserving the integrity of the Muslim community. The Islamic image of organization of society was seen as fundamentally opposed to the democratic framework India was seeking under the British rule. The Muslim view on political institutions was that they need to be embedded in the 'communal make-up of society'[19]. In the 1940s, while trying to arrive at a constitutional settlement, the conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League began to deepen. The Congress was in favor of Majority rule for political representation, and the League was focused on the rigid ideological divide between Muslims and Non-Muslims and saw numerical configurations as irrelevant[20]. Individual representation demanded by the new politics was seen as a threat to the Muslim minority as it did not fit with the Islamic conception of the 'relationship between the individual and his communal group; the nature of political consensus and the organization of power in society'[21] and thus posed a danger to their cohesion as Muslims. This took the form of Muslim separatism, which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan, even as it left deep scars in the psyche of the Muslims that stayed behind, and in reaction of the Non-Muslims as well. '

Communalism and How it Confounds with Religious Nationalism

The reason that 'communalism' got so much attention, according to Pandey, is because the nationalists of the 1920s and 1930s were struggling to overthrow the colonial regime and communalism appeared as a potent political threat to their cause of nationalism. Reflecting a similar vein, Mukhia says, 'Conceptually, nationalism and communalism in India had much in common with each other even if historically they were each other's negation'[22]. Pandey believed, exposing communalism and pointing to its opportunism and illegitimacy were their tools to counter it[23].

To Kakar, communalism was a specifically Indian concept that signified a strong identification with a community of believers. It not only had religious affiliation but also social, political and

[14] Hegdewar was the founding sarsanghchalak (supreme leader) of the RSS, Golwalkar was the second sarsanghchalak.
[15] Savarkar was the President of the Hindu Mahsabha (Hindu Grand Assembly) political party, and one of the best-known leaders of the Hindu nationalist thought. He opposed the quit India movement.
[16] Ananth, "The Political Economy of Communalism," 50–51.
[17] Ananth, 62.
[18] Engineer, Lifting the Veil, 313.
[19] Shaikh, "Muslims and Political Representation in Colonial India," 543.
[20] Shaikh, 539.
[21] Shaikh, 540.
[22] Mukhia, "Communalism and the Writing of Medieval Indian History," 60, 63.
[23] Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, 9.

economic interests in common which conflicted with the corresponding interests of another community of believers – the enemy who shares the same geographic space[24]. Religion itself is seen as having different functions and interpretations. Nandy splits South Asian religions into two categories in the modern times, religion as a faith and religion as an ideology. Khan and Sen also make this distinction[25]. The former has nothing to do with communal conflicts. The latter, however, is a 'sub-national, national or cross-national identifier of populations contesting or protesting in non-religious ways, usually for political or economic interests'[26].

Fox observes that communalism in India clearly depends of religion as an ideology, whereas religion in the West is, for the most part, a matter of faith, and entertains the possibility that both categories of religions could have grown out of modernity[27]. He agrees with Nandy in that communalism is an outcome of weakness not strength, but he builds further to say that it is 'bound to come out sooner or later whenever modernity has disenchanted the world'[28]. Fox however disagrees with communalism in India being the outcome of modernity and argues that the concept originates in the history of Indian tradition, in the manipulative colonial interest of 'divide and rule', a hybrid of loyalties to caste and sect which when manipulated by the British took the form of communalism[29].

Even as Nandy blames the modernization project for the rise of communalism in India, Fox says communalism is the 'hyperenchantment of religion'[30]. He attributes the violence and hatred that communalism in India fosters, to a modern situation of the 'failure of India's bureaucratic rationality, of its capitalist productivity and of its secular progress to overcome the hyperenchantment that they also create'. Veer agrees with Fox in that it is unwise to try to understand religious nationalism as a flawed and hybrid modernity. He proposes for it to be understood as a product of a particular history of at least one century, in India's case of Western colonial domination such that what is regarded as religion in India might be quite different from what modern Christians regard it to be[31].

Veer looks at the difference between nationalism and communalism through their respective imagining of the content and practical implications of 'common ethnic culture' and 'common religion'. He sees them more as moderate and radical tendencies within nationalism. He offers that communalism is a form of nationalism, where a common religion is the basis of group identity[32].

Pandey discusses 'communalism' as an orientalist term coined to describe the 'otherness of politics' in the East but is now employed by secular nationalists to indicate the illegitimacy of religious nationalism. Secular nationalists often brand religious nationalism as communalism, as a political insult[33]. Sarkar does not agree with communalism being a mere labelling exercise that secular nationalists took over from colonial knowledge and used pejoratively to brand community identities. He looks for the genealogy of Hindu communalism through two historical transitions, first from a relatively inchoate Hindu world to the later 19th century construction of ideologies of unified Hinduism, in the context of colonial structures. Secondly, in the mid 1920s a move to towards aggressive Hindutva postulated usually upon an enemy image of a similarly conceived Islam[34].

[24] Kakar, "The Time of Kali," 878.
[25] "Cultural Mechanics of Fundamentalism: Religion as Ideology, Divided Identities and Violence in Post-Gandhi India - Ragini Sen, Wolfgang Wagner, 2009," 318–19.
[26] Nandy, Ashis Bhargava, Secularism and Its Critics, chaps. 10, 'The Politics of Secularism and Recovery of Religious Toleration' p 322.
[27] Fox, Richard.G Ludden, Making India Hindu, chap. 10 p 238.
[28] Fox, Richard G. Ludden, chap. 10 p 237.
[29] Fox, Richard G. Ludden, 236.
[30] Fox, Richard G. Ludden, chap. 10 p 239.
[31] Veer, van der Peter Ludden, chap. 11 p 257.
[32] Veer, Religious Nationalism.
[33] Veer, 22.
[34] Sarkar, Sumit; Ludden, Making India Hindu, chap. 12 p 272-3.

Communalism and nationalism are alive, growing and taking new forms in present day India. They are visible in everyday life and electoral politics more sharply since the election of a Hindu nationalist party in national government. Any attempt at peaceful resolution of the conflict will need to deconstruct and engage with the heightened nationalism and communalism in the present times. Alongside the globalization and economic integration with the world that the Indian economy has seen since the 1990s, we witness in these modern times, the 'hyperenchatment with religion' that Fox terms as communalism. This need to hold on to a cultural and religious idea and to defend it vociferously fits with the increasing polarization in many parts of the world. It is critical to recognize the nuance that religious identities provide to individuals and communities. The ensuing two sections delve deeper into factors that have sharpened religious identities first from a political and historic perspective and then from also from a social-psychological lens.

4 Sharpening of Religious Identities

This section contains two sub-sections which discuss factors that have contributed to sharpening of religious identities. The first is the impact of the British rule through its policies and practices. The second covers some key communal ideas and practices that have led to the formation of in and out groups, which could then make the case for communalism and violence. These ideas include Hindu revivalist thought, Muslim need for a unique identity, and how this was used by political parties to shape narratives, and eventually focuses on the role of the state and media on interpreting and presenting the conflict in a way that deepened consciousness around social identities further.

4.1 The Impact of British Colonialism

This section looks at policy measures, institutional practices and the building of narratives portraying the "other" in negative light, and the idea of 'superior' status of the - religious group one belongs to. It also deals with the types of responses of Indians, and of the elites specifically to the British rule. Scholars have varying views about the extent to which the British rule is responsible for the sharpening of identities. Some like Veer say that while the British influence was important and significant, yet the 'agency' of the Indians in making choices on shaping religious identities must be acknowledged. Both essentialists and constructivists tend to agree that the 'sharpening' of identities took place as a result of British practices and continued thereafter.

British colonial historians inherited an 'ambivalent' framework on the communal question from medieval times, when history was ruler centric and had both secular and dogmatic versions. It was the most significant mark of British historians to remove this ambivalence and to make a linear communal study of India's past the dominant and almost exclusive trend. James Mill's periodization of Indian history into Hindu, Muslim and British periods corresponding to the ancient, medieval and modern became thereafter universally accepted. Whether in the more broad-based nationalist politics as represented by the Congress or the narrower sectarian politics represented by the Muslim League, a communal interpretation of units of social analysis and political agitation were all too evident[35].

The British mission shaped the history of the region and psychology of its communities. Nandy explains the first of two responses to the British chauvinism as 'salvation in aggressive

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[35] Mukhia, "Communalism and the Writing of Medieval Indian History," 60, 63.

modernization', which survives as the primary source of the present-day liberalism and radicalism, proudly modern and largely dismissive of most things native. The second response was in an 'odd form of reactive Westernization which wore the garb of cultural nationalism' and lives today as the project on Hindu nationalism and revivalism, proudly and aggressively Hindu. The growing middle classes in India had a choice between these two models of social change and collective identities[36].

Veer and Brass take an essentialist approach and agree that the cleavages between Hindu and Muslim communities predate the colonial intervention. Yet Veer points to the formal counting of people by religions and caste as a process that gave these communities the idea of representation along the lines of their communities. The census was instrumental in establishing a Hindu majority and Muslim minority first as demographic facts and then as political categories. Other scholars, Kaviraj (1997) and Nandy (2000) have also attributed to the classificatory practice of the census, the creation of sharp divisions between these communities. Pai et al agree with the census and missionary activities of the British as creating sharp divisions, and also speak of the role of the Hindu middle class in making religious categories politically salient in new ways in the colonial times[37]. This political construct was built on creating separate indigenous laws and customs applicable to Hindus and Muslims[38].

Brass has focused on the role played by particular elite groups as being important. In addition to the influence of colonial policies, he talks about the balance between the rates of social mobilization and assimilation between different communities, the setting up of political organizations for promoting group identities and interests as important factors[39]. Likewise, Pandey acknowledges that religious communities began to be defined more sharply during the colonial period, making communalism largely a colonial construct in north India. He further stresses on the "false totalities" of religious communities of 'Hindu', 'Muslim', and 'Sikh', which ignored existing internal differentiation within these communities[40]. Engineer dates the first systematic division between Hindu and Muslim elites to the late 19th century question on linguistic identity, when Persian was being replaced by English in higher courts and Urdu in lower courts. Large sections of society demanded Hindi instead of Urdu. This was beyond a question of linguistic and cultural identity and also one of livelihood and saw Muslims elites supporting Urdu and Hindus supporting English[41].

Veer contradicts this and states that the maximizing behavior of elites, essentialized value systems or the hegemonic project of the colonial state are not enough to understanding the formation of religious identities. He cautions against acceding too much importance to colonialism in shaping Indian society and simplifying the interplay between Western and Indian discourses. He argues that religious institutions are in a constant process of transformation and while there is politicization, there is also relative autonomy of the historical transformation of religious institutions. 'Religious identities are produced in religious configurations which are affected by the state but cannot be reduced to it'[42].

Historically speaking the period of British domination has coincided with several reforms, including on aspects of religion. It is true also that religious identities are in constant transformation, and the stance and policies of the British is one significant set of factors. There is no doubt that

[36] Nandy, Time Warps, 18.
[37] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 12.
[38] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 19.
[39] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 13.
[40] Pai and Kumar, 12–13.
[41] Engineer, "Remaking Indian Muslim Identity," 1036–38.
[42] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 30.

the British regime in India brought about greater homogenization of religious communities into somewhat neat identities of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh etc, superseding other identities of caste and subcommunity that were often more important. This phenomenon will find mention in the course of our discussion about the creation of ingroups and outgroups.

4.2 Consolidation of In-Group and Out-Groups[43]

This section engages with the notion of how different communities began to coalesce in the latter half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century due to developments that promoted communal ideas. These developments that led to the creation of the 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' are examined through three strands, first Hindu Revivalism; the second, which is derived from and is a continuation of the first, the shaping of religious identities through political symbolism and narratives; and third, being the role of the state, independent media and others in interpreting and labelling violence as communal.

4.2.1 Hindu Revivalism

Through the idea of a glorious ancient Hindu culture, Hindu revivalism offers a sense of pride to Hindus, and this shared sense of glory has been an effective tool to build a community. Even as revivalist ideas came to bring glory to ancient Hindu culture, which would have created an in-group, it also overtly created the image of the Muslim as the 'other'. Scholars have viewed revivalism through the lens of trying to reform Hinduism against its inherent weaknesses, and this translated eventually into a common theme of pride in the ancient Hindu culture, which most post-independence political formations followed. This took two forms, a softer version of Hindu pride followed by the nationalist movement of the Congress and a militant form of Hinduism advocated by organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha.

Veer discusses that the recurring theme in nineteenth century Hindu reform as that of Hindu weakness which is derived from the discourse on 'foreign-rule'. The two sources of weakness to defend Hindu society against were 'external' caused by conversions to foreign religion and 'internal' caused by differences and conflicts amongst Hindus. As early as the 1860s Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Hindu revivalist organization the Arya Samaj, drew on Max Mueller's translation of the Vedas to articulate the idea that the Hindus were clearly the descendants of the Aryas who themselves were a primordial people[44]. Pandey says that the Arya Samaj asserted unmatched scientific temper and achievements in ancient Hindu civilization and that its appeal was highest to groups of western-educated Hindu Indians[45].

Swami Vivekananda, a social reformer critiqued the oppression of the caste system in Hinduism and also referred to the threat to Hinduism from Christianity and Islam[46]. In 1899 Swami Vivekananda said that Hindus need to focus on their 'physical weakness which was responsible for one-third of their problems'. This fear of emasculation has manifest itself into an aversion for Muslim males who were seen as endowed with greater physical strength. This idea found greater expression in 1909, when U.N. Mukherjee wrote, 'Hindus – a Dying Race', which spoke about the imminent demise of a once dominant Hindu race. He spoke of emulating Mohammedans due

[43] Robinson and Tajfel, "Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel."
[44] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 64–65.
[45] Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, 207.
[46] Ludden, Making India Hindu, 250–58.

to their religious revival and systematic moral training[47]. These writings were deeply influential in the Hindu-right's version of the threat to Hindus and hence the need to bond together as a community. In addition, the writings of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee have given a definite shape to the Hindu ideology through glorification of ancient Hindu culture[48].

Pai contends that the political competition leading to reformulation of Hinduism from a segmented to single community, and the socio-religious reform movements in the nineteenth century were responsible for consolidation of Hindus[49]. She explains that Hindu revivalism was more possible due to the emergence of a mercantile culture in the early nineteenth century along with the rapid expansion of the railways and communication networks and the growth of the press and vernacular newspapers. Prominent members of the Arya Samaj, who owned many of the important publishing houses and newspapers published in UP in the early twentieth century, carried out a massive campaign against Muslims and Islam in print[50].

Zoya Hasan recounts that the glory of India's past formed a constant refrain in the argument of the nationalists to mobilize support for democracy and freedom. This then, provided an impetus to revivalist thinking and ideology which led to compromises with and defense of the existing social system. In different ways and times, Tilak and Gandhi represented these tendencies in the national movement and harnessed revivalist energies to promote the Congress cause[51].

4.2.2 Resurgence of Communal Identities 1980s Onwards

This section focuses mostly on the period after the 1980s. Resurgence of communal identities, particularly Hindu communalism was accompanied by major riots in the late 1980s and 1990s. One position is that Hindu nationalism was gaining ground because it could draw upon historical and cultural 'reserves from the past of religious nationalism, and another was that the revival of 'Hindutva' was due to successful political strategies. This section concludes by discussing the use of social identities, and efforts to strengthen distinctions that have been at play as part of the politics of the day.

Veer takes the first view and shows how Indian religious identities have been shaped by pilgrimage, migration, language development, and more recently, print and visual media. His central focus is the long-standing dispute over the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. He describes the historical construction of religious identities: cow protection societies, purdah and the political appropriation of images of the female body among other things as means of building the Hindu religious identity. Jafferlot takes the second view and argues that revival of 'Hindutva' in the 1980s was possible due to years of systematic, well–organized, and imaginative political strategies. Veer speaks of the importance of religious organization, as against the political organization at the heart of Jafferlot's argument, and the role of ritual in the formation of nationalism. Pai points to a view explaining the deeper purpose behind 'political strategies' for revival, which is the Hindu nationalists' desire to transform Indian culture such that it can claim to be a superior ancient Hindu civilization. This view proposed by Thomas Blom Hansen required a disciplined national culture rooted in this ancient civilization[52].

As electoral politics started to become a numbers game, the politics of reproduction and conversion surfaced in helping mobilize Hindus. 'The growth of the Muslim population became

[47] Baber, "'Race', Religion and Riots," 705–7.
[48] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 8.
[49] Pai and Kumar, 8.
[50] Pai and Kumar, 12.
[51] Hasan, "Communalism and Communal Violence in India," 27–28.
[52] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 8–9.

one of the most vexing political issues in the new India' Veer contends[53]. The fertility rate of Muslims being higher than of Hindus helped create a link between religion and sexuality. Anand speaks of the Muslim being seen as a predatory sexual figure that threatens Hindu bodies[54].

4.2.3 Increasing Consciousness of Social Identities

Veer speaks of how the Hinduization project was extended to the Dalits and tribals. Using the issues of reproduction and conversion, the feeling of being besieged was created among Hindus who could only be a 'majority' as long as these disenfranchised groups do not openly declare themselves to be outside that majority. He believes that this social reform effort was done not only by the RSS and VHP, but also by Gandhi through attempts to uplift these sections[55]. The demonstrations by Hindus against Mandal commission recommendations to provide reservations to OBC for similar reasons posed a threat to the Hindu agenda of the BJP/VHP/RSS[56]. In their construction of the Muslim as the 'other', and a 'dangerous foreign element', the trauma of the partition, poor relations with Pakistan, and the growth of Muslim labour migration to the Middle-East and remittances being sent back by them were important markers[57].

Anand's ethnographic study of culture, insecurity, gender, identity and violence intersect in Hindu nationalism's reactionary and right-wing politics of fear and imagination, as he locates Hindutva as a 'schizophrenic nationalism'[58]. He asserts that Hindu nationalism normalizes a politics of fear and hatred by representing it as a defensive reaction to the threats supposedly posed by Muslims to the security of the individual Hindus as well as of the Hindu collective.

Engineer talks of a greater sense of solidarity amongst Muslims who were otherwise highly stratified as a community, with increasing episodes of communal violence in the post-independence period. Riots in Ahmedabad (1960), Jabalpur (1961), Ahmedabad (1969) along with many other smaller ones, were all instrumental in this consolidation around the Muslim identity. The Moradabad riot of 1980 was attributed to Arab money flowing to Muslims in India[59]. This 'Arab factor' became a liability for the Muslim in India. It benefited a few by way of business contracts or funds to make madrasas and other religious centers and marked the entire community as partaking of resources from the Gulf, and therefore positioned them as a threat to Hindus. The sharpening of religious identity in the Muslim community indeed was one of the reasons the movement for reform in Muslim personal law was weakened considerably, Engineer says[60]. It is important however to also note that there was a larger, more global context for the Indian Muslim reasserting her identity. The movement of Islamic reassertion throughout the Islamic world drew strength from the humiliating defeat of Egypt and Syria at the hands of Israel in 1967. The breaking up of East and West Pakistan along more cultural and linguistic lines, which was seen as the failure of Islamic solidarity came as a jolt to Muslims, further strengthening their need to be cohesive as a community[61].

Political leaders exploit social contradictions and do not blame the system for its failure to achieve goals of development. Pai offers that in raising the issue of backwardness and relative deprivation repeatedly, they create a sense of insecurity in the minds of the members of a community,

[53] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 27.
[54] Anand, Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear, 1.
[55] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 28.
[56] Veer, 5.
[57] Veer, 10.
[58] Anand, Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear, 1.
[59] Engineer, "Remaking Indian Muslim Identity," 1036–38.
[60] Engineer, 1037.
[61] Engineer, 1036–38.

which strengthens their identity as a group, not as individuals. The processes of urbanization, industrialization, and migration contribute further by making social groups conscious of their class and communal identities. She sees this alliance between religion and politics in a community as leading to communalism[62].

4.2.4 Interpretation and Labelling of Tensions and Violence

The labeling of violence and creation of interpretative narratives are done by various actors including the state, political parties and militant religious groups, transmitted in large part through media from the colonial to more recent times. This section discusses the political interpretative process of violence and of labelling it, aided of course by the independent media in creating a sense of 'us versus them' by promoting a Hindu majoritarian view. The section ends with the phenomenon of victim shaming and justifying action against them by viewing oneself as worthy and the other as unworthy.

Pai refers to the colonial construction of the 'Indian past as chaotic and full of communal tension while projecting the colonial state as the upholder of law and order', and points to increased communalization due to their labelling breakdowns of law and order as 'Hindu–Muslim riots'[63]. Gyanendra Pandey criticizes the orientalist notion which portrays India as a society of two mutually hostile religious groups. He cites several examples of colonial writings on communal violence to show how they have reduced any violent event into 'communal' riots. He says that the hostile nature of caste, class and gender relations are hardly investigated in the empirical analysis of what is generally perceived as communal violence[64]. It is an error to classify some of these violent clashes as riots between religious groups, ignoring the role of the state in creating such conflicts.

Scholars studying Hindu-Muslim violence in India have stated that the state camouflages rationally motivated acts of violence against minority groups as spontaneous outbursts of emotions, anger, thus legitimizing their political expression[65]. Brass goes further and implicates everyone in the perpetuation of systems of violence. He examines incidents of collective violence arising initially out of common occurrences such as a drunken brawl, the rape of a girl, and the theft of an idol, and concludes that 'incessant talk about violence and its implications in these circumstances contributes to its persistence rather than its reduction. Such treatment serves in fact to mask the causes of violence, displace the victims from the center of attention, and divert society's gaze from those responsible for its endemic character'[66].

Kapur expresses the Gujarat riots of 2002 as having been 'produced as a result of the successful discursive battle waged by the Hindu Right, partly in and through law'[67]. She shows how the Hindu Right has successfully articulated its political agenda within the language of secularism and equality, even as its vision undermines much of the prevailing understanding of these concepts[68]. Veer speaks of an untouchable community converting to Islam in 1981, due to humiliation, not poverty. This was presented in the press as conversions induced by 'oil money' from the Gulf, and a threat to the 'Indian unity'. The union government and its then leader Indira Gandhi issued statements against this conspiracy. Through several such instances, the views of Hindus were

[62] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 10–11.
[63] Pai and Kumar, 12.
[64] Punathil, Interrogating Communalism, 4.
[65] Dhattiwala, Keeping the Peace, 31.
[66] Brass, Theft of an Idol.
[67] Kapur, "Normalizing Violence," 925.
[68] Kapur, 920.
[69] Ananth, "The Political Economy of Communalism," 49.

shaped to mobilize them as one community and to generate negative stereotypes of Islam and Muslims to legitimize violence against actual Muslims living in India[69].

Malini Parthasarathy discusses the role of the independent media in promoting Hindu majoritarianism in more recent years. She refers to 'the repeated peddling of the worst kind of ethnic stereotypes of Christians and Muslims, of the former as rabid evangelists out to "convert" Hindus, of the latter as "fundamentalist terrorists" provided incendiary political justification and the implicit legitimization of hate crimes such as what happened with the Australian missionary Graham Staines, burnt to death in Orissa and the Gujarat pogroms against Muslims. For instance, the writings of columnists like Arun Shourie and Gurumurthy, both regarded as influential voices with the Indian middle classes, appeared to provide a strange kind of moral sanction for these dark episodes'[70]. Veer speaks of the televised series Ramayana as having greatly enhanced the public knowledge of Ayodhya as Rama's birthplace and significant contributor to the coalescing of the Hindu identity, at a large scale across the country[71].

Pandey contends that our current neo-liberal regime is not a developmental state in that it has reverted to a colonial conception of productive citizens and unworthy citizens who lack resources, education and initiative. He compares the Western worldview which looks at itself as fundamentally differently and not even worthy of comparison with most parts of the East, with the 'us' and 'them' distinctions created in India between Hindus and Muslims. He shows that the narratives of normalizing violence from Gujarat, post 2002, and making the victims appear to deserve the treatment they received.

This section has richly discussed symbols, incidents and markers of identities that enabled consolidation of ingroups and outgroups. This provides a segue into the next section which examines literature on the social-psychological impact of these events and actions.

5 Socio-Psychosocial Perspectives on Communal Conflict

In continuation of the previous section, this section considers psychosocial elements of violence and polarization and how they feed into the creation of in groups and out groups as part of sharpening of religious identities. Religions are not uniform and homogeneous constructs. Both Hinduism and Islam comprise a number of sub-communities/castes/sects. There are further language and regional markers that are strong identifications, not overlapping strictly with religion. Forces of modernization and secularization post-independence have generated a push towards greater homogenization. Research in social-psychology highlights this homogenization accompanies a sense of loss of identity, amongst other things. This phenomenon, when seen alongside how other psychological threats and violent episodes threaten one's cultural identity are seen as highly potent in sharpening religious identities.

This section examines various lenses through which psychologists have examined the Hindu-Muslim conflict. We first discuss how the two religions themselves offer somewhat different self-identities to individuals. The second theme is how threats and anxieties influence social identities, and the role of rumors, myths and symbols in creating ingroups. The third theme we

[70] Nussbaum et al., Pluralism and Democracy in India, chap. 5.
[71] Veer, Religious Nationalism, 8.

engage with how relative social status influences social identities, prejudices and intergroup relations.

The existing body of psychological theory and research addressing Hindu–Muslim relations shows a *'fundamentally fragmented and limited literature'*[72]. Khan and Sen also lament that psychologists across the disciplinary spectrum have failed to adequately place mainstream theories and methodologies within the contextual complexity of Hindu–Muslim relations[73].

Psychological studies have considered the hypothesis of essentialist differences as the source of the Hindu-Muslim conflict. In the earliest psychological enquiry into Hindu Muslim relations in India, K. M. Panikkar in 1927 disproved essentialist differences. He proposed that the increase in tensions between the two religious communities was a direct result of political rivalry and the 'distrust of motives in the process of democratization in India'[74]. While the Hindu community believed that every Muslim worked secretly for the establishment of Muslim power in India, there was a conviction among the Muslim community that Hindus wanted to expel them from India[75].

5.1 Self-identification in Hinduism and Islam

Religion is seen as central to the 'meaning-making function of human life'[76]. Kakar contends that if what religion makes meaningful is under attack, it will cause deep disturbance. Religion invokes strong emotions also because it incorporates some of our noblest sentiments and aspirations, and a threat to these beliefs denudes people's self-esteem[77].

Researchers have distinguished between the individual self-identification that Hinduism and Islam are seen to propagate, as a core difference. Kakar and Majeed and Ghosh discuss that the Hindu tradition emphasizes the self, rooted in one's proximate community, the gotra or the caste, whereas the Islamic tradition stresses self-identity as nested in a much larger group membership[78,79], the brotherhood of believers. Kakar emphasizes that a Hindu's self-identification occurs only when he talks of the Muslim; otherwise the conversation is in terms of castes. The Muslim's awareness of his religious group identity, as a member of a community of believers, does not need the presence of a Hindu, however. Yet, there is no difference between Hindus and Muslims in the pervasiveness and strength of their communal identities[80].

Kakar further speaks of how episodes of violence bring the question of an individual's identification with her/his religious on the surface of their consciousness. This awareness may last for different periods of time for different persons but is 'always accompanied by a pre-conscious self-interrogation on the significance of the religious community for one's sense of identity and the intensity of emotion with which this community is invested'. He points to the revivalist and fundamentalist political groupings in encouraging switches between one's religious identity as against other groups such as caste, language, region etc..[81]

As Hindus and Muslims begin to see each other as stereotypes perceiving each other in terms of categorical characteristics rather than their personal, individually diverse natures, the

[72] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 48.
[73] Khan and Sen, 48.
[74] Khan and Sen, 49.
[75] Khan and Sen, 49.
[76] Kakar, "Religious Conflict in the Modern World," 454.
[77] Kakar, 454.
[78] Majeed and Ghosh, "A Study of Social Identity in Three Ethnic Groups in India," 455–64.
[79] Kakar, "The Time of Kali," 877–99.
[80] Kakar, 885.
[81] Kakar, 897–98.
[82] Kakar, 885.
[83] Kakar, 886.

homogenization and depersonalization that follows is inevitable[82]. In both communities, the communal identities tend to be less salient for women than men, a difference Kakar believes is rooted in their developmental histories[83].

5.2 Relative Status and Social Identity and Intergroup Relations

This section discusses the influence of social status on ingroup formation, prejudice and intergroup dynamics. The social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests in-group members are motivated to maintain biases toward an out-group so they may enhance a positive social identity. Bohra supports the social identity theory as he examines the perceptions of Hindus and Muslims toward one another and argues that people from different strata of society follow different patterns of ethnocentrism. Only the upper caste Brahmins follow Allport's contact theory (which predicts that we all define ingroup on the basis of narrow criterion), they express ethnocentric feelings based more on their caste than religion. He observes, in line with Paranjpe's theory (which predicts that position of a group within the societal framework determines the criterion for defining ingroup) that people from the lower social continuum do not make a significant distinction between caste and religion[84].

Tripathi and Srivastava write about relative deprivation and intergroup attitudes. Muslim participants with higher relative deprivation displayed more ethnocentric attitudes towards Hindus. They also observed the presence of strong ingroup identification in even in low relative deprivation Muslims. They explained this using the traumatic events of the partition and communal riots which have put Muslims in a 'perpetual state of conflict' with Hindus and have helped consolidate their ingroup boundaries[85]. Adding an age dimension to ingroup formation, Singh (1985) and Mishra and Bano (2003) contend that by the age of 8 to 9 years, religious identities are crystalized across children of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian families. By this age, ethnocentrism and clear ingroup bias are well established[86].

Majeed and Ghosh examined social identity from three frames of reference, self, own group and out groups in three ethnic groups – upper caste Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes. Ghosh shows that the outgroup perception is differentially determined by the relative status position of the groups in question. Both the minority groups, Muslim and Scheduled Caste do not significantly differ in their perception of the dominant High Caste Hindu, which was evaluated favorably. The High Caste, however, showed significantly lower evaluation for both the minority groups as compared to minority groups themselves in their reciprocal evaluation relations[87].

5.3 Threats and Social Identities

This section discusses how psychological threats and anxieties help shape social identities. We discuss different kinds of threats and anxieties and their influence on group dynamics or propensity for violence. Formation of social identities is a complex and continuous process with people often holding multiple identities at a given time. Tripathi 2005 shows social identities emerge and fade on the basis of a social context, and most often situations are attributed meanings which are based on one's lived experiences[88]. He uses the historical context of the

[84] Bohra, "Social Perception of Ingroup and Outgroup Members in India," 108, 9–12.
[85] Tripathi and Srivastava, "Relative Deprivation and Intergroup Attitudes," 11, 313–18.
[86] Tripathi, Ghosh, and Kumar, "The Hindu-Muslim Divide," 262.
[87] Majeed and Ghosh, "A Study of Social Identity in Three Ethnic Groups in India," 455–62.
[88] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 52.
[89] Khan and Sen, 52.

Ram temple issue at Ayodhya to demonstrate how past memories are selectively employed for the dual purpose of constructing as well as maintaining social identities[89].

Anxieties and perceived threats often push people to prioritize some identities over others. Ones that are shared with a larger number of persons tend to be prioritized. Under the influence of threats, people's ability to trust the other side erodes and that leads to a greater need to be part of an ingroup. Two categories of threats can be delineated – those generated by structural forces such as globalization, democratization and the economic and political changes they bring in their wake. The others are more direct, and produced often by deliberate social action and narratives, such as threats of sexual violence and persecution.

In discussing the identity threat that is posed by the forces of modernization and globalization, Kakar describes feelings of loss and helplessness that for instance accompany dislocations and migration from rural areas to the shanty towns of urban areas. These, he says are compounded by the disappearance of craft skills that underlay traditional work identities. These changes contribute to making 'ancestral cultural ideals and values outmoded and irrelevant' and intensify the group aspects of identity. Affected people tend look to cultural and religious groups to combat their feelings of helplessness and loss[90].

Tausch, Hewstone and Roy examine the role of cross-community contact as a predictor of prejudice. They deploy Realistic Threats[91], Symbolic Threats[92] and Intergroup Anxieties[93] for their analysis. They and found no overall effect of contact quantity on realistic threats, suggesting that contact may be less effective in changing perceptions of economic and political threat posed by the outgroup[94]. The authors show that relative (social) status predicted realistic threat for Muslims, but not for Hindus, and its direct effect of status on ingroup bias was also only significant for Muslims. The status gap was seen as highly relevant and predictive of threat and prejudice for Muslims, but irrelevant for Hindus whose dominant position is secure. They found that while intergroup anxiety was equally predictive for Hindus and Muslims, symbolic threats predicted prejudice for Hindu respondents and realistic threats predicted prejudice among Muslim respondents[95].

Hassan and Khalique (1981) studied religiosity and its correlates. They found Muslim participants to be more religious than the Hindu participants. Religiosity was correlated positively with anxiety, authoritarianism, intolerance for ambiguity and rigidity among both groups. The higher levels of religiosity found among the Muslim participants attributed the Muslim community's minority status and subjective feelings of insecurity and anxiety created by frequent communal riots[96].

Anxieties tend to challenge trust between people and communities. Amongst methods to generate these anxieties, rumors, myths, cultural and religious symbols are significant. Kakar discusses that mistrust in the world creates internal conflict within a person. He argues that once the communal identity takes over, 'persecution anxiety' and 'propensity for violence' take hold of a person. 'Once the ability to trust recedes, all that is alien inside and outside comes together through projection. This is projection, he believes is not an idiosyncratic, individual process but directed by the group. Especially demagogues who take the lead in creating an 'old enemy'[97].

90 Kakar, "The Time of Kali," 880.
91 Realistic threats pertain to threats to the welfare of the in-group, including its political and economic power (Tausch et al)
92 Symbolic threats concern group differences in morals, norms and values which threaten the worldview or 'way of life' of the in-group (Tausch et al)
93 Intergroup anxiety constitutes a threat because it refers to the experience of being personally threatened during intergroup interactions (Tausch et al)
94 Nicole Tausch, Hewstone, and Roy, "The Relationships between Contact, Status and Prejudice: An Integrated Threat Theory Analysis of Hindu–Muslim Relations in India," 91.
95 Nicole Tausch, Hewstone, and Roy, 83–94.
96 Hassan and Khalique, "Religiosity and Its Correlates in College Students," 129–36.
97 Kakar, "The Time of Kali," 889–90.
98 Kakar, Culture and Psyche, 2008, 130.
99 Kakar, 125.

The Role of Rumors, Myths and Symbols

Like gossip, rumor involves the feelings of 'curiosity, transient identification, and intimacy'. The listener and provider of gossip or rumor bond with feelings of kinship and intimacy. In strengthening an individual's identity with his or her group, 'rumor helps in releasing the feelings of exaltation connected with the transcendence of individual boundaries'[98]. Kakar believes that 'rumors are the fuel and riots the fire in which a heightened sense of community is also forged'[99].

In the psychoanalytic theory of rumors, Kakar categorizes rumors as statements "that breach the individual's 'background of safety', releasing our paranoid potential and its accompanying persecutory anxiety" particularly when related to sexual violence. Rumors can be used to subvert both individual identity and group identity. A rumor that magnifies a group's specific and historically derived fear in relation to the 'enemy' group can sharpen group identity. In Muslims it is often the fear is of reabsorption in Hindu society, while in Hindus it relates to the threat to the freedom of the country and revival of medieval Muslim suzerainty[100]. Once the Muslim minority is linked with an armed and dangerous enemy, the it becomes a psychological threat that is otherwise not justified by its numbers[101].

Partition - Redefining Social Identities

The partition of India and Pakistan was as a landmark in redefining the relationship between Hindus and Muslims and continues to live in the psyche of people. Adinarayan was amongst the earliest scholars to have conducted a longitudinal study on racial and communal attitudes. He used pre and post partition time period as a reference to compare attitudes of Hindu and Muslim professionals and students towards each other's religious communities. The results showed that both Hindu and Muslim professionals rated the outgroup more positively than students before the partition. Data was collected only among Hindus after the partition and revealed that they rated Muslims more negatively compared to what they had done before the partition[102].

Sen and Wagner (2005) show how symbols used in daily political life are powerful in evoking representations from past events, for example relating to the division of India. They argue that these representations are still strongly affectively charged and lend their mobilizing force to promote interethnic hatred and violence even today, and accordingly are exploited by fundamentalist politicians. Hindu and Muslim representations are similar in their cognitive content but opposed in their affective and motivational charge[103,104].

Hindutva - Sharpening of Social and Religious Identities

The rise of Hindutva has been accompanied by several historical narratives that share responsibility for shaping social identities in India. Khan, Liu and Fischer have investigated the structure and content of the Hindutva ideology and its workings within India's social and political processes[105]. They use ten recurring historical narrative templates. An example of a theme is the idea that 'true' Indians share a bond of common Hindu blood inherited from the ancient Indus civilization. "Outsiders," such as Arabs, Turks and British, who cannot trace their heritage back to the Indus civilization can therefore never consider themselves to be true Indians. A second theme involves the notion that India and Hinduism are indistinguishable. Such thematic narratives were used to develop a range of generalized psychological variables of prejudice. They used the Hindutva

[100] Kakar, 129.
[101] Kakar, Culture and Psyche, 2008, 128.
[102] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 49.
[103] Sen and Wagner, "History, Emotions and Hetero-Referential Representations in Inter-Group Conflict," 2.1-2.23.
[104] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 53.

[105] The project is currently investigating how the relationship between Hindutva and prejudice towards Muslims is aggravated and mitigated by social processes, such as collective remembering, economic competition and intergroup contact. (Khan & Sen, 54)

ideology to predict variance in socio politically dependent variables such as justification of demolition of the Babri mosque, banning of religious conversions of Hindus etc,[106].

Sen and Wagner (2009) analyze the history and more recent evolution of Hindu fundamentalism from India's independence. They show that Hindutva deconstructed the Gandhian ideal of non-violence, re-interpreted cultural symbols to become political signs and prepared the ground for communal violence. These new symbols sought to brand secularists and the religious outgroup, Muslims as enemies. 'As a result of Hindu ethnic dominance, religion shifted from faith into an ideology. They show that such an ideologically charged mindset draws on a distinct religious and ethnic identity, erects strict borders towards other groups and justifies violence against them by their mere otherness'[107].

In a different study, the same authors show that by changing the definition of words and by the introduction of a new representation, Hindu nationalists attempted to change collective thought in an effort to increase their hold on the Indian mindset. A stronger and more militant version of Hinduism sought to replace the non-violent and tolerant Hinduism of Gandhi[108]. Members of both Muslim and Hindu communities had begun to feel that their religious identity had been diluted and that this should be rectified. Thus, social positions and newly emerging social identities had begun to anchor and force themselves upon the cognitive system[109].

It is our hope that many of the concepts discussed here will put in perspective the creation of a sense of 'us' versus 'them' or the 'other' in the following sections.

6 Economic Causes of Communal Conflict

This section starts with a medieval phenomenon of the 'othering' of Muslims due to economic reasons. It then presents arguments showing a connect between economics and the communal conflict as well as one which shows that the economic connection is not a valid cause for violence. These arguments are in two parts, the first being conflicts and sharpening of within-community identities in response to macro-economic trends of growth, rising inequalities and uneven capitalism. As part of this strand, some scholars look at the broad trends of urbanization, industrialization and changes in the labor markets as potential contributors to deepening the social and religious identities of communities. The second set of arguments draw from more micro shifts such as changes in the economic interrelationships between Hindus and Muslims at the local level. Changes in the nature of these economic relationships take the form of tensions, generated through an upheaval of the economic status-quo.

Baber proposes that the consolidation of a sense of the Hindu Self and its Muslim Other was spurred visibly by the local rulers. He gives the example of Andhra in the fourteenth century on their granting land to Brahmins. These grants were done in order to gain legitimacy by 'forcing' a connection with the Kakatiya dynasty, which had collapsed not long ago due to the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate. This transfer of resources helped produce the narrative of perceived injustices of the past, and each such land grant further demonized the Muslims. In these narratives, there is no hint of religious factors as the main motivation behind the constructions of the Self and the Other[110]. He contends that in the constitution of the Muslim as the 'other',

[106] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 54.
[107] Khan and Sen, 53.
[108] Sen and Wagner, "Gandhi, Secularism and Social Capital in Modern India," 111–16.
[109] Khan and Sen, "Where Are We Going?," 53.
[110] Baber, "'Race', Religion and Riots," 704.

material considerations of declining power and privilege rather than religious distinctions and doctrinal differences played a greater role[111].

Shifting focus to more recent times, several scholars have seen the communal issue being fed by the social and economic contradictions in India's evolution, as a result of distorted growth of capitalism. Modern technology coexisting with primitive lifestyles; urban elite removed from religion coexisting with backward socio-religious consciousness, have sharpened the consciousness of rights amongst the backward and minorities. This has led to greater assertion of religious and communal identities. Engineer shows how this context makes religion an instrumental but not causative factor for communal violence[112]. He presents a nuanced position by differentiating between how displacement and loss of privilege impact Uttar Pradesh and Bihar versus Andhra, Kerala and West Bengal. The anti-colonial movement in the former areas drew on the revivalist sentiment and they were more prone to communal conflict[113].

Hasan proposes that economic stagnation has led certain groups to treat each other not only with suspicion and hostility, but also as rivals in the scarce market for jobs, concessions and subsidies. She further contends that 'various forms of tensions, among Hindus and Muslims in particular, have assumed corrosive proportions because the bourgeois political parties have, quite successfully, deflected intra-class and inter-class contradictions into the stream of community and communal consciousness to serve their narrow ends'. Her investigation of some of the major communal riots points to various powerful interests-economic and political, which play an active part in fomenting communal conflict[114]. Likewise, Pai speaks of the 'Fusion of rising cultural aspirations and deep economic anxieties in an economically backward state, where a deepening agrarian crisis, unemployment and inequalities are widespread' as having created a 'fertile ground for a new kind of communalism'[115]. She contends that communalism is more political and economic in nature than social as widely believed. The social aspect is associated largely to mark the boundaries of a group[116].

Unlike other scholars, Bohlken and Sergenti show a negative relationship between economic conditions and ethnic riots. They examine the effect of economic growth on the outbreak of Hindu–Muslim riots in 15 Indian states between 1982 and 1995. They find that just a 1% increase in the growth rate decreases the expected number of riots by over 5%. It is short-term changes in growth that influences the occurrence of riots and the study finds no evidence of a relationship between the levels of wealth in a state and the incidence of riots. Moreover, the negative relationship found between economic growth and riots is driven primarily by the relationship between growth and riots within a state over time rather than across states[117].

Engineer has taken both macro and micro views on the link between economics and the communal conflict. For the former he discusses the nature of Muslim preoccupation with politics which has marginalized them further in the new economic infrastructure and processes of development. The ruling class political compulsions, he says permit concessions to Muslims in a limited sphere such as the preservation of the minority character of the Aligarh Muslim University, but not in the form of granting economic concessions to Muslim weavers in Bihar and UP, which would 'boomerang' on the ruling party, he says[118]. The latter position speaks of the increased prosperity and affluence among Muslims as creating a change in the traditional pattern of economic hegemony. This leads

[111] Baber, 705.
[112] "Bhiwandi-Riots-Analysis-Communal-Riots-in-Post-Independence-India-1.Pdf," 1134–36.
[113] Engineer, Communal Riots in Post-Independence India, 74–75.
[114] Hasan, "Communalism and Communal Violence in India."
[115] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 2.
[116] Pai and Kumar, 9.
[117] Bohlken and Sergenti, "Economic Growth and Ethnic Violence."
[118] Engineer, Communal Riots in Post-Independence India, 75–76.

to a socio-political conflict and also sometimes violence. Engineer observes that the increased prosperity manifests itself thorough greater spending on religious activities and on acquisition of real estate. Greater expression of power through religious activities is prone to being positioned as inflow of external funds to strengthen Muslim fundamentalism[119].

On similar lines, Ahmed also shows an increase in the economic status of Muslims and a change in their traditional social relations with Hindus, who were earlier the traders with Muslim being the artisans. Economic growth enabled these Muslim artisans who became entrepreneurs to get export orders from the Gulf region. This increased affluence was expressed through buying property in non-Muslim localities which then increased their social and cultural visibility. This enhanced visibility led to greater 'communal' tensions[120]. In the larger picture however, Ahmed's take is different from others in that he speaks of communal tensions not as an outcome of the breakdown of the system, but a symptom of greater dynamism resident in economic growth and progress[121].

Gupta refutes Hasan's argument and the idea that competition over scare resources or material interests are a convincing explanation for ethnic violence or that economic growth of a minority community vis-à-vis the Hindus leads to communal conflicts. He observes the sectoral and occupational patterns to show that over 90 percent of Muslims in India work in the informal and unorganized sectors and are underrepresented in organized sector and government jobs. He says they are not big landowners or owner cultivators in Gujarat, and even to the extent they are known as traders, it is because they are 'inoffensive and undemanding'. He contends that the Muslim victims of violence are the very poor and nobody wants their jobs or gains economically by chasing them out of their neighborhoods. He does concede that real estate speculators take advantage of such unrest[122].

Mitra and Ray link group incomes to violence and show that the incomes of antagonistic groups can have opposing effects on the conflict between them. They observe the systematic use of religion as a marker for appropriating economic surplus, either directly through resource grabbing or indirectly through exclusion from jobs, businesses, or property. They also observe the existing intergroup animosity being exacerbated by economic progress within one group. They show that an increase in per capita Muslim expenditures generates a large and significant increase in future religious conflict. An increase in Hindu expenditures has a negative or no effect[123]. Further the violence perpetrated by the group that was relatively poor to start with is negatively related to its increase in average incomes and the violence this group faces has a positive relationship[124]. In conclusion, the authors also refer to a strong political component, which is evidenced by a positive association between BJP's share of Lok Sabha seats in a region and the extent of Hindu-Muslim conflict therein. Importantly, though their analysis has left out Ahmedabad, which has been a focal point of such violence in the last two decades in particular.

In summary, the more micro impact of economic issues on Hindu-Muslim conflict is not evidenced in too many empirical papers or other literature, however the broader set of interrelationships between the increasingly capitalistic society and such conflict is shown more comprehensively. There is also evidence, some of which finds reference in Part II, on how economic interrelationships end up becoming a glue between communities and prevent communal violence as both communities stand to lose, if even one does.

[119] Engineer, chap. 2.
[120] Ahmed, "Political Economy of Communalism in Contemporary India," 905.
[121] Ahmed, 906.
[122] Gupta et al., Elusive Peace, 62–68.
[123] Mitra and Ray, "Implications of an Economic Theory of Conflict," 2014.
[124] Mitra and Ray, "Implications of an Economic Theory of Conflict," August 2014, 721.

7 <u>Electoral Politics and Communal Violence</u>

Even as the narratives that enable communal conflicts discussed in the preceding sections are all political in nature, it is worth our while to examine literature specifically on the interplay between electoral politics and communal violence. The value of violence towards electoral arithmetic has been seen in both immediate and long-term electoral prospects. Scholars have observed the nature of communal violence as having evolved over time and also sometimes seen through the lens of time - episodic, endemic, and also 'everyday communalism' as Sudha Pai and Sajjan Kumar frame it. Scholarly interest in political factors that lead to communal violence have mostly focused on the role of and benefits to political parties. Several scholars acknowledge that communal violence has been seen in different political regimes, not limited to the right-wing. Wilkinson states that the Congress rule is positively related to violence in the Nehruvian period and negatively related to violence only for the 1980s and 1990s, when its role in conflict-managing was greatest[125]. However, given the demographic composition of India, and deeply polarizing and transformative events like the demolition of the Babari Mosque, the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, the focus has stayed on the Hindu right. This section focuses, likewise on the political involvement of the Hindu right in communal violence.

7.1 Cause of Violence - Communal Ideology or Party Politics?

Bipan Chandra (1987) stated that Communal ideology can prevail without violence, but violence cannot exist without communal ideology. Many other scholars on communalism in India such as Asghar Ali Engineer (1983, 1992, 1997), A.G. Noorani (2003, 2014), and Omar Khalidi (1995, 2004) resonate with this view[126]. Most, however, look further for reasons beyond just the presence of communalism as an explanation for violence. Brass, for example, says that the history of communalism or immediate circumstances leading to the violence do not explain the nature of endemic riots that we see in India. He sees the relationship between party politics and riots as a continuum from political rivalry leading to communal riots to political rivalry feeding on communal riots[127].

7.2 Violence – Spontaneous or Organized?

Another strand in literature that points towards the politics behind communal violence is on how organic or planned the violence is. Scholars like Basu, Saxena and Wilkinson agree that violence is not spontaneous and requires efforts. Paul Brass has gone further to show how there are well defined processes and modalities of producing violence. Saxena discusses that after 1890, riots around religious festivals became a common feature and that these were concentrated in those districts of North India where socio-political activity on the part of the organized groups like the Arya-Samaj, the Muslim League, Hindu Sangathan groups, the Tabliq movement etc. were prominent[128]. He explains that almost no riot took place in the princely states where organized groups were not active, alluding to the centrality of organized efforts for communal violence. Basu contends that 'anti-minority violence is neither random nor spontaneous but the outcome of a confluence of forces'[129]. She finds that the more unified and functional the network of right-

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[125] Wilkinson, Votes and Violence, 98.
[126] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 10.
[127] Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, 220.
[128] Engineer, Communal Riots in Post-Independence India, chap. 5.
[129] Basu, Violent Conjunctures in Democratic India, 290.

wing organizations such as RSS, BJP, VHP and Bajrang Dal has been, the more their ideas have gained ground[130].

Brass examines violence through a spatial lens and discusses the modalities of producing a riot through what he terms 'institutionalized riot systems'[131]. These systems have multiplicity of roles and a specialized division of labor such as informants of incidents; propagandists who create messages; vernacular journalists to present messages as news; rumormongers; and recruiters who collect crowds and thugs to kill, loot and burn, when the time is ripe. He finds that there are specific functions of being a 'fire tender' – who keeps the embers of communal animosities alive and 'conversion specialist' – who turns a local incident or a public issue into one with riot potential[132]. Brass also spells out the phases of riot production as 'preparation/ rehearsal, activation/ enactment, explanation/ interpretation'[133].

7.3 Is Violence Directly Correlated with Electoral Victory?

Seen through the lens of electoral victories, empirical analysis by Basu (2014), Brass (2003) and Wilkinson (2004) show that violence has often contributed to the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) doing better in elections. Pai and Kumar speak of a shift in strategy to more everyday institutionalized communalism which is seen as politically more manageable. Basu shows that the BJP had lost the elections before the violence, but post violence in both 1969 and 2002 in Gujarat, it won elections convincingly. In 2002, for example, it won 5% more vote than 1998, 50% vote share and did especially well in 52 out of the 65 constituencies in which violence occurred. She shows that Hindu nationalists precipitated the most violence in constituencies where it needed to improve its electoral performance[134]. Her broader conclusion though is that 2002 was an unprecedented convergence of forces that heightened Hindu nationalist militancy and violence, active RSS presence, high levels of coordination between RSS, VHP, BHP and Bajrang Dal and BJP in state govt with ties to the bureaucracy and law enforcement agencies, and NDA govt at the center[135].

Brass takes a bigger picture view and associates riots with large-scale political movements that precede them. Every great wave of rioting in modern India, he contends has been preceded by new mobilizing tactics that become integrated into the new repertoire and promote violence[136]. He shows the *rath yatra* by BJP leader, L.K.Advani in 1990 as a significant example, which brought various riots in its wake and consolidated the Hindu voter base for the BJP. He argues that riots precede elections and intensify political competition, leading to polarization of voters that benefits the riot-instigating political systems[137].

Examining the resurgence of communal riots in Uttar Pradesh, post 2000s, Pai and Kumar contend that rather than instigating major riots like earlier, the BJP-RSS have tried to create and sustain constant, low intensity incidents out of petty everyday issues. This was how they 'institutionalized communalism at the grassroots' and kept the 'pot-boiling'. Once the riots get over, they are used to install a new antagonistic relationship that causes constant low-key communal tension. The authors say that 'this strategy is viewed as politically more manageable, to be carried out by the local cadres without the top leadership being involved, and only at times when mobilization reaches a peak does it create large riots as in Mau in 2005 or Muzaffarnagar in 2013'[138].

[130] Basu, 49.
[131] Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, 15.
[132] Brass, 33.
[133] Brass, 15.
[134] Basu, Violent Conjunctures in Democratic India, 166–67.
[135] Basu, 163–64.
[136] Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, 13.
[137] Brass, 12–13.
[138] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 4.

Wilkinson considers 'electoral incentives' for ethnic violence and shows the conditions under which the politicians who control the police and army have an incentive to foment and prevent ethnic violence. He argues that states with higher degrees of party fractionalization, in which minorities are therefore pivotal swing voters, have lower levels of violence than states with lower levels of party competition. This is because minorities in highly competitive party systems can extract promises of greater security from politicians in return for their votes[139]. He compares two cases from Uttar Pradesh in 1990 where the government had to decide whether or not to prevent Hindu nationalist mobilization that was likely to lead to communal violence. In Varanasi in 1991, the BJP allowed the mobilization to continue which resulted in a riot, as expected. In 1995, with a similar situation in Mathura, the BJP-BSP coalition was conflicted because the BSP saw Muslim votes as important to its next elections, even as the BJP preferred greater polarization of the Hindu vote. In this case, the government intervened and averted the violence. His analysis shows that between 1961 and 1995, higher level of party competition in 15 major Indian states is statistically associated with lower level of Hindu Muslim violence[140].

Composition of Electorate and the Likelihood of Communal Violence

Most scholars agree that the caste, class, religious composition of the electorate is relevant in understanding the political arithmetic behind violence. In this section we discuss literature that examines this additional layer of social tensions, created between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, which are then considered as an addition to Hindu-Muslim communal violence, for the polarizing common perception and thereby influencing voting patterns. Pai and Kumar discuss the experimentation with 'non-Brahminical Hindutva' in which lower castes are being included to consolidate a Maha-Hindu identity, with the aim of creating a bias against the Muslim among the Hindus as part of the communalization process[141]. Basu adds to this by observing the Hindu Right's ability to refashion Dalit identities, and exacerbate class tensions between Dalits and Muslims in several towns that experienced violence in the early 1990s[142]. One of the forces in Basu's 'confluence of forces' that enable violence is the absence of strong social movements that represent the poor and low-castes. She asserts that violent conjunctures are seen to also occur when such movements are weak or absent[143]. Indeed, she goes on to compare UP and Gujarat to conclude that unlike UP, Gujarat does not have a tradition of low-caste or leftist movements, and unlike in UP, the BJP in Gujarat did not face caste tensions in the electoral arena or within the party, and was therefore very successful[144].

Wilkinson also explores the historical development of caste cleavages and shows that because the colonial state provided job and education reservations as incentives for backward caste mobilization, substantial intra-Hindu party political competition emerged as early as the 1920s and 1930s in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south[145]. He sees the high levels of party competition combined with strong backward-caste movements that are inclusive of Muslims as putting the Muslims in a position to demand security in exchange of votes. He contrasts the growth of social and political identities around non-Brahmin identities, cutting across religious lines in the South, over half a century before the North and explains the relative difference in emergence of strong opposition parties to the Congress in the early post-independence period. This was seen as a key factor influencing the presence or absence of anti-minority violence. This

[139] Wilkinson, Votes and Violence, 137.
[140] Wilkinson, 1.
[141] Pai and Kumar, Introduction, 1.
[142] Basu, Violent Conjunctures in Democratic India, 146–47.
[143] Basu, 294.

is also true, he says, of the Janta Dal in Bihar and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh which often win power by building coalitions with Muslims[146].

Basu considers variables similar to Wilkinsons's, including party competition, caste movements and state government, and argues that the extent to which violence has been seen to diminish with victory of lower caste representatives in elections, is not simply a result of the actions of the state or any other single institution but rather a result of changes in the relations among movements, parties and the state govt. this time under the control of the lower castes[147].

In this section, we have observed the relationship between electoral interests and communal violence from perspectives of ideology, demographic composition and cleavages and the nature of the violence itself. Notwithstanding the nature, form and timing of violence, or the underlying electoral configurations, it is fairly clear from the preceding discussion that the imperatives of electoral victory bear association with communal violence in India.

Summarizing Part I

Part I of this report makes a journey into the history of politics, economics, psychology of the causes of Hindu-Muslim conflict in India. Even as it takes a largely constructivist interpretation on the causes perpetuating the conflict, it examines communal violence as a crucial marker of the conflict. We recognize that the attempt to delve into different disciplines is fraught with the possibility of oversimplifying. This conflict has vexed academics, politicians and other social observers through the 20th century, with no end in sight.

The idea, however, was to take a holistic approach and cover important studies across disciples to provide a background and framework for solutions to the conflict. As we move to solution to the communal conflict, it is important to highlight that Part We draws from theory, and Part II is inspired both by theory and practice of conflict/violence prevention. We summarize our understanding of various approaches to peaceful solutions by examining them through the lens of social capital. As we will discover later, some types of social capital lend themselves to deepening the conflict and others lend themselves more to conciliation.

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[144] Basu, 164.
[145] Wilkinson, Votes and Violence, 172–74.
[146] Wilkinson, 202–3.
[147] Basu, Violent Conjunctures in Democratic India, 161.

PART II –
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
ON SOLUTIONS

8 Context and Theoretical Perspective on Conflict Prevention

This part of the study engages with solutions and conditions connected with the absence of violence or effective prevention of violence. We focus on violence as a marker and sometimes an imperative of unresolved conflict. The expression of conflict need not always be violent, but the existence of violence is sufficient to show for the existence of conflict. We fall back on scholarly literature that tries to understand conditions for violence and differentiate it from conditions that enable the lack of violence or peace to prevail.

We refer to literature on conflict prevention to understand the theoretical underpinnings of Structural versus Operational approaches. Structural approaches consider the innate and embedded social, political and economic conditions that generate conflict[148]. These are often a function of disruptive global and domestic social forces, and institutions for maintaining law and order, basic services and a stable political regime. Structural solutions would include creation or reform of the legal systems, enhancing democracy, reforming police, creating institutions of health and social welfare, building schools, financial institutions, cultural associations, and other institutions and methods that create stable and vibrant societies[149].

Operational or direct approaches to violence prevention are considered responses to an impending crisis before violence breaks out. Operational approaches are time-sensitive and actor or event-focused. Such responses would include diplomatic initiatives, mediation, training in non-violence, or armed deterrence with the idea of keeping conflicts from escalating into violence. These approaches tend to be narrower and are able to address specific geographies and sets of actors[150]. These approaches are often dependent on the support of people in positions of authority who may exercise the choice of not supporting action to prevent violence[151].

In the present situation, there is evidence of growing roots of Hindu Nationalism and that some people are taking to a polarized rhetoric which seeks to treat minorities as 'others' and even endorsing violence against them. It is true that communities are not often able to withstand the temptation to be violent in the face of larger polarizing political narratives. India faces sharp social and economic inequalities, and the present national government is led by a political force that has been seen to benefit from violence between Hindus and Muslims. With exogenous, structural conditions that create discontent and instability, the possibility of sowing ideas of discord are high. Given that the law and order machinery is accountable to a state which may choose to not deter violence, the relevance of a community level solutions become sharper.

Kaufman states that "recent history shows that the questions of whether the politicians can be trusted to protect people or whether the police can be counted on to prevent ethnic riots are not forgone conclusions. This is why the question of whether there is an expanded role for civil society organizations in preventing communal violence is an important issue to consider"[152]. Theoretically, our quest for solutions could be drawn from the following range of ideas:

1. Structural solutions to inequality, greater rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy.

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[148] Lund, "Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice," 290.
[149] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 49.
[150] Lund, "Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice," 290.
[151] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 51.
[152] Vaitla, 48.

2. Transformation of the larger narrative, which can be an effective counter to religious polarization. One possibility could be for opposition political parties playing a conciliatory role effectively. Indeed, such a role was played by the Congress party using its 'resilient network for transactional negotiations' in several contexts in the past[153].
3. Political and demographic configurations that do not support or benefit from violence.
4. Solutions at the local level where communities are able to exercise agency to prevent violence.

Kaufman notes that symbolic politics theory suggests the problem with most peace efforts is that they pay insufficient attention to ameliorating the emotional and symbolic roots of extremist ethnic politics. The theory suggests that resolving ethnic war requires reconciliation – changing hostile attitudes to more moderate ones, assuaging fears. He speaks of the importance of replacing intragroup symbolic politics of ethnic chauvinism with a politics that rewards moderation. The tools for such attitudinal and social changes are not politically popular are require very hard choices on part of the leadership in asking them to acknowledge their contribution in escalating emotive issues with their constituents[154] .

This document looks at the latter two sets of ideas more carefully. That is not to undermine the significance of structural solution or larger political narratives that can de-polarize. Those are different lines of enquiry and finds less space in the existing literature on solutions to religious violence in India. It will require a different methodology, as a literature search will not suffice and primary information collection from contemporary political actors will be important. The political economy of conciliatory narratives should be conceived of as a distinct research project. Unlike the first part of this study, this section relies on both theory and practice to explore the idea of solutions to violence in the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India.

9 Theoretical Approaches on Factors That Help Prevent Violence

An understanding of communal violence prevention is limited even at the outset by two phenomena. Firstly, as political psychologist Asish Nandy has written of what he calls the "conspicuous asymmetry" between the number of studies focusing on violence and those focusing non-violence and on new and old forms of creativity across difference[155].

Secondly, preventing such violence in India is difficult given the various types of complexities this violence stems from. One reason may be, as Horowitz (2001) writes, is that there is a perceptual asymmetry between those who want to prevent violence and those who perpetrate it. Srinivas notes that if a conflict involves a specific action that leads to be a predictable reaction, then it is clear when and how to intervene. He notes however, the notch-by-notch character of situations that lead to violence, where the process is gradual and incremental where no single action is clearly responsible for violence. This makes the understanding of violence prevention evident only as hindsight after the event[156].

In the quest for understanding situations where violence is averted, what factors lead to a non-violent outcome, scholars have tried to examine regions and contexts that face inter religious

153 Bardhan, "Method in the Madness?," 1390.
154 Kaufman, "Escaping the Symbolic Politics Trap," 201–2.
155 Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism," 744–45.
156 Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 59.

tensions and violence. There are two distinct bodies of literature we refer to, for this section. One where the central focus is violence and therefore insights about the lack of violence are a secondary outcome. The second set of studies consider nonviolence or peace as the dependent variable. The theory we examine falls under three broad categories: demography and its intersect with electoral politics; individual and group agency; and the role of civil society and citizens' collectives. One of the most comprehensive and influential pieces of research on the subject is by Varshney, whose work defines a large part of our analysis here.

9.1 Demographic Factors and their Intersect with Identity and Politics

This section talks about the influence of the demographic composition of a region on the likelihood of violence. It is relevant to note that when the region corresponds with either one or a series of electoral units, political interests come to play differently. Demographic structures and politically relevant cleavages such as rich-poor; Muslim-Hindu, and other differences like sects, castes and languages often intersect in ways that impacts the likelihood of violence. We have discussed in section 4 earlier, the conditions under which sometimes one identity takes precedence over multiple identities that individuals hold. This section focuses on how the existence of these multiple identities and cleavages becomes a safeguard against violence.

Crosscutting Cleavage Structures

David Laitin presents Varshney's cleavage structures as 'mechanisms of interest' as against civic engagement which are 'mechanisms of trust'[157]. Civic engagement is discussed later in this document. Varshney proposes that politically consequential cleavages carry a lot of explanatory weight in terms of where violence is likely. He surmises that the more cross cutting cleavages such as religion and language intersect, the lower will be the overall level of violence. In the case of Lucknow, for example, he shows that the Sunni/Shia cleavage cuts into the Muslim/Hindu cleavage such that the latter cleavage does not cleanly divide all residents on all political issues[158]. The idea being that a person who differs on religion but shares a language with his neighbor might be in political conflict and coalition with the same person on different issues, such as in regard to prayers in school and respect for minority languages respectively. 'Cross-cuttingness, as opposed to cumulative cleavages, thereby reduce the chances of Manichean oppositional debate'[159].

Cleavage structures in terms of the relative presence of various communities and castes in a region, influence closely the type of coalition politics that emerges. Varshney gives credence to cleavage structure as an input for coalition governments to moderate their politics[160]. In Calicut, Varshney reasons, the Muslim League needed a coalition partner, as it could never come to power on its own by seeking only Muslim votes. This need for low-caste Hindu allies compelled Muslim League leaders to cool down tensions on religious issues. Horowitz argued that communal violence is most likely in relative homogeneous localities where a big majority group can easily attack a vulnerable, small target group[161]. This may give us cues on heterogeneity being correlated with less violence due to the more even spread of communities.

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[157] Varshney et al., "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life," 101.
[158] Varshney et al., 100.
[159] Varshney et al., 100.
[160] Varshney et al., 100.
[161] Horowitz, "The Deadly Ethnic Riot," 376–95.

Religious-Caste Composition of Voter Base

Wilkinson falls back on the composition of voting population as a key explanation for whether a state government will choose to prevent violence, intervening to stop it or not, as we've seen already in section 6 above. He believes, their primary incentive is electoral interest and that state governments protect minorities when minorities are an important part of their party's current support base, or the support base of one of their partners in a coalition government; or when the overall electoral system in a state is so competitive making likely the need for future negotiations with other parties for coalitions. Not just minorities, the growing competitiveness of state politics in India as a result of backward caste mobilization, is a positive thing for communal relations, he argues[162].

Bunte and Vinson studied relationships among identity, violence, and local political institutions between Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria. They conclude that local government councils that represent religious pluralism of their communities have been less prone to national and local politicization of religious identities and inter-religious violence. They argue that local power-sharing institutions shape two key aspects that influence inter-religious violence. Firstly, they influence motivations of elites to rationally use religious rhetoric to mobilize against the other group. Secondly these institutions change the general population's perception of grievances and competition vis-a-vis the 'other', and thereby reduce the propensity to engage in violence. Indeed, the scholars offer a critique of 'publicity-friendly' national-level power-sharing agreements and question their effectiveness unless complemented by local-level initiatives that 'create stable channels of communication and collaboration among religious groups'[163].

Gottschalk's study on local Inter-religious relations emphasizes the multiplicity of shared identities for Indians, both Hindus and Muslims. He argues that while it is unreasonable to expect the absence of disagreement between the communities, either ideology would only win over a minority from their community, given their 'complex engagements and shared identities that resist such purities'[164]. He shows how Hindus and Muslims in a North Indian village emphasized their brotherly relations and prevented national-level conflicts from 'parochializing' to their village.

Cleavage structures and demography are more or less given, even as one could argue that over long periods of time, the demography can change due to migration and changing settlements in the wake of violence, like the exodus of Kashmiri Pundits from the Kashmir Valley. A greater number of cross cutting cleavages make it more likely for violence to be averted in the area. Also, demographic composition of a region is closely linked to its electoral politics and a less skewed demography increases the likelihood of electoral competition and therefore the likely protection to minorities. Despite their explanatory power, they can be treated as more or less 'given' and therefore beyond the scope of active intervention. The ensuing section discusses active approaches to preventing violent conflict.

9.2 Civic Engagement - Mechanisms of Trust

'India's encounters with ethnic violence … and its equally frequent return from the brink … have a great deal to do with the self-regulation that its …cross-cutting civil society provides'[165].

[162] Wilkinson, "Communal Riots in India," 4768.
[163] Bunte and Vinson, 64.
[164] Gottschalk, Beyond Hindu and Muslim, 304.
[165] Varshney et al., "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life," 101.

We discussed in the previous section 'mechanisms of interest' proposed by Varshney. Another significant contribution by him is in explaining the relationship between civic society and ethnic networks and their impact on violence prevention. He distinguishes between interethnic and intraethnic networks of civic engagement and shows how the former are more effective in building peace. Varshney further argues that everyday forms of inter-ethnic civic engagement can make violence prevention possible, but that associational forms of civic engagement, such as business organizations and unions, would be sturdier in resisting riot instigation.

Intraethnic Neworks help Bond; Interethnic Networks Bridge

First, he shows the different roles that that interethnic and intraethnic networks of civic engagement play in ethnic conflict. Interethnic networks are agents of peace as they build bridges and manage tensions. If communities are organized only along intraethnic lines and the interconnections with other communities are very weak however, then ethnic violence is quite likely. Second, Varshney breaks down civic networks into two other types based on whether the civic interaction is formal or not: organized and quotidian. The former being 'associational' forms of engagement and the latter 'everyday' forms of engagement. Business associations, professional organizations, reading clubs, film clubs, sports clubs, NGOs, trade unions, and cadre-based political parties are examples of the former. Everyday forms of engagement consist of simple, routine interactions of life between families from different communities including participating in festivals, etc.[166].

'Vigorous associational life, if interethnic, acts as a serious constraint on politicians, even when ethnic polarization is in their political interest. The more the associational networks cut across ethnic boundaries, the harder it is for politicians to polarize communities'[167]. This is exemplified from this case from Surat in the aftermath of the Babri mosque demolition. Even as many cities and towns saw riots and rumors were rife in Surat, the 'civically engaged business community', many of whom were communal in their personal beliefs, formed peace committees and exposed the rumors as falsehoods. Varshney analyses their motivations to reveal that 'they were simply not ready to risk disruptions in business'. Here cross-cuttingness between businessmen/workers and Muslims/Hindus, and that confluence of 'interests' seems to explain the successful prevention of violence[168].

Varshney however cautions against overstating the causative impact of intercommunal civic networks. The role of intercommunal civic networks, he asserts has been crucial for peace at a 'proximate level'. 'Taking the long view, however, the causal factor was a transformative shift in national politics. Once put in place by the national movement, the civic structures took on a life and logic of their own, constraining the behavior of politicians in the short to

> **BOX 1: Pre-Independence: Relationship between Civic Institutions and Violence Prevention**
>
> *In the 1920s and 1940s, several big cities in India were going through a turbulent phase on communal relations, but Ahmedabad and Surat stayed calm. Varshney attributes this calm to the 'monumental' civic activity built by the Gandhians. This in turn gave these two cities 'a remarkable capacity to resist the national-level shocks'*. This is despite the fact that Gujarat in general and Ahmedabad in particular were the target of Muslim separatism. Likewise, even as communal violence was rising all over the country, Surat's harmony was not disturbed. The rioters were frustrated by the divisions within the Muslim community, the strong business linkages between Hindus and Muslims and the organizational strength of the Congress party.*
>
> **Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 235*

[166] Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," 362–63.
[167] Varshney, 362–63.
[168] Varshney et al., "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life," 100–101.

medium term'[169]. His arguments have been criticized for overstating the power of inter-ethnic associations in preventing violence, which some scholars argue would reduce explanations of violence to the absence of inter-group civic life.

Limits to Civic Society Oraganisations' Ability to Prevent Violence

It is noteworthy to recognize also that scholars such as Brass dismiss claims for citizen's peace efforts, arguing that communities 'cannot withstand the power of political movements and forces that seek to create inter-communal violence'[170]. On the other hand, there are studies that show how local attempts can control and prevent riots in an area with an approach of community policing. Yui studies the Bhiwandi and Mumbai experiments with peace committees for prevention of violence, and her focus is the involvement of the local community as a key variable in riot prevention[171].

Srinivas studies active prevention of violence by civil society organizations in the context of Hindu-Muslim riots. He compared successful and unsuccessful cases of prevention between organizations in a city, and in different cities and notes similarities and differences in institutions and strategies. He believes that the options available to civil society vary greatly based on the political regime managing the state. Srinivas has conceptualized three broad methods for CSOs to be active in preventing conflict 1) protect citizens from state oppression; 2) provide services; in terms of conflict: establish forums for discussions, educate and train on peace, conduct peacemaking and peacebuilding activities), and 3) develop pluralistic identities and communities. His table summarizing the theories and describing how those theories may translate to activism for conflict prevention is given as Annex 1.

9.3 Human Agency

This section discussed the ideas of Jana Kraus and Ward Berenschot, both of whom, in different ways, find human agency a compelling factor which determines the ability to prevent violence. Both these studies challenge instrumentalist thought on communal violence and find ideas for prevention, even in the face of incentives to be violent. In cases where some neighborhoods were able to prevent violence, Kraus sees an element of civilian agency as the power of all pre-existing associational networks fails to explain sufficiently their ability to avert violence. Berenschot sees the capacity to develop alternate routes to access state resources as a means to prevent local patronage channels organized around religious differences.

African scholarship on communal violence has placed emphasis on civilian agency, noting the practices of ordinary people and the importance of youth leaders for violence and violence prevention in community conflicts[172]. Individuals and families helping others in the midst of a riot is something we have seen from the times of the partition to the most recent riot in the capital city of Delhi in 2020. Kraus challenges notions of individuals preventing killings as being driven by moral commitment, inclusive values, or by instrumental motives of self-protection and personal benefit. Indeed, self-protection and fear are also key motivations for joining militias or participate in genocide, she notes. Kraus has explored whether there is merit to the notion of 'civilian agency' in vulnerable communities that could prevent violence.

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[169] Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," 364.
[170] Krause, "Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War," 261.
[171] Yui, "Effectiveness of Riot Prevention through Community Policing in India," 865.

Agency Beyond Preexisting Local Networks

Kraus observes two regions in Jos, Nigeria, which were afflicted by communal violence. Anglo Jos was devastatingly violent whereas Dadin Kowa became famous for its ability to be peaceful. She finds an element of civilian agency as she reflects on the common ground that people in a neighborhood are able to build to prevent violence. In one non-violent but socio-economically mixed and vulnerable area, civilian leadership and control over internal youth, as well as refusal to collaborate with external armed groups, accounted for the absence of killings. In this neighborhood, peace committees did not simply extend from preexisting local networks of associational life, but rather individual community and youth leaders and ordinary residents actively formed prevention networks in response to threatened violence to protect themselves, their families, and their livelihoods[173]. The civilian agency that Kraus talks about is a form of bridging social capital to protect their lives and livelihoods from violence, across communities.

This human agency cannot be captured by top-down peace efforts and needs much deeper investigation to understand before one can think of conditions that enable such agency. Berenschot gives an example of what kind of arrangement can help strengthen this agency, even as the arrangement itself may be possible in places where such people with such individual agency exist.

Agency to Connect with Powers Beyond the Community

Berenschot has not focused on the 'agency' of community members, indeed his primary focus is that violence is more likely in areas that gain access to state resources through patronage networks invested in communal divisions. He engages with conditions that facilitate or hinder the organization and instigation of violence. While local events cannot be seen in isolation of the broader political and social developments that facilitate the outburst of violence—these broader developments do not have the same impact everywhere[174]. The capacity of political actors to instigate violence is related to the capacity of these politicians to help citizens deal with government institutions. He argues that residents who had the greatest capacity to deal with outside authorities had the greatest influence over the course of events. It is this capacity that We understand as 'agency' to resist violence even when engaging in violence was the easier thing to do.

In his ethnographic study in Gujarat, one neighborhood was able to defuse tensions and violence by using their local standing and strong organization to build the capacity to negotiate access to state resources, while the other was extremely violent. This access enabled them to minimize the role that the RSS and VHP were seen to play in instigating violence[175]. This study of events in a violent and a peaceful locality suggests that violence is more likely in neighborhoods where inhabitants gain access to state institutions through patronage networks that derive electoral gains from communal violence[176]. The central focus here is the collective human agency that has the foresight and ability to build linkages with people and institutions in positions of power. These linkages help create alternate networks that can give them the power to deny the organizations like the RSS and VHP, the latitude they otherwise have in Gujarat, to enable violence.

[173] Krause, 261–83..
[174] Berenschot, "The Spatial Distribution of Riots," February 1, 2011, 221.
[175] Berenschot, "The Spatial Distribution of Riots," February 1, 2011.
[176] Berenschot.

Between human agency, mechanisms of trust (civil society networks) and mechanisms of interest (demographic cleavages), we find most of the explanatory variables that explain the ability to prevent violence. These factors can each be understood in greater detail by examining experience of violence prevention from India. We try to delve deeper into the grassroots experience of direct approaches to violence prevention and recognize successes and failures.

10 Operational Approaches to Prevent Violence – What Worked, What Did Not?

The previous section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of direct or operational approaches to violence prevention. We now discuss operational approaches to violence prevention with a view on strategies and what worked and what didn't. We observe the role of the facilitators of community level experiments with preventing violence. Three types of facilitators are discussed here, first NGOs/CSOs; second the state and its law and order machinery; third 'informal' community institutions such as peace committees and how they fare. Most experiments create peace committees of local residents, yet the issues with these committees have been considered in a separate section to highlight their strengths and failures, regardless of mediating and facilitating institutions involved.

10.1 Civil Society Organizations as Facilitators of Violence Prevention

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or NGOs working with communities on issues of development are the most likely to possess hands-on knowledge of the situation and the credibility to work with the community to prevent riots. This section focuses on the significance of grassroots NGOs in violence prevention, their strategies, and the limitations of their effectiveness. The ability of NGOs to respond to violence depends on the nature of the violence. This section draws on experience from grassroots organizations, from the work of Srinivas Vaitla.

Srinivas believes that peacebuilding organizations with expertise on conflict prevention need to collaborate with development organizations. His research with CSOs that have worked on violence prevention offer four broad lessons. First, that regular contact with potential victims and leaders in communally sensitive communities is the foundation for prevention. Second, development CSOs in the field are best placed to conduct operational prevention because they are trusted by the community as a result of their other work, have detailed knowledge of the area, and have some access to funds. Third, relationships with police will impact the effectiveness of intervention. Fourth, CSOs should create operational prevention networks amongst themselves and with actors in the community in order to increase their power to lobby political authorities during crises, increase resources for prevention, and to scale up the impact of their activities to affect a wider area[177].

Reactive and Proactive Roles of CSOs

CSOs have both a reactive and proactive role, the former being more direct to preventing violence. The latter is more in terms of building community institutions or capacities of individuals and

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[177] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities."

groups over a period of time, that can be of value during times of violence. Proactive approaches can be followed during times of relative peace. For instance, St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS) works in slums of Ahmedabad, and works with women in peace times as well. It sees them as key constituents, not only in development, but also as an entry into working with children and men—critical populations in the riot dynamic[178].

Once signs of heightened tensions and violence are visible, reactive approaches take over. One of the most significant reactive contributions include building awareness and quelling rumors or campaigns that push for violence, and not letting them pick momentum. Tactical prevention of violence requires attention to signals of likely violence, early warning, and coordinating an effective response. CSOs understanding of culture and local contexts make them privy to early warning information. Effective reaction requires pre-established capacity and processes to respond to communal incidents, and good contacts with the local police[179].

CSOs' privileged access to resources that are critical during tensions include, information and the attention of the District Collector and government authorities[180]. By and large, though, civil society's involvement in operational prevention is 'ad hoc, —unplanned and at the initiative of courageous individuals to intervene'[181].

> **BOX 2: GANDHI'S SHANTI SENA**
>
> *The Shanti Sena (Peace Army) was modeled around Peace Corps-style activities, where the volunteers would get their authority from being invested in service of the community. Gandhi's philosophy was explicitly and simultaneously connected with peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding[1].*
>
> *The sainiks acted as impartial and outside mediators whose work was to rush to the site of violence in teams and establish dialogue and trust with leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities, encourage them to call for an end to the violence, and assist them in setting up peace committees. They also liaised with the local police and politicians. They would also combat rumors and false stories and worked to spread truthful information. Sainiks also averted violence by patrolling sensitive areas and dissuading people from engaging in violence. Shanti Sena's method depended on courage and commitment of individuals. Srinivas notes however, that 'the need for such Gandhian character and devotion perhaps also restricted the number of people willing to do this kind of work. It was difficult for the idea to become institutionalized across India'[2].*
>
> *In instances of violence, the sainiks also often arrived too late to prevent violence and ended up working more on preventing further violence or reconciliation in the aftermath of riots. The sainiks were outsiders and often did not have intimate local knowledge of the communities, and their temporary presence also left communities with no sustainable ways to prevent future violence. The Shanti Sena was set up in 1957 by Vinobha Bhave, and it split into a Jayaprakash Narain faction in 1975 on ideological differences. It faded away over the next few years, just as the Hindu nationalistic forces began to consolidate social and political space[3]. The experience of the Shanti Sena in both its successes and failures, is instructive for preventing violence in contemporary times.*
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> *[1] Weber, Gandhi's Peace Army, 55–68.*
> *[2] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 84–87.*
> *[3] Vaitla, 84–87.*

Ability to Prevent Varies by Nature of Riot – Spontaneous or Pre-meditated

The effectiveness of CSOs/NGOs is a function of the nature of the impending violence, whether it is spontaneous or pre-mediated. A 'spontaneous' riot is also organized, but not conceived deliberately with politicians. Political riots on the other hand are fomented by politicians and tend to be well organized often with rioters and material from outside and political protection to perpetrators[182]. Typically, CSOs and most other stakeholders cannot avert such riots, save the police force, which can stem violence. However, CSOs with presence in sensitive localities,

[178] Vaitla, 98.
[179] Vaitla, 57–63.
[180] Vaitla, 100.
[181] Vaitla, 64.
[182] Vaitla, 186.

access to residents both potential victims and perpetrators and trained human resources are capable of responding effectively to prevent communal altercations and riots of the spontaneous kind.

Srinivas gives the example of a human rights and advocacy organization and argues that it is well placed to spearhead violence prevention initiatives even in the face of political riots by confronting the benefactors of violence or politicians. He contends that organizations that are not limited by their need for developmental funding on the state government and can afford to confront them. Needless to say, this possibility is very context specific and limited in its reach.

Some larger issues with the intervention of NGOs in preventing violence and building peace include the lack of resources, personnel and a platform. Peacebuilding and communal harmony are not typically a priority among civil society organizations primarily because funding for peacebuilding programs is scarce. There are not enough trained personnel for the job of resolving conflicts and building peace. The director of COVA, Dr. Mazher Hussain underscores the importance of NGOs working together in networks. He feels COVAs network and relationships with other organizations in Hyderabad remain largely untapped for organizing a civil society early warning and response system[183]. A network is essential for multiplying the effect of each voice.

10.2 State-Led Experiments on Preventing Violence

Many studies argue that community participation is critical for the success of preventing violence. In this section we draw on the joint experiments between communities and police departments, their successes and failures. Many scholars have discussed the Bhiwandi and the Mumbai experiments to discuss the workings of state/police led initiatives with communities to prevent violence. Thakkar shows how the success of the Mumbai experiment was because of the joint efforts of the police department and the communities which were organized into peace committees on initiative of the police[184]. Yui refers to how the citizens' participation is crucial for community policing in keeping harmony between different religious communities[185]. Varshney questions the notion that the state and the civil society have an adversarial relationship and uses the Bhiwandi experiment to discuss how their relationship can be different.

Police Led Grassroots Peace Initiatives

Bhiwandi, a town just outside of Bombay was infamous for Hindu-Muslim riots in the 1970s and 80s. In the late 80s, the police took the initiative of building Hindu Muslim contacts in an organized way around issues of common concern. This town did not have any of the vibrant business or social links around which Gujarat's civic society institutions were built. In fact, Hindus and Muslims lived in segregated neighborhoods. The police chief invested in creating Mohalla Samitis (neighborhood committees) for the whole town. These committees met regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern, and thereby created a 'base of mutual confidence'[186]. In the period of 1988 to 91, when communal mobilization was at its peak heading to the destruction of the Babri Masjid and creating the space for a temple at the birthplace of Ram, Bhiwandi did become tense. These members, however, voluntarily took the task of patrolling the streets and suppressing rumors and isolating mischief mongers by constant vigil[187]. Bhiwandi's peace in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri mosque was remarkable, and not a single life was lost.

[183] Vaitla, 159–60.
[184] Thakkar, "Mohalla Committees of Mumbai," 580–86.
[185] Yui, "Effectiveness of Riot Prevention through Community Policing in India," 865–71.
[186] Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 294.
[187] Varshney, 294.

The Bhiwandi experiment was replicated in Mumbai a few years later. The Mohalla Committees Movement Trust (MCMT) was launched in Mumbai by three prominent people, former Police Commissioner of Mumbai Julio Ribeiro, social worker Sushobha Barve, and then Police Commissioner of Mumbai Satish Sahney together, after meeting with Muslim residents. This was authorized by Chief Minister Sharad Pawar. The MCMT was instrumental in stemming violence in several instances in Dharavi in December 1992. Indeed in 1993, in the second wave of violence post Babri Mosque demolition, Dharavi was a relative 'island of peace' given how limited its violent episodes were. Yui consider the results of the practices of the Mohalla Committees in Mumbai as successful because committees were organized by volunteers from different religious communities and local police and focused on enhancing the quality of life by supporting job-hunting, empowering women, and holding sports and recreational events, and the focus on a multicultural society.

The peace committees in Mumbai set up at each police station at the beginning of the riots in December did not last long, however. Among their many problems was the involvement of politicians and that the police, who had little trust of the citizens, controlled the committees. Peace committees are also seen to be ineffective when they are not truly representative of the community, as seems to be the case with the MCMT, which was clearly elite-led. Varshney explains that the committees are often top-down and not bottom-up. In the city of Hyderabad, there are civic interactions between elite Hindus and Muslims but there is little among the masses, he notes. Peace committees formed by the elites to counter communal violence have often failed to prevent riots and have only been effective at delivering relief after riots. This is largely because these elite-led committees are not organically linked to the poorer neighborhoods where many of the communal riots have taken place, largely in the Old City of Hyderabad[188].

Thakkar further helps understand that from the perspective of common citizens, the importance of such experiments is that they were being listened to. Further that some problems do not have answers and yet, the mohalla samiti experience showed that violence can be averted in crisis situations if there are people to help the two sides communicate. 'As long as people are talking, they will not go out on the streets to resort to violence. And these communication channels could then turn into creative connections in addressing other problems'[189]. Thakkar and Yui contend that this work is successful only in areas where the police officers have taken personal interest. They often do this by ensuring the right kind of people are inducted into committees.

Biases of the Police Force, Real though not Insurmountable

The involvement of the police has its downsides. There is evidence of the religious composition of the police force being problematic because of over representation of the majority community. Further, the self-concept of the police as being the supporters of the rulers, makes them somewhat prone to suppressing citizens with force[190]. Further, there are issues of the members of the police force being biased and having a communal mindset themselves and acting as instigators instead of peacemakers[191]. Police complicity, inaction, and ineffectiveness have repeatedly been cited as key issues and even as we expect the police to be professional and impartial and rise above communal prejudices, they are also individuals like any other. 'They bring with them the prejudices of the society in which they live'[192]. The police find it difficult to accept citizens as equal partners

[188] Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life.
[189] Thakkar, "Mohalla Committees of Mumbai," 584.
[190] Yui, "Effectiveness of Riot Prevention through Community Policing in India," 867.
[191] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 84.
[192] Vaitla, 54–55.

of the committees. Often, policemen at the lower levels tend to reduce the *mohalla* committees to a network of informants alerting them about communal trouble[193].

Drawing lessons from Bhiwandi, Varshney argues firstly that *communal biases of the police force are real, yet not insurmountable*. Waiting for these biases to disappear, in order to work on peace is not a good strategy as they can be constrained with the right kind of institutional pressures. Secondly, that *'there is no evidence to suggest that the state alone can bring about lasting peace in violence torn areas. It has to see civil society as a 'precious potential ally'*[194].

Violence Requires Ground Force and 'Sanction'

It is important to put the role of politicians and the police in perspective for preventing violence. We make two arguments here: first that polarizing and communal political leadership is powerless without its organization on the ground. Secondly, violence requires sanction, and clear communication by the police of its intent to take action against rioters is sometimes enough to prevent violence[195]. As a case in point, on the limitations of politicians in fomenting violence - after the outbreak of communal violence in Kherwadi, Bandra East, in 1984, the police arrested forty Shiv Sena shakha pramukhs (local political activists) including the main leader from the area. The Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thackeray was known for his communally charged and provocative speeches, and such a situation would normally lead to greater tension and even riots. Contrary to expectations, in this instance, Thackeray appealed to all his other workers to not associate with violence and cooperated in maintaining peace in the city, showing how his power to create violence was dependent on his cadre on the ground.

On sanction by the police, Horowitz (2001) notes that one variable used by riot leaders and rioters is to calculate their chances of carrying out violence without harm to themselves or legal repercussions; particularly, based on whether they will face opposition from police forces. While actions of the police force or politicians cannot be influenced easily, these insights point to a possible role for communities in constraining political interests that seek violence.

10.3 Community Peace Committees

Community peace committees are informal in nature, and relatively simpler to institute compared to the peacebuilding initiatives of NGOs. They require no budgets and administrative hassles are minimal. The committee's work is founded on the wisdom and commitment of its members. The engine that propels the committees is its reliance on a mutually beneficial relationship between citizens and some connectivity to a state authority, such as the police.

Methods of Community Peace Committees

The methods of peace committees are simple. On hearing of the news of possible violence, they connect with the community and appeal for them to remain peaceful, quell rumors, combat misinformation, work to reduce tensions, tour the neighborhood to deter mischievous elements and assure the others of safety. They often facilitate conversations between the residents and the police to help prevent escalation of tensions[196]. The committee members visit people affiliated to politics that is seen to benefit from such violence and try to contain them. They are able to do this

[193] Thakkar, "Mohalla Committees of Mumbai," 585.
[194] Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 295–97.
[195] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 52.
[196] Barve, Healing Streams.

based on their credibility and trust with the local community and deep social, cultural and political knowledge and of neighborhood[197]. The set of activities adopted for preventing violence is the same regardless of whether a facilitating institution is undertaking them or a peace committee or even a set of interested individuals from the community.

Much like the problem faced by peacebuilding programs anywhere, issues of peace quickly become secondary given the struggle to meet daily livelihood needs. Some committees evolved to address other needs in order to sustain the residents' interest in peace issues and set up Women's Grievances Redressal Cells. These cells assist women with domestic problems, including providing emotional support as well as giving legal advice[198]. However, most were not able to find the leadership and capacity to evolve and support other needs to retain their relevance. Also, significantly, the community peace committee facilitators lack the ideological training, which the Right wing (Sangh Parivar) has. Strong ideological grounding which keeps getting reinforced through the network of organizations has helped the right-wing stay on course through their grassroots efforts.

Peace Committees in British Times

Peace committees to resolve religious disputes are not a recent phenomenon. As early as 1913, British colonial officials formed 'conciliation boards' to settle differences between Hindus and 'Muhammadans' regarding their religious rites. These committees were seen to be effective only where the conflict was not bad to begin with, they were prone to collapse if tensions should decline or if the officials involved in the committee are transferred or lose interest. They often included the wrong people, either people with no community credibility and power or else those people who are behind the conflict in the first place[199].

It is interesting that the problems with peace committees have remained broadly similar even after a century. Though the more recent experiments provide insights on making stronger and more sustainable efforts to prevent violence. Varshney uses the Bhiwandi versus Bombay example to point to the importance and utility of 'small acts of human agency' in creating integrative civic

> **BOX 3: USE OF RELIGION FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION**
>
> *Religious majorities and minorities clash on several accounts, those based more on religious identities are more amenable for preventing violence. It is important to differentiate between religious identities and religious symbols[1]. There may be conflict between members of different religions over non-religious issues such as land, elections, cricket matches between India and Pakistan, etc. This is different from conflicts over religious symbols such as mosques or temples in sacred sites, cow-slaughter, etc. The latter are contentious because facts are hard to establish, and the issues are too emotive for logic to work.*
>
> *Fr. Prakash of SXSSS points out that peace committees can successfully address tensions resulting from social or political issues, but they are unsuccessful when religious symbols, or religion, are directly involved. Indeed, he seeks greater engagement with religious leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities as part of the peacebuilding and violence prevention process. A success story of inter-religious battles being handled by religious leaders can be seen from the case of the Pastor and Imam in Nigeria[2].*
>
> *[1] Bock (1995)*
>
> *[2] https://tanenbaum.org/peacemakers-in-action-network/ meet-the-peacemakers/imam-muhammad-ashafa-pastor-james-wuye/*

links. He argues that *'Intercommunal civic linkages can be forged even in highly unfavorable circumstances*[200]. This should give us hope for designing new solutions with the community in the future.

[197] Berenschot, "The Spatial Distribution of Riots," February 1, 2011, 226.
[198] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 138.
[199] Wilkinson, Religious Politics and Communal Violence, 29.
[200] Varshney, Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 295–97.

11 Social Capital for Violence Prevention

11.1 Theory of Social Capital

Woolcock and Narayan define social capital as 'the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively'[201]. Important features of social capital include trust and reciprocity, which are developed through an iterative process. Putnam (1992) specifies two types of social capital: bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding occurs in highly homogenous communities with very similar identities such as race and religion. These common identities enable strong bonding of the community, and also makes it difficult to transcend that identity. Akin to this is the 'communitarian view' of Woolcock and Narayan, which stresses the centrality of social ties in helping the poor manage risk and vulnerability. There are however instances where such bonding social capital enables communities or networks to work at cross-purposes to society's collective interests, such as in ghettos, gangs, drug cartels. These are only some instances where communities become pliable to influences that encourage violence. As seen in section 2, parts of the Hindu community is seen as being bound by a common sense of victimization at the hands of the Mughals. This then justifies the othering of and violence towards Muslims who are the contemporary representatives of the Mughals.

Bridging social capital stresses on across groups, and denotes links based on other common ground or choices rather than ascriptive identities such as ethnicity. This is similar to the 'networks view' of social capital[202], which underlines the importance of horizontal associations across communities. Bridging social capital is typically weaker initially and can be fostered by facilitating interaction between members of different communities on any issues of common interest, including peace or violence prevention. This bridging is what civil society organizations enable between different groups that cross various social divides based on religion, class, ethnicity, gender, and to a limited extent, socioeconomic status. Without these somewhat weak intercommunity ties strong horizontal ties can become a basis for the pursuit of narrow sectarian interests[203].

Woolcock and Narayan also propose the 'institutional view' which, argues that the vitality of community networks and civil society is largely the product of the political, legal, and institutional environment[204]. Unlike the communitarian and networks perspectives, which treat social capital as the determinant of various positive and negative outcomes, the institutional view instead views social capital as being dependent on the quality of the formal institutions which they reside in. This view underscores the importance of the functioning of the state and its institutions.

For Community cohesion and collective action to succeed, 'strong' interpersonal ties (like kinship and intimate friendship) are less important than 'weak' ties like acquaintances and shared membership in secondary associations. Weak ties are more likely to link members of different small groups than are strong ones, which tend to be concentrated within particular groups. Dense but segregated horizontal networks sustain cooperation within each group, but networks of civic engagement that cut across social cleavages nourish wider cooperation. This makes networks of civic engagement such an important part of a community's stock of social capital[205].

This brings us to a third type, linking social capital, added by Harris (2001) and Pai et al (2004)[206], which transcends beyond bonding and bridging types of social capital. 'Linking' social capital

[201] Woolcock and Narayan, "Social Capital," 226.
[202] Woolcock and Narayan, 230.
[203] Woolcock and Narayan, 230.
[204] Woolcock and Narayan, 234–35.
[205] Putnam, Making Democracy Work, 175.
[206] Vaitla, "Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities," 67–68.

becomes extremely relevant in violence prevention as it involves social relations between disadvantaged groups such as the poor, lower caste, and those in positions of authority and power such as government and religious institutions. Linking social capital is what connects senior police and government authorities to neighborhood activists, becomes key in the case of peace committees and CSOs attempting to prevent ethnic violence. This is closest, though perhaps not overlapping completely with the 'Synergy' view of social capital, which integrates the network and institutional approaches[207]. Narayan (1999) suggests that different interventions are needed for different combinations of governance and bridging social capital in a group, community, or society[208].
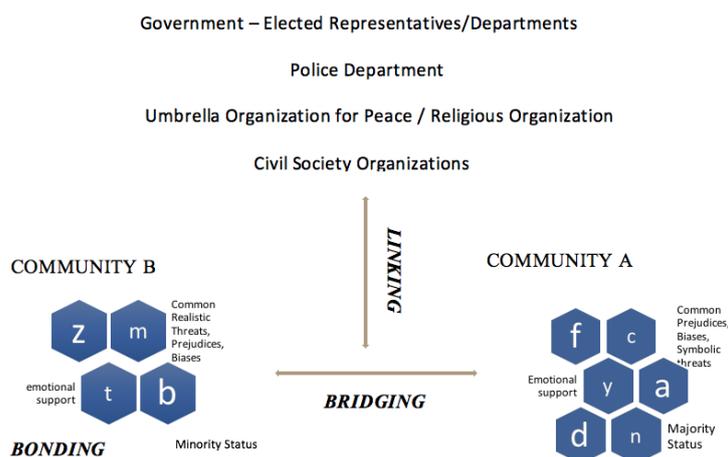
These broad, coherent coalitions that can nurture relations and build alliances with those powerful positions require painstaking work. Non-government organizations (NGOs) working with communities to implement donor or government projects can become brokers of linking social capital. Religious institutions can reach out to communities and be the position of power that these communities can access. Likewise, governments that explicitly seek to build bridges with marginalized communities can also support mechanisms to build these links to support its policies. Approaches to violence prevention need to recognize the importance of establishing linking social capital and continue to support mediating organizations that work effectively with local communities.

11.2 Social Capital Created by Operational Approaches in India

I start this section with a graphic to show different types of social capital. We then summarize our understanding of the various approaches to violence prevention through the lens of social capital. Using this, we spell out two ideas. First that social capital of all types is required for communities to face conflicts without slipping into violence, and there is a need to enhance society's total stock of social capital, with a focus on linking social capital. As we build the case for developing a greater stock of linking social capital for violence prevention, we also examine where our current stock of linking social capital is and discuss some ideas on how it can be enhanced. Secondly, We discuss the need for a secondary layer of umbrella organizations linking those at the grassroots and offering them support.

This graphic shows how different forms of social capital are located and their points of connect.

FIGURE 1: TYPES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND HOW THEY FORM

Government – Elected Representatives/Departments

Police Department

Umbrella Organization for Peace / Religious Organization

Civil Society Organizations

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[207] Woolcock and Narayan, "Social Capital," 235–38.
[208] Woolcock and Narayan, 237.

The alphabets denote different castes, sects and sub-communities, the heterogeneity within larger religions. While communities share biases and threats, they share bonding social capital. Beyond the immediate communities, bridging social capital forms when they intermingle. Linking social capita, as the graphic shows forms when these communities establish vertical relationships with stakeholders holding different power, resources and access.

Table 1 summarizes the various approaches discussed in section II of this study and lists whether it is dependent on bridging and linking networks of social capital. The motivations and capacities required of the actors in each type of approach are indicative of what it may require of future action on these accounts. Community stakeholders can be affiliated to institutions offering bonding, bridging or linking social capital. Such membership, however, is merely an input, and what determines outcomes is the collective action of stakeholders involved. This collective action is a function of the type of social capital built and the capacities the stakeholders are able to develop.

Table 1: Social Capital in Approaches to Violence Prevention

TYPE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL	STAKEHOLDERS, MOTIVATION, CAPACITY
Bridging : INTERETHNIC SOCIAL NETWORKS (Varshney)	• Community groups, civil society can function as 'agents of peace' as they build bridges and manage tensions. • This approach could be motivated by the need to protect business interests or ideological commitment to secularism. • Such groups have the ability to see beyond ascriptive identities based on their common needs. • The associational networks around business or ideology may have to worry about the strength, capability and resources to sustain peace in adverse circumstances.
Bridging : CIVILIAN AGENCY (Kraus)	• Individual community, youth leaders, ordinary residents getting together to form prevention networks in response to threats of violence. • This approach considers that humans have agency beyond their motivations to protect their families and livelihoods. • Requires stakeholders to develop the ability to act beyond divisions of identity and work together in the face of threats with the potential of social discord and economic losses. • Knowledge about the organization of violence and lived experience in conflict zones were important factors that gave leaders the ability and confidence to persuade mobilized men not to start killings .
Linking: CIVLIAN AGENCY (Berenschot)	• Communities in a neighborhood, across religions, community leaders/elders, outside individuals or institutions in positions of power. • This approach requires the agency to first develop independent networks of access to resources and state power. Secondly, it leverages this access to get others to refrain from violence and keep vested interests out. • Leaders need to leverage their access to independent patronage networks to help the community rise above limitations of poverty and livelihoods. • Requires the ability to develop access to networks that cannot be swayed by incentives offered for being violent. In the context of Gujarat this meant finding networks that that do not keep them at the mercy of a state or other large institutional system interested in violence.

Linking : CAPABLE, RESOURCEFUL CSOs (Srinivas)	• CSOs, communities, govt., politicians, police • This approach enables CSOs with the right capacities and resources to act as better bridges between vulnerable communities and administration/police/politicians to prevent violence. • Focuses on the CSOs ability to confront authorities and perpetrators of violence to protect communities. • The CSOs will need resources and conflict resolution and reconciliation capabilities in addition to their deep knowledge of the community.
Linking: STATE-LED INTERVENTIONS WITH COMMUNITIES	• Police department, community representatives across religions, communities, politicians. • This approach is driven by capable and interested elite, including within the government to take the initiative to connect with communities and truly build their capacities over time. • Risks being elite-led and dependent on individual interests, which then makes sustainability a question.
Bridging/Linking: REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (Vinson)	• Community representatives across religions, communities, politicians. • This approach helps create disincentive for the elite to polarize on grounds of religion, and it: • Requires conditions and institutional framework for negotiating local government representation and functioning • Requires willingness and technical capacity to build power sharing structures with other communities

Comparing Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital

The strength of intra-ethnic networks acts as bonding social capital. Some amount of bonding social capital is healthy for communities to relate to one another, too much of it however will create strong in and out groups and polarization will be very easy. Bridging and linking networks of social capital are not strictly distinct or mutually exclusive in their occurrence. There are likely to be elements of both in some way or form in most forms of associations. However, it will be useful to distinguish between these conceptually as they help to understand the nature of the networks in question better. Research has found that communities with higher levels of all forms of social capital have been seen as more able to mobilize in the face of adversity and less likely to have negative outcomes[210]. It is important therefore, to have an appropriate balance of all types of social capital, not just linking with an absence of the other types.

It is with vulnerable communities that bankers charge usurious interest rates, police corruption is most visible, and teachers fail to show up for work. Linking social capital has several drawbacks, and it is crucial to recognize them. The detailed description of approaches given in Table 2 point to several of these. For instance, both Varshney and Berenschot point to people's institutions with bridging and linking social capital having the risk of being elite-led and therefore less representative of the community's needs. Also, Linking social capital, if created selectively, risks becoming like a patron-client relationship, and therefore tokenistic at best, instead of benefiting the community. This, along with other factors that contribute to continuity, such as resources make them less sustainable. Indeed, scholars have found connections between high levels of linking social capital and nepotism, corruption, and suppression[211].

[210] Onyx, Edwards, and Bullen, "The Intersection of Social Capital and Power."
[211] Onyx, Edwards, and Bullen.

BOX 4: *Bridging and Linking Social Capital Compared*

There is a certain degree of purposefulness and deliberate effort in both bridging and linking social capital. Neither of them form as naturally as bonding social capital, which is made on the basis of traditional kinship ties, and are homogeneous and horizontal. Bridging social capital, while horizontal as well, constitutes of non-kin who are hierarchically undifferentiated like friends and neighbors. The mutual trust and interdependence are cultivated in these instances. Linking social capital goes a step further and extends to non-kin and people in positions of authority like in government, political party or even affiliation with collectives and networks such as SHG federations, association of manufacturers.

Woolcock observes that poor people tend to have strong bonding social capital and some level of bridging social capital, but little linking social capital. Nakagawa and Shaw note that linking social capital is the most important for betterment of the economic environment. They cite examples of natural disasters or crop failure resulting from sudden climate change, as instances in which bonding and bridging social capital might work as a very 'fragile safety-net'. They believe that to eliminate vulnerability of livelihood and make a safer and sustainable environment, linking social capital plays a critical role[1].

In a case related to treatment and medication for thalassemia, Palanisamy et al note that a formal linking network of affected families that supports and provides various resources related to the treatment is vital. Bridging social capital was identified in the form of support from relatives and neighbors when they were in financial need, to meet travel expenses, share emotions, obtain information and companionship for hospital visits. The association with outside NGOs, which was instrumental in increasing awareness of the disease amongst affected families was seen as linking social capital[2].
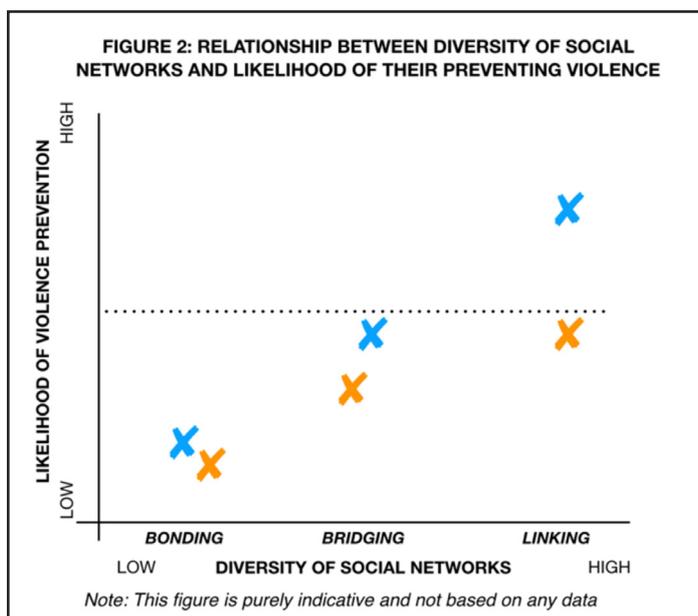
[1] *Nakagawa and Shaw, "Social Capital: A Missing Link to Disaster Recovery," 5–34.*
[2] *Palanisamy, Kosalram, and Gopichandran, "Dimensions of Social Capital of Families with Thalassemia in an Indigenous Population in Tamil Nadu, India – a Qualitative Study," 1–12.*

The graphic given earlier in this section shows that linking capital can be built in affiliation with religious organizations. However, if the religious leader chooses, they can encourage instead of discourage violence using the very same 'link'. Yet, such 'links' open up economic and social opportunities to those belonging to less powerful or excluded groups[212], and are worthy of pursuing. Linking social capital is slow to develop and difficult to sustain, as it involves both shared cultural values regarding service provision and long-term, trusting relationships.

The capacities required of stakeholders to sustain any of the associative frameworks given in the table 1 are at a very high level and need to be broken down into operational capabilities. It is important to continue to experiment with various approaches with a view to enhance and deepen the stock of linking capital.

The current research points to a much smaller stock of linking social capital in India than bonding and bridging, particularly with a view to preventing communal violence. We see this in Figure 2 here which shows the relationship between type of social capital and likelihood of violence prevention. The blue icons are indicative of a scenario where there is police and state support and the financial resources to build capabilities and sustain. The orange icons show a situation without police and state support. If we were to think of a situation without resource support the curve will shift downwards further. The dotted line shows the limits of

FIGURE 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVERSITY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR PREVENTING VIOLENCE

Note: This figure is purely indicative and not based on any data

212 "Grootaert et al. - 2004 - Measuring Social Capital An Integrated Questionna.Pdf."

bridging social capital in preventing violence, beyond which it will need to evolve into linking social capital. The idea here being that in the present, the stock of linking type of social capital needs to go up considering both how low it is and that it is a much more supportive of violence prevention.

Value of Affiliation to Secondary Organizations

This leads us to the notion of grassroots organizations having affiliation to networks or secondary organizations that support them. Based on studies from several parts of the world, Grootaert surmises that supra communal institutions provide a promising venue for the creation of social capital. Local level organizations, operating strictly within a community are very beneficial, he says, to the welfare of the households in the community, but their effectiveness is limited. The value of second level organizations, which act as an umbrella for organizations at the community level and allow them to combine forces in obtaining resources and engaging in a dialogue with the next level is potentially significant[213].

In the Indian context this is exemplified by the fact that the right-wing organizations have the benefit of state support when BJP is in government in states or at the national government. Local activity thrives in instances where the state and the community network get together to build (bonding) social capital[214]. The political and social context is therefore crucial to enabling or disabling the building of social capital that helps prevent violence. Gujarat, for instance has a political economy where everything responds to how the right-wing functions, and how deep its networks run. In Maharashtra, power has changed hands more often and both the Congress and BJP have led state governments. The Shiv Sena, which has been a grassroots cadre-based right-wing political party in Maharashtra has morphed into a somewhat different institution in the present. Coalition politics have, it seems in part tempered its incentives to polarize and encourage violence. (ref. Wilkinson, cited earlier in Section 6 and 8.1). This then influences the possibilities of building linking social capital in ways that a secondary organization can also be created. This may give the whole structure a greater ability to sustain over time and bear ever increasing pressures of polarization.

Any action by civil society is embedded in the political, legal and economic institutions it operates in. This institutional framework can be enable or hinder violence prevention. Particularly in the latter case, there may be merit in the idea of building and strengthening both primary and secondary institutions. They can draw on learning, experience, techniques and energy from one another to find greater sustenance. This may give us cues on heterogeneity being correlated with less violence due to the more even spread of communities.

12 Concluding Note: Imperatives for Peace

Several studies explore the relationship between social capital and violence[215]. A study by Cuesta et al, argues that strengthening interpersonal trust is the single most important determinant to reduce victimization[216]. Evidence from the developing world demonstrates why merely having high levels of social solidarity or informal groups does not necessarily lead to economic prosperity. In many Latin American countries, indigenous groups are often marked by high levels of social solidarity, but they remain excluded economically because they lack the resources and access to power that are necessary to shift the rules of the game in their favor[217].

Through this report, we argue that the need for resources and access to power applies also to the idea of social solidarity and the capacity to prevent violence. Structural factors notwithstanding,

[213] Grootaert and Van Bastelaer, The Role of Social Capital in Development, 348.
[214] Basu, Violent Conjunctures in Democratic India.
[215] Cuesta, Alda, and Lamas, "SOCIAL CAPITAL, VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC INTERVENTION: THE CASE OF CALI," 1–32.
[216] Cuesta, Alda, and Lamas, 1–10.
[217] Woolcock and Narayan, "Social Capital," 230.

the state and authorities can be disincentivized from enabling violence only if the resolve of communities makes them unmalleable to the incentives of violence. For groups to work towards violence prevention themselves and indeed to move to a point where they can demand nonviolence from the State, these groups need access to power, knowledge and resources beyond their immediate means.

As we discuss the value of linking social capital, it is essential to keep in perspective the politics behind building and maintaining such linkages. The goals of community and the institution of power and resources in question may not have enough in common. That poses a real threat to the ability of these links to prevent violence, sustainably. These links are often not built on trust and respect and cannot be understood in isolation from the institutionalized structures of power and accountability[218].

As discussed earlier in this document, the capacity to resist violence and choose nonviolence requires enormous 'agency' and 'capacity' from the communities. As we think about institutionalizing this agency by enabling greater access to alternate networks of power and resources, we need to also focus on the political economy of peace. The incentives of various stakeholders need to be understood even as we attempt to build institutions that focus on preventing violence in the face of deep-seated prejudices and incentives from both communities engage in violence. This quest for peace should also engage with the context and conditions based on cleavages and demography of the electorate, and creating the resources, financial, legal, social.

[218] Rubin, "The Political Dimension of 'Linking Social Capital,'" 438–39.

Annex – 1

Table 1. Civil Society's Potential for Conflict Prevention6 Theoretical Tradition	*Understanding of Civil Society*	*Potential contribution to conflict prevention*
Locke (1632-1704)	Affirm an independent social sphere as a safeguard against arbitrary action by the State.	Protect against the excesses of arbitrary state power and foster the rule of law.
Montesquieu (1689-1755)	Promote social networks as a counterweight to central political authority.	Promote the growth of —acquired—rather than —ascribed—social affiliation, and of overlapping memberships, thus countering the scission of society along ethnic characteristics.
De Tocqueville (1805-1859)	Political socialization of citizens, through which the habit of democratic behavior is acquired.	Foster an open and discursive approach to conflicts, thus teaching citizens through political socialization to become used to dealing with differences.
Gandhi (1869-1948)	The private (family) is the public and political; political education is accessible to all, including illiterates and rural; civil society as the foundation of political order.	Develop transcendental identities based on equality (rather than negotiate between communal identities); personal change as foundation of social and political change and conflict resolution.
Habermas (1929-)	Create a public space (—Public Sphere) for disadvantaged interests, given the ossified power-based structure of political systems.	Provide through various forums and channels a favorable framework for the articulation of interests that are otherwise suppressed or disadvantaged, and foster the emergence of shared values.

Source - Srinivas, 71-72

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Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies

Jawahar Bhawan, Dr Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi 110 001 India

T 91 11 2331 2456, 2375 5117 / 118 | E info@rgics.org W www.rgics.org

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