

CRISIS, CREDIBILITY, AND CORRUPTION

How Ideas and Institutions Shape Government Behaviour in India



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ABSTRACT

Anti-corruption movements play a vital role in democratic development. From the American Gilded Age to global demonstrations in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, these movements seek to combat malfeasance in government and improve accountability. While this collective action remains a constant, how government elites perceive and respond to such agitation, varies. My dissertation tackles this puzzle head-on: *Why do some democratic governments respond more tolerantly than others to anti-corruption movements?*

To answer this research question, I examine variation across time in two cases within the world's largest democracy: India. I compare the Congress Party government's suppressive response to the Jayaprakash Narayan movement in 1975, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government's tolerant response to the India Against Corruption movement in 2012.

For developing democracies such as India, comparativist scholarship gives primacy to external, material interests – such as votes and rents – as proximately shaping government behavior. Although these logics explain elite decision-making around elections and the predictability of pork barrel politics, they fall short in explaining government conduct during credibility crises, such as when facing nationwide anti-corruption movements.

In such instances of high political uncertainty, I argue, it is the absence or presence of an ideological checks and balance mechanism among decision-making elites in government that shapes suppression or tolerance respectively. This mechanism is produced from the interaction between *structure* (multi-party coalition) and *agency* (divergent cognitive frames in positions of authority). In this dissertation, elites analyze the anti-corruption movement and form policy prescriptions based on their frames around social and economic development as well as their concepts of the nation.

My research consists of over 110 individual interviews with state elites, including the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, party leaders, and senior bureaucrats among other officials for the contemporary case; and a broad compilation of private letters, diplomatic cables and reports, and speeches collected from three national archives for the historical study.

To my knowledge this is the first data-driven study of Indian politics that precisely demonstrates how ideology acts as a constraint on government behavior in a credibility crisis. On a broader level, my findings contribute to the recently renewed debate in political science as to why democracies sometimes behave illiberally.

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For my untiring parents, Hassina and Mohammed Bux Baloch

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In ninth grade, my final English exam asked students to write about an inspirational figure. I wrote about my brother. This episode has been a point of humor and awkwardness for us both in its re-telling. However, there is no doubt he hacked down the jungle in order to clear my path through it, and has been my chief cheerleader ever since I can remember. I hope this dissertation goes some way to repaying his endless faith in me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aam Aadmi Party	AAP
Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad	ABVP
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	AIADMK
All India Congress Committee	AICC
All India Forward Bloc	FBL
All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	AIMIM
All India Trinamool Congress	TMC
Association for Democratic Reforms	ADR
Bahujan Samaj Party	BSP
Bharatiya Jana Sangh	BJS
Bharatiya Janata Party	BJP
Bharatiya Lok Dal	BLD
Biju Janata Dal	BJD
Central Bureau of Investigation	CBI
Central Information Commission	CIC
Central Vigilance Commission	CVC
Centre for Policy Alternatives	CPA
Chief Election Commissioner	CEC
Common Minimum Programme	CMP
Commonwealth Games	CWG
Communist Party of India	CPI
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	CPI(M)
Comptroller and Auditor General	CAG
Confederation of Indian Industry	CII
Congress Socialist Party	CSP
Congress Working Committee	CWC
Crime Investigation Department	CID
Delhi Transport Corporation	DTC
Deputy Inspector General	DIG
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	DMK
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry	FICCI
First Information Report	FIR
Group of Ministers	GOM
India Against Corruption	IAC
Indian Administrative Service	IAS
Indian National Congress	INC
Indian Union Muslim League	IUML
Intelligence Bureau	IB
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Jammu and Kashmir National Conference	JKNC

Janata Dal (Secular)	JD(S)
Jawaharlal Nehru University	JNU
Jayaprakash Narayan Movement	JPM
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	JMM
Jharkhand Vikas Morcha	JVM
Maintenance of Internal Security Act	MISA
Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan	MKSS
Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act	MRTTP
National Advisory Council	NAC
National Campaign for People's Right to Information	NCPRI
National Coordination Committee	NCC
National Democratic Alliance	NDA
National Innovation Council	NIC
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	NREGA
Nationalist Congress Party	NCP
Nehru Memorial Museum & Library	NMML
Observer Research Foundation	ORF
Pradesh Congress Committee	PCC
Praja Socialist Party	PSP
Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council	PMEAC
Prime Minister's House	PMH
Prime Minister's Office	PMO
Public-Private Partnerships	PPP
Rashtriya Janata Dal	RJD
Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh	RSS
Reserve Bank of India	RBI
Revolutionary Socialist Party	RSP
Right to Education	RTE
Right to Information	RTI
Samajwadi Party	SP
Shah Commission	SC
Telangana Rashtra Samithi	TRS
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India	TRAI
Times of India	TOI
United Nations	UN
United Progressive Alliance	UPA

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prologue

A phone rang at around 9pm in New York City's Murray Hill neighborhood. "Namaste, is guru-ji there?" enquired a quiet, measured tone. "Father, I believe India's next Prime Minister is on the line for you," the instinctive reply came from the other end. There had been rumors, after all. "I have been expecting your call, Manmohan." The elderly voice of a teacher (*guru*), a fellow technocrat who had served Mrs. Indira Gandhi so dependably 30 years earlier, came calmly through to the phone in Delhi. "What is your counsel, guru-ji? This game is not for me. We are not supposed to be politicians. I'm an economist." There was a pause. And then a response: "The first thing you must do, Manmohan, is sit down and write your resignation letter. Place it in your pocket and you take it into work every single day. You have no idea about the compromises you will have to make and the battles you will have to fight."

13 May 2004 was a momentous day for the Indian National Congress Party. Against the predictions of pollsters, they rose to power at the federal-level, or Centre, in a coalition government. It was the return of India's "Grand Old Party" after what party chiefs considered eight years of political exile on the opposition benches. Just a week later, a different coalition was born; this time unprecedented in the history of Indian politics. On 22 May 2004, India's technocrat Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, walked into Parliament's Ashoka Hall for his swearing in ceremony. After taking his oath, he walked over to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, and bowed slightly. Although Mrs. Gandhi's ability to build a left-leaning coalition, premised on constructing a government for the "common man" (*aam aadmi*) had won Congress the highest office in India, it would be the former-Finance Minister and chief architect of the 1991 neo-liberal reforms, Dr. Singh, who was anointed by the Gandhi family to sit in that most-coveted seat.

Research Puzzle

The puzzle animating this dissertation began to take shape during the summer of 2012. That July I witnessed thousands of citizens from the Indian capital and far beyond take to the streets. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh faced its biggest civic challenge in an anti-corruption movement led by supporters of the Gandhian activist, Anna Hazare, a veteran campaigner who had undertaken a hunger strike in Delhi. This movement, India Against Corruption (IAC), came to a crescendo on the back of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions and a sequence of high-profile corruption scandals that implicated senior officials all the way up to the Prime Minister. The government found itself in the midst of a credibility crisis. Indeed, fast forward to the smoldering summer months of 2013 and the cry from citizens across developing world democracies – from Chile, Brazil, and Mexico to Turkey and Indonesia – raised the global volume for movements calling for better governance through the eradication of corruption in their respective central governments. Each of these governments faced up to mounting pressure, several of them closing in on re-election campaigns. Ensuing reactions saw some democracies, such as Turkey, bizarrely crush the anti-corruption groundswell while yet others, such as Brazil, were more conciliatory. These fascinating sets of events piqued my interest in anti-corruption movements and, more intriguingly, the nature of, and differences in, government response. It led me to the puzzle: Why do we see variation in tolerance among democracies toward anti-corruption movements?

Corruption has once again struck the imagination of citizens and scholars in recent years. The phenomenon subverts the functioning of elections, state mechanisms of representation and accountability; and undermines public trust in state institutions thus leading to public unrest. Extant scholarship has reflected these issues and more. There have been novel accounts written on how, for example, corruption creates insurgencies and

terrorism as donor governments turn a blind-eye to kleptocratic governments.¹ And, elsewhere, how networks of multinationals and corporate investors strike opaque deals with coup leaders that allow the latter to drain a state's natural resources.² India, specifically, has become fertile ground for the study of corruption ranging from the link between lobbying practices and political corruption³ and the divergent reform practices of governments reliant on petty vs. grand corruption⁴ to the very selection of corrupt candidates in high office.⁵ Elsewhere, experimental studies in India (particularly at the sub-national level) have burgeoned, which tend to focus on the effects of corruption on economic development and growth.⁶ All of these works build on a long-standing tradition in political science investigating the relationship between politics and corruption at varying levels of analysis. In this dissertation, I tackle a key part of state-society relations pertaining to the phenomenon of widespread corruption that has received little, explicit attention. That is, *why do some democratic governments respond more tolerantly than others to anti-corruption movements?*

A simplistic answer is: democratic regimes respond more tolerantly than authoritarian ones. This perspective is widely assumed in the academic literature (and among policymakers) but it leaves important theoretical and empirical questions unanswered. First, and foremost, why do some democracies suppress anti-corruption movements while others do not? Second, within democracies, why do some governments choose to punish these demonstrations even when there are clear material (votes and rents) costs in doing so? Third, pertaining to purely interest-based explanations, which interests win out and which do not – and how – when decision-makers decide between strategies to

¹ Sarah Chayes, *Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security* (W. W. Norton and Company, 2015).

² Tom Burgis, *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Corporations, Smugglers, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth* (Harper Collins, 2015).

³ Vineeta Yadav, *Political Parties, Business Groups, and Corruption in Developing Countries* (OUP, 2011).

⁴ Jennifer Bussell, *Corruption and Reform in India: Public Services in the Digital Age* (New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

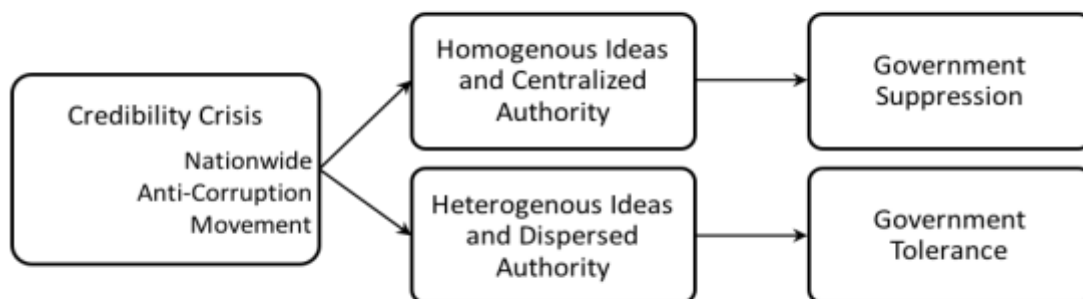
⁵ Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics* (Yale University Press, 2017).

⁶ A. V. Banerjee et al., "Are Poor Voters Indifferent to Whether Elected Leaders Are Criminal or Corrupt? A Vignette Experiment in Rural India" (Mimeo, MIT, 2012); Ben Olken and Rohini Pande, "Corruption in Developing Countries," *Annual Review of Economics* 4, no. 1 (2012): 479–509.

suppress or negotiate with movements? Fourth, and within the context of the global political economy, why do some of democracies appear to ignore signals and pressure from the international community and hegemons when using suppression to respond to anti-corruption movements?

Existing arguments, as I detail in Chapter Two, are inadequate to answer these research questions. They are either over-reliant on external, material interests in explaining government behavior that fail to sufficiently incorporate the uncertain decision-making environment when facing a nationwide anti-corruption movement; or remain underspecified such that empirical correlations are consistent with several alternative interpretations of the underlying causal mechanisms. My short answer will be: Democratic governments are more likely to be tolerant of nationwide anti-corruption movements where heterogeneous ideas are diffused among a range of decision-makers in a coalition government. This is less likely in majoritarian governments in which homogenous ideas dominate among a small group of decision-makers and governments are thus more likely to behave insularly and arbitrarily (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Government Response to Nationwide Anti-Corruption Movements



The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. In the next section, I lay out key components of the research design, including a detailed description of the

dependent variable as well as data collection strategies and methodological tools used to examine original data, ending with a discussion on where, beyond India, my central argument resonates. Then, I illustrate and sketch out my argument and its theoretical and empirical contributions. I finish with a chapter-by-chapter overview of the dissertation.

Research Design

1. The Outcome of Interest and Operationalization of Dependent Variable

This study seeks to explain the determinants of central government behavior during a credibility crisis denoted by a nationwide anti-corruption movement in India.⁷ Specifically, I examine why democratic governments sometimes tolerate, and at other times suppress, these movements. My empirical work compares two cases cross-historically from India: The Congress Party government's suppressive response to the Jayaprakash Narayan movement (JPM) in 1975; and the Congress-led UPA government's negotiated response toward the India Against Corruption movement (IAC) in 2012.

Anti-corruption *movement* here refers to national social movements.⁸ These movements bring together citizens from across the country to challenge the national government, and are important for political scientists to study for theoretical and empirical reasons. First, national-level collective action in developing democracies is bound to be a fixture of future citizen contestation given the penetration of technology as a mobilization

⁷ Many definitions of corruption abound. I rest on the most widely utilized formulation: *the abuse of public office for private gain*. One prominent charge against this classic definition is that it suffers from an ambiguity that makes it simultaneously too narrow and too broad in scope: all illegal acts in office are not necessarily corrupt and all corrupt acts in office are not necessarily illegal. However, my study is not measuring or defining corruption, and so I settle on the aforementioned meaning which has been codified in World Bank and Transparency International studies. This definition is also suitable for my research given the focus on corruption in high office; that is, at the political "Centre" in India.

⁸ I rest here on the definition that social movements are *contentious performances, displays, and campaigns that bear collective claims* (Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768-2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004)).

tool and the enlargement of *political society* that demands legitimation of the state.⁹ Second, such movements are an essential part of democratic politics, specifically the evolution of modern political institutions. In late-nineteenth century U.S., for example, anti-corruption movements made possible the passage of important legislation, for example the Pendleton Act (1883), which established the principle of merit-based recruitment into the federal bureaucracy.¹⁰ Contemporary developing democracies such as India are at a similar critical juncture in their social and economic development where issues such as corruption are no longer acceptable norms to an increasingly middle-class citizenry.¹¹

I study two movements whose aims are defined through the *language of anti-corruption*. Such movements, especially in their organizational forms, can often be viewed as a set of contradictions through the diverse motivations and tactics that activists and leaders among them espouse.¹² For example, in both my cases the movements denote a group of reformers leading an uprising of citizens against widely exposed government corruption; while on the other hand, they also represent some mobilizers using the collective action to further their own social and political ideals. This can be reconciled by envisioning the anti-corruption agitation not as a singular, unified movement but rather a series of shifting, dynamic, loose coalitions. In neglecting the real divisions among movement mobilizers, we fail to explore

⁹ Lina Dencik and Oliver Leistert, eds., *Critical Perspectives on Social Media and Protest: Between Control and Emancipation* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (Columbia, 2004).

¹⁰ Francis Fukuyama, "America in Decay," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September 2014): 5–26. Party bosses and political machines continued to thrive for several generations past this point, but were gradually eliminated in most U.S. cities by the middle of the twentieth century through determined political campaigning of movements such as the Municipal League (Ariane Liazos, PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2007).

¹¹ Susan Stokes, "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina," *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 315–25. See, on the political and economic implications of India's growing middle class, Devesh Kapur, Milan Vaishnav, and Neelanjan Sircar, "The Importance of Being Middle Class in India," 2016, <http://bit.ly/2oDBMMq> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

¹² It is important to note that while anti-corruption movements use many different tactics – from peaceful to violent – I only consider those movements that do not indulge in violent tactics. This allows me to control the type of movement examined across cases and concentrate fully on the variation in government response alone. After all, a government may respond with force to an anti-corruption movement that burns shops, beats officers, and causes general havoc, which would add a further dimension to an already complex study. Overall, even when we control for the size and methods of such movements, it is abundantly clear that the government's actions carry more weight for the direction of tensions between the Centre (state) and the movement (society). This is particularly the case in India.

mechanics of the associations they build, reforms they seek, and their evolution. In focusing on these factors, we can investigate the many ways in which the ruling government can interface with the fluid configurations of anti-corruption movements and their causes. Indeed, the bandwagoning of mutually referencing groups is a common occurrence in nationally mobilized social movements.¹³ In the movements I study, their coalitions and evolution are starkly similar. Moreover, this approach allows the broader applicability of my argument given that there are several de-stabilizing movements around the world that rise against corruption, especially in contexts such as India, where there are plausibly very distinct ideas about what constitutes a good society. I look at some of these cases in the conclusion chapter. However, as fascinating as these movements are on their own, this project focuses on government response.

The dependent variable in my study is *government response*, which I dichotomize in terms of suppression (intolerant) or negotiations (tolerant).¹⁴ I measure government response in terms of the number of imprisonments, physical harm bounded out to movement participants, leaders, and sympathizers such as the press or academics, and the death count. A zero-low figure would constitute a tolerant response, with the greater numbers denoting government intolerance. For example, in its suppressive response to the JPM, the Congress government instituted emergency rule in June 1975 under which 110,806 citizens were arrested and a black-out of selected newspapers was introduced among other mechanisms of suspending civil liberties.¹⁵ JPM activists, leaders, and supporters were the first and most prominent to be targeted. While under the UPA's response in 2012, a small number of IAC demonstrators were temporarily detained while the government focused on negotiating with movement leaders.

¹³ Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 3rd (Rev. & Updated) (Cambridge; New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ These are simply ideal types employed for the sake of parsimony. Governments can often mix and match strategies, as well as attempting strategies somewhere in between suppression and negotiation.

¹⁵ Era Sezhiyan, ed., *Shah Commission Report: Lost and Regained* (henceforth SC) (Aazhi Publishers, 2010), Third and Final Report, Annexure to Chapter XIX.

Government behavior, however, doesn't always approximate scholarly ideal types, which is why I focus on more granular within-case variation in the empirical chapters. For instance, in the case of the UPA government in India, though decision-makers responded with attempts to negotiate with the IAC, during one demonstration led by the spiritual and political guru, Baba Ramdev, the government reacted less peacefully. It is this variation, within cases, and between controlled comparisons, that my theory can reconcile. With this in mind, it is important to note what my theory does not purport to explain.

In this project, I do not make causal claims linking government response to the success or failure of anti-corruption movements. For example, in the historical case under examination, it is plausible that the JPM succeeds when some of its members and sympathizers join the Janata Party, defeat Congress at the 1977 elections, and begin investigations into abuses of the Indira Gandhi government that suppressed the movement. Elsewhere, though the IAC negotiates on an anti-corruption ombudsman (*Lokpal*) bill with the government, the movement arguably fails to succeed given that at the time of writing no ombudsman has been selected let alone weeding out corruption in India. It is therefore not only difficult to make generalizable claims about the effects of suppression or tolerance on the success of an anti-corruption movement, but this exploration remains outside the scope of my project.

Furthermore, this dissertation does not examine corruption *qua* corruption. It is not necessarily the case that the government's response, tolerant or not, correlates with less or more corruption in that government. I assume corruption to be a constant in India, and, hence, am more interested in how government behavior varies in the face of widespread corruption, when a nationwide anti-corruption movement creates a credibility "crisis" environment such that the government must react.¹⁶ In other words, I am more interested in the response itself, and which causal factors motivate it.

¹⁶ Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays*.

Overall, few studies on corruption sufficiently interrogate variation in government behavior and tend to assume that decision-makers, particularly in low- and medium-income countries, are captured by external, material interests. This is in part a shortcoming of access to data and methods used to study decision-making in India.¹⁷ Next, I show how I build my theory, and the original data I utilize, to illustrate new understandings of government behavior in India.

2. Data Collection and Methodology

This dissertation gives primacy to causal process tracing and the use of case studies.¹⁸ This approach is ideal for the inductive theory-building exercise in this dissertation. The focus here is on providing intensive analysis of two cases, compared across time, at the national level in India. In the conclusion, I explore contingent generalizability of my theory cross-nationally in developing democracies like India.¹⁹

¹⁷ The study of Indian politics has become replete with experimental methods, filled with assumptions at the individual level that do not always match up to social and political realities. Hence, we see the concretization of assumptions such as “rent-seeking politicians” which act as covering laws in several extant works on political behavior in India (I will discuss this more fully in Chapter Two). In my study, it would be unrealistic and too expensive to separate treatment and control groups with regards to complex government procedures such as Cabinet decision-making. Such topics require a high degree of differentiation and thick description.

¹⁸ *Process tracing* is “the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either *developing* or testing hypotheses about *causal mechanisms that might actually explain the case* (my emphasis)” (Bennett and Checkel, *Process Tracing*, 7). While *cases* are social constructions of “both political actors and social scientists who study and define political categories” (Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 8). My study is also a *within-case* analysis as it extrapolates evidence from within the temporal domain of the India “case.” Therefore I mainly trace *causal process observations* (CPOs) defined as, “observations on context, process, or mechanism” (Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Second (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 12).

¹⁹ A similar design has been utilized by leading comparativists working on developing country contexts: Melani Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon* (Cornell University Press, 2014); and Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

A. Controlled Comparison within India

I use a controlled comparison of two case studies of government response to anti-corruption movements to develop my theory. I employ a most-similar, different-outcome framework for case selection; that is, comparisons of cases of governments and anti-corruption movements where much is shared between them except the value of my independent and dependent variables.²⁰ This theory-building, small-n research design thus employs Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett's method of "structured, focused comparison."²¹ This approach consists of three phases: designing the research, carrying out field and archival work pertaining to the selected case studies, and drawing the larger theoretical implications of the case findings in the conclusion.²²

My cases derive from one country, India. India is the world's largest democracy and therefore provides "food for thought" for scholars interested in democratization and its puzzles.²³ For many years now, several scholars in different disciplines have investigated the historically challenging birth of India's democracy.²⁴ And yet, despite its uncertain origins, India transitioned to a democracy "in spite of the Gods" and has continued to consolidate a democratic regime.²⁵ One may argue at this point that such exceptionalism could deter comparative research on India. However, the very deviancy of India's democratic development allows researchers the prospect to build "risky predictions"²⁶ or "novel facts"²⁷ that can provide new insights for theory development, particularly among new and

²⁰ John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative, and Inductive*, vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1834]).

²¹ George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 67.

²² *Ibid.*, 73.

²³ Alistair McMillan, "Deviant Democratization in India," *Democratization* 15, no. 4 (August 2008): 733–49.

²⁴ For classic studies, see, inter alia: Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (University of Chicago Press, 1967); Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Atul Kohli, *The Success of India's Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

²⁵ Edward Luce, *In Spite of Gods: The Strange Rise of Modern India* (London: Little, Brown, 2006).

²⁶ Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (Routledge Press, 1963).

²⁷ Imre Lakatos, "The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," ed. John Worrall and G. Currie (Cambridge University Press, 1978 [1970]).

developing democracies.

I examine variation in two cases across time.²⁸ I compare the Congress Party government's intolerant response toward the JPM (1974-1975), with the Congress-led UPA government's tolerant response toward the IAC (2011-2012). Though my case selection allows control for partisanship, the contemporary, tolerant government response follows sequentially from the historical, intolerant response. In this context, the use of the internal emergency policy mechanism, as instituted under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975 to suppress the JPM, was less likely under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2012.²⁹ The emergency period (1975-1977) has left an indelible mark on the country's post-Independence history as an aberration in her democratic development.³⁰ As we will see in Chapter Three, freedom of the press, opposition, and assembly, among other civil liberties were crushed using emergency laws. In turn, Congress governments since this time have, at least publically, remained highly selective in their reflections and perception of government suppression under Gandhi.³¹ Nevertheless, and starkly given this historical backdrop, many other forms of, and justifications for, government suppression have continued to take shape in India at the Centre and state-levels since the early-1970s and, as my data shows, were strongly considered and in a few instances carried out by some decision-makers in the

²⁸ Selecting my cases from one geographical region will help apply background control for spuriousness (Gerring, *Case Study Research*, 81).

²⁹ Indira Gandhi's own historical experience provides a possibly ambivalent signal with regards to government intolerance. Her inspirational father, former-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-64), had set a precedence in 1949 for banning and arresting ideological others in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) who were considered enemies of the Indian nation and its secular order; but she, along with many others in government, had been imprisoned and suppressed by state security forces under British rule as part of the Indian independence struggle prior to 1947. My discussion in Chapter Four reconciles these factors by centralizing the role of Gandhi's ideological anchoring in the Congress' inclusive nationalism.

³⁰ More on this in Chapter Three. For details, see: Emma Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi* (University of California Press, 2003); Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³¹ In recent years, Congress Party President, Sonia Gandhi, has said that it is difficult to predict how Indira Gandhi would view the emergency period today, but that she believed the former-Prime Minister would not have called for elections in 1977 had she not felt "extremely uncomfortable" with the preceding two years (Rajdeep Sardesai Interview, *India Today*, 21 November 2016, <http://bit.ly/2ssuzVV> (Accessed 20 April 2017)).

UPA when they faced IAC in 2011-2012.³² I evaluate and reconcile these factors of continuity and change in the next chapter as well as the empirical study of the cases.

For the contemporary case I utilize over 110 original interviews with state elites from the period of study including the Prime Minister, senior members of the party, Cabinet ministers, senior bureaucrats, and other senior officials in the Planning Commission, National Advisory Council (NAC), Election Commission, Comptroller Auditor General's (CAG) office, Judiciary, and opposition groups (Appendix C.1-C.2); as well as a close study of newspaper reportage (Appendix E).³³ In addition, I use assessments garnered from seven focus groups conducted with members from a cross-section of civil society, businesses, and the bureaucracy (Appendix C.3).

For the historical case I examine a broad set of decision-makers' private letters, correspondence, and speeches collected from three national archives (India, U.S., and UK) that are yet to be examined collectively in the context of my outcome of interest; as well as

³² The fact that an emergency is politically unviable today is true of non-Congress governments, too. However, this does not mean that alternative (and subversive) methods of intolerance do not take shape, as we are witnessing under the current BJP government in India that has been accused of carrying out or covering suppression with regards to: Arrests of political opponents, extra-judicial killings, blocking of judicial appointments to bring the institution in line with the government's ideological vector, press censorship, and generally suppressive policies bound up in, and shelter to vigilantes beating and killing in the name of, religious-nationalism (Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "There Is No Emergency," *Indian Express*, 5 November 2016, <http://bit.ly/2exBvIT> (Accessed 20 April 2017)). We see such actions eerily echoed in Chapters Three-Four.

³³ Following Oisin Tansey I used both "reputational" as well as "positional" non-probability sampling methods, i.e. respondents were based not only on their formal positions but their reputations or informal influence within a particular decision-making grouping in the UPA (Oisin Tansey, "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40, no. 4 (October 2007): 765–72). Using the reputational method of selection helped identify informal yet influential individuals in the political and economic realms, actors who may have been overlooked if using only positional selection criteria. To protect interviewees from possible negative consequences, most responses have been anonymized based on the interviewee's wishes.

newspaper reports, party manifestos, memoirs, and autobiographies (Appendix E).³⁴ Specifically, I focus on leaders' decision-making, since my project is, at root, about why governments do one thing and not the other.³⁵ In this way, my methodological approach ties in neatly with the "historical turn" in the comparative study of democratization.³⁶

³⁴ There have been limitations in my exploration of this case given the restricted access the Government of India provides to researchers of this period. Many official documents have been destroyed, while Indira Gandhi's private papers and government records are not open to scholars. Even P.N. Dhar, whose memoirs are perhaps one of the most widely referenced of any primary writing on the emergency, did not have access to official records (P. N. Dhar, *Indira Gandhi, the "Emergency," and Indian Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2000)). The official, legal investigation into the decision to institute an emergency and its effects – the Shah Commission Report – was released in August 1978. However, when Gandhi returned to power in January 1980, she had all known copies withdrawn and destroyed. A couple of libraries in the UK and Australia maintained the report and, recently, a resurrected copy of the report was published in 2010 by former-Indian MP, Era Sezhiyan (Sezhiyan, *Shah Commission Report: Lost and Regained*). Despite the political wrangling around the report (most recently President of India P. Mukherjee's memoirs (Pranab Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade: The Indira Gandhi Years* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2015), leading legal experts in India today believe the commission report to be reliable and the only official enquiry into the causes and events of the emergency. Meanwhile, JP's papers at the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML) are private in name only as they consist almost entirely of articles and speeches that are available open-sourced. Indeed, evidence that is unavailable often lowers the upper limit of the probability one can attach to the explanation. One way I have overcome this is through triangulating the evidence, including excavating private correspondence from related archives that includes the actors under study. For example, uncovering diplomatic cables from the U.S. and UK where I found first-hand observations and interviews with Congress Party leaders and other decision-makers from the period. A look at diplomatic cables for purely domestic politics analysis is seldom employed, and haven't been utilized in other studies of the emergency in context of the JPM. The evidence which follows in the empirical chapters is as much about corroborating evidence as it is about uncovering primary material from India and elsewhere. In tracing the causal steps leading up to the decision to institute the emergency, I have concerned myself with what is written but also with how it is written and what has been excluded.

³⁵ The vicissitudes of India's politics, as examined in this study, heightens political agency. Within government, competing decision-makers drive policymaking where they are confronted with an intensely competitive federal party system. Here, I will argue, intra- and inter-party politics is determined by the balance of power among government elites (Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson, eds., *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)). In my study, I privilege agency-based explanations that are especially useful for overcoming an institutional determinism that implies state performance is driven solely by the formal rules, or structure, governing politics. Structures, rather, do not come with "instruction sheets" (Mark Blyth, "Structures Do Not Come with an Instruction Sheet: Interests, Ideas, and Progress in Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 4 (December 2003): 695–706). As historical institutionalists point out, government systems create incentives, opportunities and constraints that political actors have to appraise (see: Wolfgang Streeck and Thelen, eds., *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies* (Oxford University Press, 2005)).

³⁶ Daniel Ziblatt and Giovanni Capocchia, "The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies," *Comparative Political Studies*, 2010. In researching the historical case (1974-1975) and examining the archival documents pertaining to it, I have faithfully adhered to the three methodological propositions of philosopher of history, R.G. Collingwood: i) all history is the history of thought; ii) historical knowledge is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying; and iii) historical knowledge is the re-enactment of a past thought encapsulated in a context of present thoughts, which, by contradicting it, confine it to a plane different from theirs (R. G. Collingwood, *My Autobiography* (Oxford University Press, 2014 [1939]), 111–115).

Scholars in this tradition posit that innovative variables, such as ideas, need further exploration in the study of new democracies. As outlined in this introduction, and detailed in Chapter Two, the role of ideas is treated as an explanatory variable in my overall causal argument. Moreover, the decisive role of government type in the deepening of democracy is also central to my argument where I examine the divergent effects of single-party majority government vs. multi-party coalition government.³⁷ Specifically, and as I detail below, I examine the causal interaction between *structure* and *agency* to explain the causal mechanism shaping government response to anti-corruption movements in India.³⁸

Utilizing data from the fieldwork phase of the research, the values of all causal variables are explained primarily through narrative-based analyses of the cases and in some instances are supported by other proxy measures (quantitative and qualitative). Each variable is measured using a fine-grained analysis of each case's unique political environment and the content and spread of specific ideas among decision-makers in authoritative positions of power, as well as the exogenous sources of these ideas.

B. Process-Tracing Ideas and Institutions

One part of my analysis examines the ways in which institutional context, i.e. government type, generates strategic incentives and, more precisely, places constraints on the political actors. As I study a puzzle on which there is little prior theorizing in the India context, I proceed through inductive study. This involves analyzing events backward

³⁷ This distinction also finds resonance in the work of comparativist tour de force, Arend Lijphart, on consociationalism. Lijphart divided political systems based on whether regimes are majoritarian or multi-party (Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Theory: Problems and Prospects. A Reply," *Comparative Politics* 13, no. 3 (1981): 355–60; Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

³⁸ *Causal mechanisms* are ontological entities in the world about which we theorize: "If we are able to measure changes in the entity [outcome to be explained] being acted upon after the intervention of the causal mechanism and in temporal or spatial isolation from other mechanisms, then the causal mechanism [under study] may be said to have generated the observed change in the entity" (Bennett and Checkel, *Process Tracing*, 12; George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 137).

through time, identifying how each step in the causal chain has taken shape from government response to potential antecedent causes, and locating causal mechanisms therein. This allows me to exploit variation over time in my cases and tightly assemble sequential evidence.³⁹ The first chapter of each case employs this method through deploying case-specific knowledge of the formal and informal institutional structures within each government, patterns of political competition, economic and social conditions, and details the substantive issues (government corruption, the emergence of national collective action against it, and the government's response) at hand. I supplement this approach, given the causal interaction between institutions and ideas in my theory, with an inventive *ideational* process-tracing method in the second chapter of each case.⁴⁰

The second part of my analysis seeks to measure, and illustrate causal independence of, decision-makers' ideas.⁴¹ Ideational mechanisms have characteristics that make them especially tricky to study as compared to materially driven causal processes that dominate my outcome's rival explanations. In this dissertation, decision-making elites analyze the anti-corruption movements and form responses through their ideational frames around social and economic development as well as their concepts of the nation (detailed more fully in

³⁹ Tightly-knit tracing of CPOs can prove decisive against rival hypotheses, especially in helping to eliminate the beliefs or motives of downstream actors (i.e. those with purely strategic incentives) (Alan Jacobs, "Process Tracing the Effects of Ideas," in *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, 62).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* An ideational argument privileges the content of cognitive structure influencing actors' responses to a choice situation, and in which that cognitive structure is not wholly endogenous to objective, material features of the situation being explained (*Ibid.*, 43). Variation in choices across cases is therefore explained by reference to variation in the *content of actors' cognitions* (*Ibid.*, 44). Given my theoretical argument privileges the *interaction* between ideational and institutional variables, this part of my data examination task treats ideas as one component of the explanation.

⁴¹ I rest on Kathleen Knight's definition for ideas: *a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values*. To this "core" definition, Knight adds supplemental terms of *contrast* (parties, groups, and "isms" such as nationalism that juxtapose one abstract group, and its beliefs, with another) and *spatial conceptualization* (location on a left-right or liberal-conservative continuum) (Kathleen Knight, "Transformations of the Concept of Ideology in the Twentieth Century," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006): 625). Elsewhere, as per Douglass North, Sheri Berman, and Mark Blyth among others, I use "ideas," "ideational," and "ideology" interchangeably (Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*; Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)). These terms get a sense of ideas that fit together to give individuals guidance on how to make sense of causal relationships in the world and act within it.

Chapter Two). I follow three steps when examining data pertaining to these ideas in the second chapter of each case:

- i) *Measuring the independent variable*: Identifying the decision-makers' sincere ideational commitments
- ii) *Finding evidence of the causal mechanism*: Establishing that the relevant ideas were applied to the choice being explained
- iii) *Establishing exogeneity of the independent variable*: Locating an ideational source external to the situation being explained

The approach begins by expanding the empirical scope of study in terms of temporal range in order to then trace the exogeneity of ideas.⁴² The key to establishing the causal independence of ideas, is to study where cognitive frameworks come from.⁴³ I therefore take seriously decision-making elites' statements and behavior at key moments related directly to my outcome (their response at the time of the anti-corruption movement) but also through several sequences of (in)directly related events and the movement of decision-makers, or *idea carriers*, across institutional settings over an extended period including prior to entering authoritative positions in government.⁴⁴ Beyond establishing exogeneity of ideas and their subsequent diffusion, throughout the narrative I look to reduce their multicollinearity against objective, material interests to illustrate causal

⁴² Observation of decision-makers' behavior over substantial stretches of time can help distinguish ideational from material causes by uncovering independent variation in these two sets of factors (*Ibid.*, 57). For a similar longitudinal design for the study of ideas, see Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*.

⁴³ This strategy, of sufficiently illustrating prior intellectual ancestry of decision-makers' ideas, is considered a "hoop test" for the causal narrative, without which the case for independent ideational influence would be considered weak (Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*).

⁴⁴ Idea carriers' belief systems can often be inferred by reference to their *sociological context* – such as their embeddedness in a professional network or the site of their training or education – or from *past verbal communication*. Thus, the most useful idea carriers for examination are technocrats; those that have a prior track record of activity outside of politics – an intellectual or professional setting in which incentives for strategic misrepresentation or beliefs are limited (Jacobs, "Process Tracing the Effects of Ideas," 68; on tracing of programmatic ideas, see Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*). Distinct conceptual frameworks can lead actors to prioritize separate goals, attend to distinct pieces of information, or employ particular causal logics.

independence and divergent preferences.⁴⁵ This is where proxy measures, for example election results and specific policies that align with the interests of, for example, large capital domestically and/or international pressures, examined against decision-makers' ideas can help to discount (or temper) material incentives. Over-time patterns of tracing ideas will help me undermine the *sufficiency* of purely instrumental narratives, and locate and scrutinize the availability of the relevant ideas that are *necessary* for the outcome to take shape.

Abovementioned methodological and data-gathering tools come with many advantages and disadvantages.⁴⁶ Ultimately, however, I examine diverse, complex, and sometimes conflicting claims, and have judged their credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness according to the best practices of empirical verification.⁴⁷ The test lies in producing a tightly specified theory with thickly detailed causal observations that substantially enhance the discriminating power of my argument.⁴⁸

C. Contingent Generalizability and Developing Democracies

In the concluding chapter, I explore the contingent generalizability of my theory cross-nationally in similar developing democracies to India. In keeping with the requirements of the method of structured, focused comparison, the research objective in my project is focused in that it investigates a subclass of the broader phenomena of

⁴⁵ It is important to note here that ideational accounts are fully compatible with an instrumentalist logic of choice (that is at the heart of many of the studies on government behavior specifically in the Indian context). The key distinguishing feature of my argument is that those goals and beliefs can vary independently of objective material conditions, generating different decisions.

⁴⁶ Elite interviews, like all data collecting tools, carry some inherent limitations regarding issues of validity and reliability of collected information. To overcome this, I have triangulated all interview data with other primary and secondary sources in order to corroborate the collected information and, where interviews are the only source of information available, I require at least one other independent interview source to corroborate that particular piece of evidence before the claim can be viewed as reliable (P.H.J. Davies, "Spies as Informants: Triangulation and Interpretation of Elite Interview Data in the Study of Intelligence and Security Services," *Politics* 21, no. 1 (2001): 73–80, 78). The sheer number of interviews in the contemporary case (110+) largely exceeds the number of interview observations in comparable studies.

⁴⁷ Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*.

⁴⁸ One key step in this strategy is to cast a very wide net for alternative explanations, hence the very detailed theory chapter in this dissertation (Bennett and Checkel, *Process Tracing*, 18).

democratization and government accountability: that is, why are some democracies tolerant towards anti-corruption movements while others punish such movements.⁴⁹ This focus on a subclass of cases allows me to develop a *middle-range* theory, which, in contrast to highly generalized covering laws, consists of *contingent* generalizations that do not purport to apply in all contexts.⁵⁰

While my project is a comparative study of two governments in one country, its central argument resonates with government response to anti-corruption movements in other parts of the world.⁵¹ I specifically look at contexts like India, namely stable multi-party developing democracies that have faced nationwide anti-corruption movements. This is a universe of cases that has been examined widely by scholars working on South Asia, or India alone, in the extension of their theories.⁵² The cases I look at are also from similar low and middle income countries, namely, Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Romania, where rent-seeking and other, material external pressures would be plausibly considered tougher constraints on government behavior over and above ideology.

Argument

This dissertation seeks to explain the variation in government response to anti-corruption movements in India. The divergent outcomes can be understood as comprising a single dependent variable: *government response*. The core argument presented throughout this study is that two (inter-related but causally independent) variables (IV) primarily explain the

⁴⁹ George and Bennett, *Case Studies*, 77.

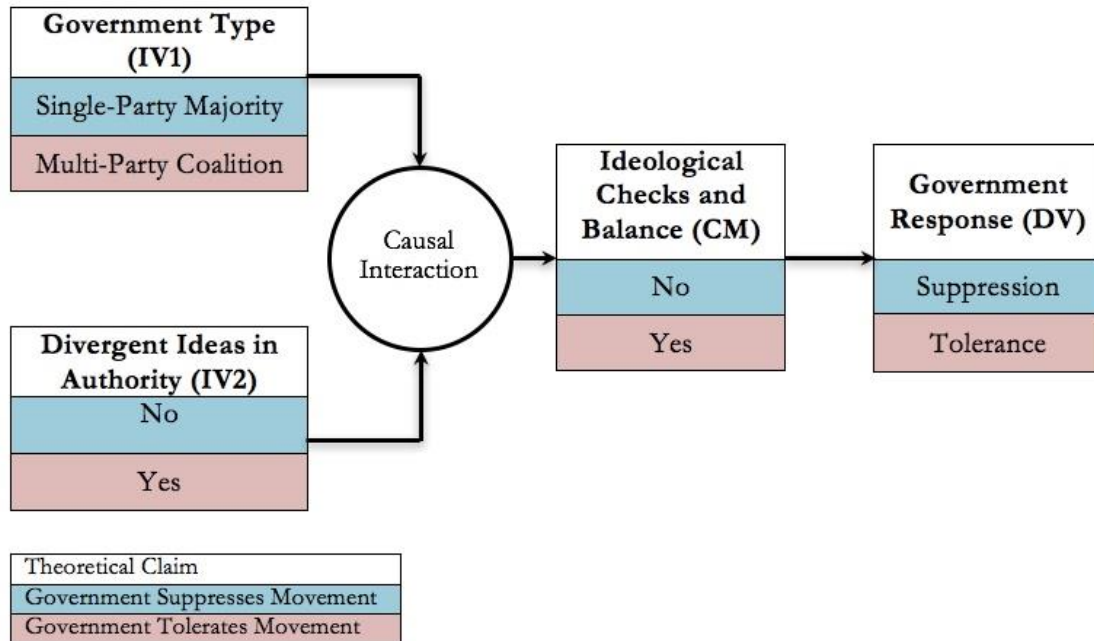
⁵⁰ Gerring, *Case Study Research*; Daniel Ziblatt, *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism* (Princeton University Press, 2006). Indeed, generalizability – or universality – is a matter of scope (Harold Kincaid, *Philosophical Foundations of the Social Sciences: Analyzing Controversies in Social Research* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). More on this in Chapter Seven.

⁵¹ Case-study methodologists have argued that a hypothesis might be generalizable if it explains a case that, a priori, it looked *least likely to explain* (Bennett and Checkel, *Process Tracing*, 13). This is certainly true for ideational causes of government behavior in a low-income country, such as India, where rival interest- and rent-seeking explanations remain hegemonic.

⁵² Yadav, *Political Parties, Business Groups, and Corruption*; Bussell, *Corruption and Reform in India*; Tariq Thachil, *Elite Parties, Poor Votes* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

divergent outcomes of government response toward the anti-corruption movements: *government type* (single-party majority or multi-party coalition) and the *heterogeneity of ideas among decision-makers* (divergent and dispersed in authoritative positions in government or not). The causal interaction between these two variables produces a specific causal mechanism (CM), namely an ideological checks and balance.⁵³ These probabilistic and historically conditioned causal claims are illustrated below (figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Illustrative Map for Causal Argument



The argument above maps out the causal pathways through which the Indian government responds to nationwide anti-corruption movements. An anti-corruption movement in India brings the ire of the citizenry squarely toward the government. In both

⁵³ Traditionally, under checks and balances mechanisms, separate branches (institutions) of government are empowered to prevent actions by other branches and are induced to share power over policymaking. I conceptualize the ideological checks and balance to function in the same way among decision-making elites in authoritative positions of power in government.

my cases, grand corruption implicating ministers all the way up to and including the Prime Minister is alleged in a context of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions. Thus, these movements take shape in a distinctive crisis environment where government credibility has plummeted, and uncertainty engulfs the political arena. With this setting in mind, the argument is as follows.

The first of the two organizing claims in my argument is *government type*. The type of government – single-party majority (SPM) or multi-party coalition (MPC) – represents the institutional setting that shapes the environment for ideational struggle over policymaking among decision-makers and provides the openings (or closing) for distinct ideas to enter government.

An SPM, with plausibly fewer veto players – actors that can block (or not) executive action – witnesses less contestation among decision-makers. Elites in such an institutional setting are more likely to act autonomously and arbitrarily than those in an MPC where, with a plausibly greater number of veto players, contestation among decision-makers is high.

In an MPC the largest party in the legislature, in my study the Congress, cannot enact its ideal policies because it does not possess the majority of seats. Rather, it must compromise with members of its governing coalition. Additionally, as political parties are not unitary actors, specific decision-making elites – party politicians, technocrats, senior bureaucrats, among others – in authoritative positions of policymaking power also possess a veto on executive action. In an SPM, by contrast, such as the Indira Gandhi-led Congress, there is no subservience to such institutional constraints. However, institutions are not neutral areas of decision-making, but rather reflect decision-makers' preferences and priorities. Therefore, the number and presence of veto players does not sufficiently explain suppression or tolerance toward an anti-corruption movement in a crisis setting where informational asymmetries are salient. In such cases, ideas render interests actionable.

The second organizing claim, which interacts with the above institutional constraints (or their absence), concerns *decision-making elites' ideas* that diagnose and strategize action toward nationwide anti-corruption collective action.

The causal interaction between a coalition government and divergent preferences among decision-making elites creates a *checks and balance* mechanism on government behavior. In a crisis environment, decision-makers' actions are not simply mechanical responses to external determining structures, such as materially derived interests, but guided by their cognitive frames, or ideas. These ideologies can be broken into two constituent variables in my cases: social and economic development frames (neo-liberal/reformist) and nationalism (inclusion/exclusion).

In the Congress Party majority government, with less veto players and the salience of a homogenous inclusive nationalism among party politicians, a suppressive response became more likely in the face of the anti-corruption movement. The party's unchecked dominant ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity and re-establish credibility within government by suppressing ideological others – right-wing exclusive nationalists – mobilized within the JPM. Contrastingly, in the UPA coalition government, with more veto players and divergent ideas (neo-liberal/reformist/secular-nationalist) spread among dissimilar decision-makers in authoritative positions of policymaking power, an ideological check and balance mechanism produced a tolerant response toward the IAC.

The details of each claim, above, specifically its empirical and theoretical basis will be detailed in the next chapter. Before concluding this introduction, let me outline the general contribution of my project.

1. Contribution: Theoretical and Empirical

The causes and correlates of government response to social movements are a recurrent theme in many works, including those on Indian democracy, state-society relations, corruption, political economy of development, and elections; detailed in the next chapter. My specific question, however, has not been tackled. Therefore, the present puzzle and its exploration is new ground for theory development. In the process, I situate aspects of my argument in gaps within the literature on comparative politics. I highlight two aspects of this contribution below.

First, my theory can identify the precise causal mechanism linking democratic governments' response to anti-corruption movements. The conventional wisdom in comparative politics dichotomizes regime type into democratic and authoritarian. Generally, the literature argues that democracies respond more tolerantly to dissent than do authoritarian governments. However, the link between a democratic regime and toleration of an anti-corruption movement fails to specify causal mechanisms that can explain variation within democracies. Indeed, my puzzle shows that democracies can sometimes act illiberally.⁵⁴ Certainly, the political events of the last two decades from cases in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and arguably even the U.S. today, justify this observation. This does not mean, however, that the regime type argument is falsified; but it does mean that more granular exploration regarding the precise mechanisms linking democratic regimes to government behavior is needed. My theory highlights an *ideological* checks and balance causal mechanism that adds to existing institutional- and interest-based checks and balance explanations of elite decision-making in developing democracies and other low-income

⁵⁴ As Fareed Zakaria argues, liberal democracies are marked not only by free-and-fair elections, but also other key factors including the rule of law, separation of powers, and, critically for my cases, the protection of basic liberties of freedom of speech and assembly. Per this definition, and given that the government arrested movement leaders and sympathizers and subsequently outlawed freedom of speech, the press, and assembly, Congress under Prime Minister Gandhi acted illiberally in crushing the JPM (Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (W. W. Norton and Company, 2007, 17-18).

country contexts. This ideas-based approach to separation-of-powers frameworks has far more currency when explaining the constraints on government behavior during periods of high uncertainty and crisis, such as when facing a nationwide anti-corruption movement. Ideas can counterbalance decision-makers' ability to act arbitrarily and suppressively, and therefore illiberally.⁵⁵

Relatedly, and second, I advance an ideas-based explanation to the two literatures on the political economy of government behavior and corruption in India that have thus far been over-reliant on purely interest based explanations derived from rational-choice frameworks. As one scholar of India remarked recently, ideology is today seen as far less of a constraint on political behavior in India than it is in most other democracies of comparable age. My theory runs counter to this assertion and maps out precisely why and how ideas matter in Indian government decision-making. This critique forms the central part of the theory chapter, next.

Chapter Overview: How the Dissertation Proceeds

The dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter Two, I develop my theoretical argument, outlining why the dominant determinants of government decision-making in India, advanced by both scholars and policymakers, do not hold under credibility crisis conditions such as when facing nationwide anti-corruption movements. I begin by describing the broad analytic framework of my argument that introduces my *constructivist-structuralism* approach. I then explicate and evaluate the main literature strands that provide alternative hypotheses for my outcome of interest. These accounts do tell us about decision-making around elections and the long-term predictable politics of budgets and

⁵⁵ Given the 2008 financial crisis, the U.S. and EU's declining global influence and democratically degenerative behavior in recent months; the growing power and self-confidence of authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China; along with volatile oil prices, it is of huge importance for scholars and policymakers alike to study's democracy's possible retrograde motion but also its resilience in the context of the current chaotic geopolitical landscape.

policy formulations, but are less useful for understanding government tolerance in the face of anti-corruption movements when uncertainty is salient. I then carefully build out my theoretical argument wherein I illustrate the precise working of the ideological checks and balance mechanism.

Chapters Three and Four focus on the historical case, the Congress Party government's (1971-1975) suppressive response toward the JPM (1974-1975). Chapter Three begins by detailing the electoral strength of the Congress Party under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; followed by a discussion of the JPM, its rise and composition, and subsequent confrontation with the government. The main theme of this chapter is to thickly illustrate the institutional environment within the single-party majority government, wherein contestation among decision-makers was low and subsequent action by Gandhi and her advisors was autonomous and arbitrary. Chapter Four focuses on the key decision-makers' perspectives in diagnosing the anti-corruption movement. These ideas were enshrined within Gandhi's populism, undergirded by Congress' *inclusive* nationalism – anchored in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights. Decision-makers – all party politicians – viewed the JPM as mobilized through right-wing *exclusivist* nationalist groups and backed by opposition parties. The party's unchecked, homogenous ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity within the government – especially in a crisis environment where government credibility was low and had to therefore be re-established – and suppress ideological “others” within the JPM.

Chapter Five and Six focus on the contemporary case, the Congress-led UPA government's (2004-2014) tolerant response toward the IAC (2011-2012). Chapter Four begins by detailing the coalition dynamics and electoral volatility of the Congress-led UPA. I then discuss the IAC, its rise and composition, and subsequent confrontation with the government. The main theme of this chapter is to thickly detail the institutional constraints placed on the UPA by multiple veto players in the coalition – not only the parties but also a specific division of power between the Congress Party and government that added to the

polycentric policymaking environment. This resulted in elevated contestation among decision-makers, thus placing constraints on arbitrary UPA action. Chapter Six focusses on the key decision-makers' divergent perspectives in diagnosing the anti-corruption movement. These distinct ideas are linked to decision-makers' specific professional and sociological backgrounds, from which three main cognitive frameworks emerge around social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist) and nationalism (secular-nationalist). These decision-makers – party politicians, technocrats, and activists – contested for influence over policymaking within the UPA government. These perspectives shaped the government's diagnosis of, and strategy toward, the IAC: on one end of the scale some were more sympathetic toward the IAC (reformist) and on the other end some were completely antagonistic (secular-nationalist), while yet others were dismissive (neo-liberal). The ensuing checks and balance among elites produced a negotiated, tolerant government response.

The dissertation concludes with Chapter Seven. Here, I begin by presenting a summary of the study's findings. I then turn to the policy implications of my research as well as a comparative assessment with other plausible cases where my argument resonates. I specifically look at contexts like India, namely low- to middle-income, stable multi-party developing democracies that have faced nationwide anti-corruption movements: Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Romania. I finish with the theoretical implications of my argument, namely with recourse to executive control mechanisms in the coalition politics literature, and outline areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS IN INDIAN GOVERNMENT BEHAVIOR

“In decisive historical moments, political capacity (which includes organization, will, and ideologies) is necessary to enforce or to change a structural situation. Intellectual evaluation of a given situation and ideas about what is to be done are crucial in politics.”

(Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, 1979: xi)

“[I]t is a paradox that scholars, whose entire existence is centered on the production and understanding of ideas, should grant ideas so little significance for explaining political life.”

(Kathryn Sikkink, 1991: 3)

Introduction

This chapter presents a causal theory explaining variation in democratic governments’ tolerance of anti-corruption movements in India. I begin the chapter by outlining my over-arching analytical framework, *structural-constructivism*. Here I locate the government as a sphere of ideational contestation where the conquest for power over policymaking is itself a key objective for elite decision-makers in positions of authority. I then turn to alternative explanations of my research question, namely in the corruption, political economy, and democracy literatures. Existing arguments provide inadequate answers – they are either over-reliant on external, material interests in explaining government behavior (in the literature on corruption and political economy), or remain underspecified such that empirical correlations are consistent with several alternative interpretations of the underlying causal mechanisms (in the literature on democracy). In laying out my argument, I foreground the crisis environment in which nationwide anti-corruption movements take shape, that heighten uncertainty for decision-makers. I illustrate that government type – single-party majority or multi-party coalition – determine an institutional set of constraints that *interact* with ideologies in authoritative positions of power to explain government response. The interaction between a coalition government and

divergent preferences among decision-making elites produces a causal mechanism, ideological “checks and balances,” that shapes government tolerance toward an anti-corruption movement.

Analytic Framework: Structural-Constructivism

The argument in this dissertation encompasses what I refer to as a *structural-constructivism* analytic framework.¹ This approach combines advances in both historical and discursive institutionalist studies, to theorize a causal interaction between decision-makers’ ideas (agency) and government type (structure).² The introduction of ideas into traditional historical institutionalist approaches avoids path dependency, by focusing on who talks to whom, where, and when; and through thickly describing the formal and informal institutional contexts that shape interactive patterns of discourse.³

Institutions are not neutral areas of decision-making, but rather reflect decision-makers’ preferences and priorities.⁴ As such, I consider government as a contestable social setting that encompasses a structural logic according to which specific sets of ideas have

¹ This framework is inspired by similar approaches to the study of government behavior in comparative politics (Yoshiko Herrera, *Imagined Economies: The Sources of Russian Regionalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Evan Lieberman, *Race and Regionalism in the Politics of Taxation in Brazil and South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), and political sociology (Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford University Press, 2002). The theoretical framework presented here departs from theories of institutional behavior that argue for the supremacy of endogenous versus exogenous variables or structure versus agency. Such arguments do not give sufficient causal independence to ideas, and, instead, utilize ideas simply as auxiliary hypotheses in neo-institutionalist research programs (Vivien Schmidt, “Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change Through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth ‘New Institutionalism,’” *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 1 (2010): 1–25).

² Recent studies that utilize an interaction between causal variables: Adam Ziegfeld, “Coalition Government and Party System Change: Explaining the Rise of Regional Political Parties in India,” *Comparative Politics* 45, no. 1 (2012): 69–87; Damian Grimshaw and Jill Rubery, “The End of the UK’s Liberal Collectivist Model? The Implications of the Coalition Government’s Policy During the Austerity Crisis,” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 36, no. 1 (2012): 105–26. Vivien Schmidt argues that the study of ideas can be improved by looking at their interaction with established approaches, such as historical institutionalism (Schmidt, “Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously” 10).

³ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, USA: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

⁴ James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

and do compete against each other for power over policymaking which, in turn, shapes government behavior.⁵ In so doing, and in anticipation of this struggle, political actors build coalitions around specific sets of ideas, or epistemic communities and networks, to support their policy preferences and influence others. Fundamentally, this requires us to understand preferences, as well as the institutional constraints within which these ideas function.

Decision-makers' actions, therefore, must be understood not only as mechanical responses to external, materially derived interests, but also through the struggle over competing ideas. This contestation takes shape over: i) the distribution of ideas among positions of authority, as well as ii) the very definition of the most legitimate forms of ideas in government. It is important to note that institutions not only play a role in constraining ideational contestation⁶ (through majoritarian or coalition governments in my study) but also structure political openings for mobilization.⁷ These openings provide a pathway for us to more directly observe idea carriers in government as well as trace their formal and informal role in policymaking.⁸

The specific relationship between government type and elite ideas, as two inter-related but causally independent variables, is as follows (see figure 2.1).⁹ The type of government – single-party majority or multi-party coalition – represents the institutional setting that shapes the environment for ideational struggle among decision-makers and the

⁵ I rest here on Steven Lukes' widely cited third dimension of power: "The capacity to secure compliance to domination through the shaping of *beliefs* and *desires*, by *imposing internal constraints* under historically changing circumstances" (Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Palgrave, 2004), 143-144). However, I alter this definition from its focus on "domination," leaning on Daniel Beland, and consider power as largely about collective action, which involves coordination efforts to affect others' preferences to shape specific political outcomes (Daniel Beland, "The Idea of Power and the Role of Ideas," *Political Studies Review* 8 (2010): 145–54). In this sense, power is less about *domination* and more about *influence*.

⁶ Irfan Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics and Economic Development: Credibility and the Strength of Weak Governments* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷ Lieberman, *Race and Regionalism*.

⁸ It is important to note that decision-makers can engage in ideational contestation without necessarily "carrying" the idea. More on this when I discuss network effects and epistemic communities, below.

⁹ Given my argument outlines the *interaction* between these two variables, it is important that as this project develops in the future that I explore cases pertaining to the northwest and southeast quadrants of the 2x2. I would expect that in both single-party governments with a heterogeneity of ideas (e.g. the Congress Party under Nehru post-partition; or the African National Congress in South Africa today) and multi-party democracies with a homogenous ideology (contemporary Israel), we observe intermediate outcomes.

openings (or closing) for distinct idea carriers to enter government.¹⁰ Both dominant and subordinate decision-makers share a set of *rules of the game* that specify, often tacitly, the specific forms of struggle that are legitimate within each type of government.¹¹ Therefore decision-makers do not always say things and behave in direct reference to external interests (voters or special interest groups) but also behave in reference to other decision-makers holding different positions of power, and possessing different perspectives, within government. In other words, there is an internal dynamic of self-referencing among decision-makers interacting with a specific constellation of institutional constraints tied to government type as well as competing ideas (if they exist) that shapes behavior.¹² This is particularly the case in a crisis environment where uncertainty is salient and interests are not *given*, while longer-term preferences based on ideas are a logical constant and therefore meaningful to decision-making. These ideas, therefore, render interests actionable. With this analytic framework in mind, I will now lay out the insufficiency of alternative explanations of my outcome before detailing my argument in full with recourse to government responses to anti-corruption movements in India.

¹⁰ See the Bourdieusean concept of *field positions* (Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford University Press, 1990), specifically 171-202).

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford University Press, 2000); North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. In the India case, for example, the type of government – single party majority or multi-party coalition – develops its own norms and rules, which are learned through experience in government. For example, in coalition governments we observe the emergence of “coalition dharma” – a set of norms that necessitate compromise solutions among decision-makers. Though I will argue later that during periods of high uncertainty and crisis, these norms collapse (for more on this point, see: Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*).

¹² Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations*, views ideas as “weapons” which decision-makers use to contest the very essence and establishment of institutions.

Figure 2.1: 2x2 Summary of Theoretical Argument

		Government Type	
		Single-Party Majority	Multi-Party Coalition
Divergent Ideas in Authoritative Positions of Power	Yes		Government More Likely to <i>Tolerate</i> Anti-Corruption Movement
	No	Government More Likely to <i>Suppress</i> Anti-Corruption Movement	

Alternative Explanations

In this sub-section I show how the present study's variant outcomes are insufficiently addressed by traditional approaches that emphasize material interests, electoral incentives, and regime type.

Below, I present an overview and critique of the extant research in corruption, political economy, and democratization that provide the alternative explanations for my research question: *Why do some democratic governments respond to anti-corruption movements more tolerantly than others?* For each alternative argument, I will rest on broader comparativist and India-specific studies where relevant. I will identify gaps and shortfalls that my theory fills.

I argue that electoral incentives and rent-seeking logics may explain government behavior around elections and the predictable politics of budgets and policy formulations, but they are not useful for helping us understand governments' reactions (or interests) to credibility crises, such as a nationwide anti-corruption movement, when uncertainty is heightened for decision-makers.¹³ Elsewhere, arguments making recourse to the democracy and authoritarian dichotomy prove too determinative and unsatisfactory in specifying causal mechanisms that link democratic regimes to government toleration.

1. Materialist Explanations: Moneyed Interests and Electoral Incentives

The literatures on corruption and political economy of development in India rest on two claims to explain decision-making drivers in government: i) that government elites are rent-seekers; and ii) that electoral incentives perpetuate rent-seeking behavior. I examine each argument in turn as it relates to my question about government toleration of anti-corruption movements.

A. Corruption, Electoral Incentives, and the Dominance of Rent-Seeking

In the corruption literature, academic evidence supports the popular perception that corruption in India is widespread and endemic.¹⁴ Though my project does not measure *levels*

¹³ The point here is not that decision-makers are not rent-maximizers, but that there are times when they seek to maximize other interests, or perhaps do not know which interests they want to maximize as a crisis environment can bring about informational asymmetries. Perhaps more crucially, not all decision-makers are incentivized in the same way, and so their preferences need to be investigated accordingly. As Garry Runciman, drawing on Max Weber, states: "To want wealth is not necessarily to want prestige or power; to want prestige is not necessarily to want wealth or power; to want power is not necessarily to want power or prestige" (W. G. Runciman, *Sociology In Its Place & Other Essays* (Cambridge University Press, 2010 [1970]), 108).

¹⁴ Ben Olken and Rohini Pande, "Corruption in Developing Countries," *Annual Review of Economics* 4, no. 1 (2012): 479–509; Milan Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays*; Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna, and Sendhil Mullainathan, "Corruption," in *Handbook of Organizational Economics* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

of corruption, nor its *sources*, insights from this literature help foreground existing approaches to the *strategic behavior of decision-makers* in contexts where corruption is salient.

The most relevant set of studies in the corruption literature pertaining to my outcome of interest concern the causal role of electoral cycles.¹⁵ Some scholars argue that incumbent governments will manipulate government policy and provide higher consumption to voters to improve the government's credibility prior to elections. This provides decision-makers with an opportunity to align rent and ballot interests during electoral business cycles.¹⁶ Corruption studies on India have widely adopted this electoral-business cycle hypothesis.¹⁷ The most relevant prediction that these studies would advance is that government toleration is most likely as elections approach. This hypothesis, however, does not match up to the case empirics: with only one year to go in the scheduled general election, the Indira Gandhi-led Congress government suppressed the anti-corruption movement they faced.¹⁸ While with three years until the next general election, the UPA government began negotiations with the anti-corruption movement they encountered.

¹⁵ A related set of studies claim that decision-makers are compelled by favoritism along ethnic, religious or other communitarian lines (F. Caselli and W. J. Coleman, "On the Theory of Ethnic Conflict," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 11, no. 1 (2013): 161–92; R. Franck and I. Rainer, "Does the Leader's Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa," *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 2 (2012): 294–325. Dynamics of ethnic politics in government behavior have been well documented in the India case (Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Connecticut, USA: Yale University Press, 2003). However, these biases are not universal and are conditioned on a range of contingent factors, for example partisan mobilization and demographic size, which are all highly heterogeneous in nationwide, socially cross-cutting anti-corruption movements. The relevance of these studies is perhaps in allowing the framing of ethnic bias as ideology. I will contextualize this later in the chapter.

¹⁶ Adi Brender and Allan Drazen, "Political Budget Cycles in New Versus Established Democracies," *Journal of Monetary Economics* 52, no. 7 (October 2005): 1271–95.

¹⁷ Kaushik Chaudhri and Sugato Dasgupta, "The Political Determinants of Central Governments' Economic Policies in India: An Empirical Investigation," *Journal of International Development* 17, no. 7 (2005): 957–78; Shawn A. Cole, "Fixing Market Failures or Fixing Elections? Elections, Banks, and Agricultural Lending in India," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1, no. 1 (2009); S. Khemani, "Political Cycles in a Developing Economy: Effect of Elections in the Indian States," *Journal of Development Economics* 73, no. 1 (2004): 125–54. The significance of electoral considerations shaping government response also permeates broader comparative studies on India (Kanchan Chandra, "Counting Heads: A Theory of Voter and Elite Behavior in Patronage-Democracies," in *Patrons, Clients and Policies*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 84–109; Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence*).

¹⁸ Even though her government faced a severe credibility challenge, the likelihood of the Congress being re-elected were gravely damaged by the emergency. More on this in chapters 3-4

More specifically, this reasoning does not fully account for the interrelated nature of national and state-level elections in India and the role of regional parties at the Centre.

For example, in 1967 Congress' hegemonic power was undercut by greater regional competition; while by 1975, as state and national elections occurred on independent political calendars since 1971, campaigning became more frequent and the election cycles aggressive.¹⁹ These trends have become even more prominent since 1989 with the rise of the coalition era and a greater number of parties.²⁰ Therefore we need an account that takes into consideration the perpetual elections' environment, not simply that corresponding to the national *or* sub-national. Furthermore, we must go further in assessing the type of governments elections create and how decision-making and electoral considerations are shaped therein. As I detail later, the role of electoral incentives in the face of anti-corruption collective action are incorporated in my argument in terms of single-party majority or multi-party coalition – where partners in the latter represent divergent constituencies and face constant electoral challenges that make governing cohesively problematic. This conceptualization will take account of the fact that electoral considerations are a constant in India; while also interrogating the role of ideological shifts and alliances on specific policy matters.

A key assumption in the corruption literature, is that to remain electorally competitive in the above context, rent-seeking while in office, or the enlargement and diversification of revenue streams through corrupt practices, is a paramount consideration

¹⁹ Vaishnav, *When Crime Pays*, 127–130.

²⁰ The number of political parties contesting elections jumped from 38 in 1984 to 117 in 1989. Moreover, by 2009 the average margin of victory in a Parliamentary contest registered at 9.7% -- the narrowest margin since Independence (*Ibid.*, 127–129). Also see E. Sridharan, ed., *Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the Centre and the States* (Academic Foundation, 2014). An exception to this trend is of course the 2014 general election. We are yet to see if this is a breakage in the trend or an anomaly.

for many decision-makers.²¹ This logic is widely held within, and often a derivative of, the literature on the political economy of development that remains a dominant framework in comparative scholarship on India. To explicate the limits of the rent-seeking logic, therefore, I now turn to the political economy literature.

B. Political Economy and the “Captured” State

In prevailing political economy models of government behavior, the dominant assumption is that “vested interests” – elite lobbies and other rent-seeking (or providing) groups – get their way with public policy at the expense of the general citizenry. Governments, therefore, do one thing and not the other because it threatens their rents.²² The logic traces to how economists think of societal outcomes and the operation of the political system. This core assumption is widely adopted in prominent work on the political economy of government behavior in India.

These studies argue that the Indian state is a non-autonomous structure; one that is a location of rent extraction and has been captured by dominant class coalitions between the state, on the one hand, and either capital or labor, on the other.²³ Decision-makers that comprise this machinery are rent-seekers responsive to external modalities that together shape government response. The 1991 liberalization reforms purportedly reinforced this relationship such that a government-big business alliance became hegemonic, and the state

²¹ Across developed and developing democracies alike, contesting elections has become a costly undertaking. However, one key difference between advanced and developing democracies is the role illicit election funds allegedly play in the latter (Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, “Financing Politics: A Global View,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 4 (2002): 69–86). Political office is widely perceived to be a highly lucrative proposition in India. More than two decades after the 1991 economic reforms, politicians retain a significant amount of discretionary power to influence resource allocations, contracts, licenses and other government-provided benefits. The regulatory intensity of the state remains extremely high in several key growth sectors of the economy, which in turn gives politicians—and the bureaucrats who serve them—abundant opportunity to engage in rent seeking (Sastry, “Towards Decriminalisation of Elections and Politics,” 38).

²² D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (New York, USA: Crown, 2012).

²³ Pranab Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Blackwell, 1984); Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

itself, captured.²⁴ According to this research, the capacity of the Indian government to initiate policy reforms, especially anti-corruption measures, has been constrained by the active mobilization of special interest lobbies and how they are affected by policymaking.

However, this reasoning faces empirical incongruities and fails to fully appreciate the vestiges of state patronage and power post-1991.²⁵ If the Indian political-capital nexus was so entrenched during the IAC demonstrations, the UPA government would have shielded these interests more carefully, perhaps even aggressively. Instead, there was a crackdown on corporate espionage in specific industries, and mid- and senior-level officials from businesses that fund parties at elections went to prison. Moreover, the UPA government dismissed high-profile malfeasant ministers and passed the anti-corruption ombudsman bill that would negatively impact both political and business elites.²⁶ Relatedly, and perhaps more pertinently, capital interests are not unified. During the early 1970s, the Congress government increased its regulatory grip over industry and big businesses to mixed response; and later some capital interests suffered while others did not after the suppression of the JPM and during emergency rule.

Therefore, it would be problematic to give too much currency to captured state

²⁴ Dani Rodrik and Arvind Subramanian, "From 'Hindu Growth' to Productivity Surge: The Mystery of the Indian Growth Transition," *IMF Staff Papers* 52, no. 2 (2005): 193–228; Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Development in India: From Socialism to Pro-Business* (Oxford University Press, 2010). Atul Kohli, specifically, has stated that India's liberalization reforms were not pro-market but pro-business. What this conceptualization assumes is that the reforms were static and did not have second and third order effects that were endogenous to the reform program as rooted in the liberal-capitalist ideas of the technocrats who oversaw the reforms. For example, the introduction of foreign capital and competition arrived in sectors where it hadn't existed before. Consequently, companies, especially in the Indian I.T. sector, such as *Infosys*, *Wipro*, and most recently *Ola* – that are not the traditional big businesses – were not, and have not been, captured by regulation and the state in the way presumed by the literature. The 1991 reforms are therefore better understood as an ideational disruption to the previous equilibrium (Rahul Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation: Ideas, Interests, and Institutional Change in India* (Oxford University Press, 2014). Overall, the point here is that the story is not so clear cut as a captured vs. non-captured state, and that we must afford agency to decision-makers within the government and examine internal debates to understand government behavior.

²⁵ Kanchan Chandra, "The New Indian State: The Relocation of Patronage in the Post-Liberalisation Economy," *Economic and Political Weekly* 1, no. 41 (October 10, 2015): 46–58.

²⁶ The impact on the government would be mediated by the fact that the Lokpal would affect all parties equally; but it would uniformly bring investigative powers of the state upon state-business interaction and thus scrutinize business' access to the government. Indeed, though the position of Lokpal remains unfilled at the time of writing (20 April 2017), that the law was passed was in itself a landmark given its long-drawn history (more on this in Chapters Five-Six).

arguments, as decision-makers in India and elsewhere sometimes behave in spite of these interests. Indeed, interests are not static and it is this component of extant arguments that I critique next.

C. Rational Choice Models Fall Short

According to the two above-discussed literatures, government toleration toward an anti-corruption movement is shaped by external, objective conditions such as the preferences of voters or special-interest groups.²⁷ But material interests are not the sine qua non of political outcomes. This prominent presumption has led to an “over-structuring” of the political game by limiting decision-making pathways in government.²⁸ Missing, I argue, is a sufficient accounting of elites’ ideas and therefore an examination of internal perspectives (and their possible heterogeneity) within government. As I will detail later, in my cases elites analyze the anti-corruption movement and form policy prescriptions based on their frames around social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist) as well as their concepts of the nation (inclusive/exclusive).

Objectivist frameworks are driven by the notion that individuals are rational, calculating and capable of acting to maximize their expected utility (i.e. interests) in an institutional sphere where prices and other incentives are generally known and predictable.²⁹ Several leading comparativist studies fall within this rational choice logic: Democratization

²⁷ It is worth noting that vote-maximization is analytically separate than rent-maximization; one is not necessarily a derivative of the other. Regional parties in India, for example the Samajwadi Party, aim to protect their community. Decision-makers can serve their community through reservations, targeted benefits, or even revivalism. It is not so obvious that in any given political situation that revivalism and not rent is the goal for a decision-maker. Each is important but not necessarily tradable.

²⁸ Dani Rodrik, “When Ideas Trump Interests: Preferences, Worldviews, and Policy Innovations,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 194.

²⁹ For a foundational formulation, see A. Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy,” *The Journal of Political Economy* 65, no. 2 (1957): 135–50; and George Caspar Homans, *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms* (Routledge Press, 1974). Such arguments are very helpful and, in my view, provide an excellent *heuristic* device when theory-building. But even in game theory, before useful analysis can begin, “rules of the game” are just what the institutional background provides and this background involves social processes.

takes form when it presents the lowest costs to potential rents³⁰ or conflict arises where possessions and power are at stake because elites see the instigation of violence as a means to hold onto office and related spoils.³¹ Each of these studies sheds extraordinary light on macro-level political outcomes, but are nevertheless premised on the fixed nature of external interests and the stability of institutions, and thus remain highly deterministic.

Instead, as I detail later in this chapter, I conceptualize political actors as reflexive, as thinkers. Agents in this realm are open to think, alter their actions, deliberate over what they are thinking of doing, and even change their minds after persuasion.³² And so ideas about interests, and therefore interests themselves, can change. As such, without sufficient treatment to the role of ideas we cannot know different decision-making elites' interests and therefore explore the divergent strategies and tools they pursue to maximize these interests. These perspectives and cognitive frames as a causal variable have so far been under-emphasized in studies of government behavior in India and in most rational choice scholarship.³³

Before explicating and evaluating the role of ideas in my argument, I will explore the final strand of alternative explanations, namely in the literature on democracy. My critique here will allow me to foreground the role of institutional constraints, denoted through single-party or multi-party coalition governments, that interact with decision-makers' ideas to determine whether a government behaves tolerantly or intolerantly toward an anti-corruption movement.

³⁰ Thad Dunning, *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³¹ Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence*.

³² P. Petit, "Why and How Philosophy Matter to Politics," in *Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Studies*, ed. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly (Oxford University Press, 2006), 35–57.

³³ As Dani Rodrik puts it: "Failure to recognize the role of ideas in shaping interests (and their pursuit) has especially serious implications in political economy. Taking ideas into account allows us to provide a more convincing account of both stasis and change in political-economic life. It provides a way of bridging the sharp divide between policy analysis (what should be done) with political economy (what actually happens)" (Rodrik, "When Ideas Trump Interests," 190).

2. Regime-Type Explanations: Democratic Determinism and International Pressure

The democracy literature broadly and on India specifically predicts government response to anti-corruption movements through two main analytical claims: i) the democratic architecture of a regime *sufficiently* explains tolerance of a movement; and ii) democratic norms and increased embeddedness of the state in the international community should improve the likelihood of government tolerance. Both claims prove over-determined on two counts. First, the link between a democratic regime and toleration of an anti-corruption movement fails to specify causal mechanisms that can explain variation within democracies. Second, arguments that assume democratic nations directly respond to the influence of (or pressure from) multi-lateral institutions and/or international hegemony fail to account for unpredictable, often volatile, domestic pressures during a crisis. My theory accounts for both limitations.

A. Democracy and Authoritarianism: A Determinative Dichotomy

Scholars and policymakers make recourse to the debate on democracy and authoritarianism in order to explain government tolerance in the face of anti-corruption movements. However, India's democratic framework has remained intact since independence, and yet we observe variation in government response to anti-corruption movements over-time.

Whether a government is democratic or authoritarian is a critical conceptual category in comparative politics, but is not always a clean predictor of government behavior. The most straightforward argument is that democratically-elected leaders are held accountable for government outcomes in a way that non-democratic governments are not, and are therefore more likely to be tolerant in the face of nationwide anti-corruption

collective action.³⁴ To put it pithily, toleration defines democracy, or *polyarchy*.³⁵ However, scholars have recently shown that the democracy/authoritarian dichotomy does not always predict government behavior in the ways we expect. For example, some scholars have illustrated that authoritarian regimes can sometimes tolerate dissent chiefly through building legislative institutions that provide space for toleration by allowing authoritarian elites to obtain information on public opinion thus facilitating bargaining.³⁶ In setting up such bodies, authoritarian rulers recognize that it is often better to include societal groups in the process of governing than to risk a turn to street demonstrations.³⁷ However, we have not yet seen a systematic study of why, and in what ways, democratic regimes do not tolerate dissent – as my puzzle interrogates.³⁸

Developing democracies have “grey areas” that may make predictions on their behavior unstable and therefore require greater differentiation – I illustrate this through looking at government type and ideas.³⁹ In my theory, I privilege decision-making elites’ world-views and specific institutional arrangements that constrain (or not) elites’ behavior, namely through the presence of a single-party majority (SPM) or multi-party coalition (MPC) government. As noted, India’s democratic framework has remained intact since independence. However, what has dramatically changed is the fragmentation of her party

³⁴ Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁵ Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989). Dahl outlines seven attributes to do with inclusion, participation and civil and political rights that help secure *polyarchy*. In short, *polyarchy* is defined primarily as a system that ensures free and fair access of citizens in determining access to power. Dahl’s procedural minimalist definition of democracy is perhaps most widely used in comparative studies, and the one employed in the development of my study.

³⁶ Joseph Wright, “Do Authoritarian Institutions Constrain? How Legislatures Affect Economic Growth and Investment,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 322–43; Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³⁷ Scott Gehlbach and Philip Keefer, “Investment Without Democracy: Ruling-Party Institutionalization and Credible Commitment in Autocracies,” *Journal of Comparative Economics* 39, no. 2 (2011): 123–39.

³⁸ Some scholars have recently written compelling articles on the global “democratic recession” (Robert Kagan, “The Weight of Geopolitics,” *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (January 2015): 21–31; Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Myth of Democratic Recession,” *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (January 2015): 45–58).

³⁹ Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (January 2002): 12.

system from a dominant one-party (Congress) system to a multi-party one.⁴⁰ Given India's size, diversity, and federal structure, party system fragmentation took a regional form.⁴¹ As regional parties grew, the coalition era announced itself in 1989 and became entrenched by 1996 since when these parties have enjoyed political power at the Centre and rooted their rule in crucial states. Going further, the rise of coalitions also precipitated more openings for new idea carrying decision-makers to enter government (detailed later).

Though the concept of polyarchy encourages us to think how democracy deepens as the cost of suppression rises and the cost of toleration declines, we need to systematically analyze how elites calculate these costs and *under which conditions* does tolerance rise or fall.⁴² I believe government type is one of the principal variables linking democracy to government behavior. More specifically, and as I will detail later, the ideological checks and balance mechanism as conceptualized in my study is a key causal mechanism linking a democratic regime to tolerance.

Before fully laying out my theory, I will address one final strand of alternative explanations linked to the democratization literature with which to foreground the role of ideas and specify one key pathway from which they emerge.

B. International Agendas, Hierarchy, and Democratic Norms

A second set of works predicts that the Indian government, as one of the world's largest and longest enduring democracies firmly embedded in the international community,

⁴⁰ Yogendra Yadav, Suhas Palshikar, and K.C. Suri, eds., *Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral Politics in Post-Congress Polity* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴¹ Ziegfeld, "Coalition Government," 70.

⁴² Nancy Bermeo, "Myths of Moderation: Confrontation and Conflict During Democratic Transitions," *Comparative Politics*, Transitions to Democracy: A Special Issue in Memory of Dankwart A. Rustow, 29, no. 3 (1997): 315.

would be more responsive to external pressures and tolerate anti-corruption movements.⁴³

Pressure from international institutions and hegemon nations pertaining to the anti-corruption *agenda* has increased over the last two decades. This in part explains increasing attention by developing world governments to combating corruption.⁴⁴ The international agenda hypothesis argues that incentives have increased for democratic governments embedded in the international community to respond favorably to anti-corruption movements.⁴⁵ Such arguments, in their existing conceptualization, are problematic.

First, they rest on a static understanding of hierarchy among nations in the international community such that governments will respond directly and proportionately to the demands of outside powers when they decide to bring to the world's attention a matter of pressing *domestic* social, economic, or political concern. In granting this rationale, the assumption is that such international campaigning trickles down to the everyday workings of the acting government. On the contrary, as both my case studies show, decision-makers' kowtowing to international preferences, especially during a credibility crisis brought on by a nationwide anti-corruption movement, often adversely affects citizens, providing fodder for opposition parties to further discredit the incumbent

⁴³ D. Held and A. McGrew, eds., *The Global Transformation Reader* (Polity Press, 2000); Mark Bevir, "Governance and Interpretation: What Are the Implications of Postfoundationalism?," *Public Administration* 82, no. 3 (2004): 605–25. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union, India has reoriented herself toward liberal-capitalist nations and sought to engage more concretely in international institutions such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank, as well as a part of political and economic fora related to the G20, BRICs, and regional organizations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (on India's increasing global role over the past two decades, see: Indeed, when U.S. President Barack Obama first took office, his first state guest was India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

⁴⁴ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi et al., "Contextual Choices for Results in Fighting Corruption," Commissioned by NORAD (Berlin: Hertie School of Government, 2011); Letitia Lawson, "The Politics of Anti-Corruption Reform in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 1 (2009): 73–100. Since a landmark 1996 speech on corruption by former-World Bank President, James Wolfensohn, many scholars and policymakers have emphasized the role of the global crackdown on corruption and its influence on governments to take corruption, and its ill effects on social and economic prosperity, seriously (Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "International 'Standards' and International Governance," *Journal of European Public Policy* 8, no. 3 (2001): 345–70; Wayne Sandholtz and Mark M. Gray, "International Integration and National Corruption," *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (2003): 761–800).

⁴⁵ Anna Persson, Bo Rothstein, and Jan Teorell, "A Failure of Anti-Corruption Policies: A Theoretical Mischacterization of the Problem," The Quality of Government Paper Series (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, June 2010).

government.⁴⁶

Second, if the logic of the international agenda hypothesis were granted we would then have a new puzzle: What explains cross-country variation in the tolerance of anti-corruption movements among democracies that are contemporaneous and equally as embedded into the international community? After all, at a similar time, and facing anti-corruption movements under comparable macro-economic conditions and credibility crises, the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) government in Turkey suppressed the anti-corruption movements it faced; while India under the UPA and elsewhere Brazil under the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) government were more tolerant. All three democracies have increasingly become part of the international system over the past two decades, yet behaved at variance with this embeddedness.

Nevertheless, the international agenda hypothesis does have some currency which my theory is able to incorporate by looking at the diffusion of norms and ideas from international institutions through to domestic ones. Clean left-right ideational frames do not always explain political cleavages in non-Western contexts.⁴⁷ But as ideas embedded within international, specifically western European and North American institutions, left-right economic schema can influence and shape the cognitions of actors whose professional and personal lives straddle distinct contexts. For example, economists who have been trained in free-market ideas in American graduate programs and/or spend a significant part of their

⁴⁶ For example, during the IAC agitation, the U.S. called on the Indian government to exercise democratic restraint which angered ministers in the Indian government across party lines (“US Remark on Exercising Democratic Restraint Angers India,” *The Indian Express*, 13 August 2011, <http://bit.ly/2onHBSY> (Accessed 20 April 2017)). Such an aversion to outside pressures on domestic decision-making goes back to the Cold War era, particularly at the height of Indira Gandhi’s Congress rule, when suspicions of CIA operatives meddling in Indian politics became central to “foreign hand” arguments often referenced in Parliamentary debates (Khushwant Singh, *Indira Gandhi Returns* (Vision Books, 1979)).

⁴⁷ Christophe Jaffrelot, “Refining the Moderation Thesis. Two Religious Parties and Indian Democracy: The Jana Sangh and the BJP Between Hindutva Radicalism and Coalition Politics,” *Democratization* 20, no. 5 (2013): 876–94. In comparativist work on developed, mainly western, contexts the notion of ideology is very narrow. It tends to be defined in the Lipset and Rokkan sense or, more simply, in terms of the economic left and right (Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (Free Press, 1967)). I do not denote ideology only in terms of social and economic development ideas but also in terms of concepts of the nation, and the role of communities and minorities therein (more below).

professional lives in multi-lateral institutions also often move into authoritative positions in their home governments. We have seen these pathways lead to the spread of ideas across developing country contexts and have an observable impact on patterns of social and economic policy and democracy.⁴⁸ India, is no exception. In the UPA government, technocrats that had spent often significant parts of their careers working in and amongst the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, the United Nations (UN) among other institutions, and held neo-liberal ideas on social and economic development, were in authoritative positions of power at the time of the IAC movement.

Ultimately, although I do not contest their broad relevance, arguments linking democratic or authoritarian regime architecture, including their embeddedness in the international community, to government behavior remain underspecified such that empirical correlations are consistent with several alternative interpretations of the underlying causal mechanisms.⁴⁹ With this in mind, I will now lay out my theoretical argument in full, which reconciles the shortfalls of the arguments above and explains the variation my research question examines: *Why do some democratic governments tolerate anti-corruption movements while others do not?*

Theory: Ideas and Institutions in Indian Government Behavior

In this sub-section I explicate my theory. I will articulate the argument through conceptual “building blocks,” detailing both causal drivers – institutional constraints and

⁴⁸ Devesh Kapur, *Diaspora, Development, and Democracy: The Domestic Impact of International Migration from India* (Princeton University Press, 2010), Chapter Five; Wayne Leighton and Edward Lopez, *Madmen, Intellectuals, and Academic Scribblers: The Economic Engine of Political Change* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 49–79. Mitchell Orenstein argues that transnational actors, namely at the World Bank, have the direct capacity to influence national policymakers largely by shaping their perceptions of what is good for them (*Privatizing Pensions: The Transnational Campaign for Social Security Reform* (Princeton University Press, 2008). However, and crucially, Orenstein recognizes the constraining power of domestic institutions, such that actors like the World Bank cannot exert unlimited ideational influence on less developed countries due to domestic veto players that are in a strong position to shape national-level legislative and political outcomes (*Ibid.*, 55-57).

⁴⁹ For a similar point, see Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*.

the role of ideas – before presenting my causal mechanism, ideological “checks and balances” which emerges from the interaction between my independent variables. I argue that government must be understood as a conflictual location over competition for power over policymaking in which ideas are important “weapons” acting to “check and balance” the arbitrary behavior of decision-makers.

1. Institutional Constraints: Coalitions and Decision-Makers

Since India’s overall democratic architecture and electoral rules have not changed since independence, the prime suspect for institutional change and behavior is the fragmentation of the political system and rise of coalitions since 1989.⁵⁰ The literature on coalition politics in India is still nascent.⁵¹ In the main, extant research treats coalitions as a dependent variable and goes on to study the causes of its formation, collapse, or endurance.⁵² Many of these studies tend to view governments as unitary political actors. However, I argue that it is the power distribution over policymaking within government and the subsequent effects on internal contestation that shapes elite behavior. This approach allows my argument to be more specific with regards to the causal link between a democratic regime and government behavior.

Since Michael Laver and Norman Schofield’s seminal study, most comparativists concede that the internal dynamics within coalition governments, i.e. executive behavior, remains a theoretical “black box.”⁵³ And yet few scholars have examined these internal

⁵⁰ Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States* (Princeton University Press, 2004); Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*.

⁵¹ There are two main monograph-length academic studies on coalitions politics in India: Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*; Sanjay Ruparelia, *Divided We Govern: Coalition Politics in India* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵² Sridharan, “Principles, Power, and Coalition Politics”; Yogendra Yadav, “The Third Electoral System,” *Seminar*, no. 480 (1999): 14–20.

⁵³ Michael Laver and Norman Schofield, *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 215

factors directly.⁵⁴ As one exception in the India context, Sanjay Ruparelia, aptly states, “to grasp the politics, achievements, and shortcomings of different coalition governments in India...requires an innovative conceptual grammar able to illuminate the dynamic interplay between political institution, social interests, and human agency.”⁵⁵ I take this advice seriously, and outline how government type: i) is a key causal link between a democratic regime and government behavior; and ii) determines the level of institutional constraints that allow for decision-makers with divergent ideas to enter government and veto policy action.

A. Veto Players and Stable Outcomes

I denote government response as the behavior of decision-makers within the executive arena, which comprises the cabinet and other offices under the control of the governing parties.⁵⁶ Where I rest on evidence from the parliamentary or extra-parliamentary (e.g. civil society actors in government) arena, I do so in terms of their interaction with the executive. In the main, this is because the executive branch has key agenda setting powers in parliamentary democracies and India is no exception.⁵⁷ These powers privilege the cabinet vis-à-vis parliament, and they render parliamentary control of cabinet members very difficult. Executive power over parliament is plausibly strengthened during a credibility

⁵⁴ In the broader comparativist literature notable exceptions are Michael Laver and Kenneth Shepsle (Michael Laver and Kenneth Shepsle, eds., *Cabinet Minister and Parliamentary Government* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)).who study the role of Cabinet ministers, and Gregory Luebbert (Gregory Luebbert, *Comparative Democracy: Policymaking and Governing Coalitions in Europe and Israel* (Columbia University Press, 1986)).who focuses on party leaders. In the India context, only one monograph-length study has broached the topic of elite contestation within coalition governments (Ruparelia, *Divided We Govern*). However, this work looks at *party leaders* alone, and is therefore not focused on the wider array of policy-constructing decision-makers in government or affects of coalitions on government response to collective action.

⁵⁵ Ruparelia, *Divided We Govern*, 5.

⁵⁶ I borrow this conceptualization from Kaare Strom, Wolfgang Muller, and Daniel Markham Smith, “Parliamentary Control of Coalition Governments,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 522.

⁵⁷ Johanna Birnir and Nil Satana, “Religion and Coalition Politics,” *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 3–30.

crisis when there is less space for deliberation and decision-making requires urgency.⁵⁸ The political executive and Parliament both consisted of a Congress majority under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In the case of the UPA, more than two distinct parties comprised the political executive and Parliament as part of the coalition government. In such multi-party coalitions (MPC), I argue, there are more veto players than in single-party majority (SPM) governments.

I observe decision-makers in government as a set of veto players – actors that can block (or not) executive action. A long-held claim in this literature is that coalition governments plausibly have more “veto players” than single-party governments.⁵⁹

Coalition governments will likely face more obstacles toward policy action than single-party governments. With more veto players, MPCs face challenges in assigning the adjustment costs of a particular policy choice to particular groups since the other parties in the coalition would veto some of the potential options.⁶⁰ After all, each coalition partner has incentives to protect the programs that benefit her own constituency.⁶¹ A non-cooperative solution is often most likely; what Irfan Nooruddin refers to as policy gridlock, resulting in stable, or non-radical, policy outcomes.⁶² We see this in the UPA coalition, where in the lead up to the IAC movement partner parties thwarted some of the Congress’ policy prescriptions in diagnosing and responding to the agitation, chiefly pertaining to improving the investment climate. Though coalition partners do not always interfere in policy matters

⁵⁸ George Tsebelis and Eunyong Ha, “Coalition Theory: A Veto Players’ Approach,” *European Political Science Review* 6, no. 3 (2014): 331–57.

⁵⁹ George Tsebelis, *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work* (Princeton University Press, 2002); K. Bawn, “Money and Majorities in the Federal Republic of Germany: Evidence for a Veto Players Model of Government Spending,” *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (1999): 708.

⁶⁰ J. Tavares, “Does Right or Left Matter? Cabinets, Credibility, and Fiscal Adjustments,” *Journal of Public Economics* 88 (2004): 2447–68; Scott Gehlbach and Edmund Malesky, “The Contribution of Veto Players to Economic Reform,” *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 4 (2010): 957–75.

⁶¹ Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*.

⁶² Tsebelis, *Veto Players*; R. W. Price, “The Political Economy of Fiscal Consolidation,” *OECD Economics Department Working Papers* No. 776 (2010). Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*, is the single monograph-length academic study on Indian politics that rigorously examines coalition politics as an independent variable to explain government behavior. His “credible constraints” framework in part influences my own study, wherein he argues that the diffusion of policymaking authority across different parties with separate accountabilities places a check and balance on the executive’s ability to change economic policy arbitrarily.

(in exchange for their own, often extractive, demands), they are likely to do so in a credibility crisis of the type faced by the UPA where the entire government comes under suspicion of corruption and attack and partners' potential influence and office benefits are compromised.⁶³ In this environment, the veto becomes an effective tool because partner parties want to distance themselves from the coalition leading partner.

In a parliamentary, federalist system such as India's there can be dramatic variation in the number and type of veto players. Indeed, there are more veto players in India who seek to control the executive agenda than the dominant theoretical claims above, based off studies in the European context, encompass.⁶⁴ Not only the Prime Minister and head of parties, but also the Chief Ministers and powerful dynasts, as well as parties' organizational social core (for example, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)) also have veto powers.⁶⁵ Some of these roles are often combined in the same individual. In the UPA, Sonia Gandhi served as the Chairperson of the coalition and the NAC, alongside her position as President of the Congress Party. This gave Gandhi, and her allies, unfettered access to the executive – the chief route to influence policy as this is where agenda-setting powers lay. Contrastingly, the Congress government under Indira Gandhi had far less veto players, wherein the Congress Party President D.K. Barooah and the President of India, as well as Cabinet ministers, were all affiliated with the Congress and most owed their political capital and station to Gandhi's patronage.

Overall, then, government type denotes specific veto-player arrangements that designate constraints on decision-makers' behavior in India, especially when intractable social and political problems emerge. Missed by the literature, however, is the fact that it is not only the number of parties that indicate the presence of veto players, but the preferences of decision-making elites in authoritative positions of power. These are not analytic equivalents. Parties are considered bound in their preferences by elections and

⁶³ Strom, Muller, and Smith, "Parliamentary Control," 524.

⁶⁴ Tsebelis and Ha, "Coalition Theory."

⁶⁵ For example, over Cabinet positions or budgets

constituents; whereas a deeper interrogation into specific decision-makers, from politicians to technocrats and even activists, reveals distinct and diverse sets of ideas and incentive structures.⁶⁶ More important, therefore, are the preferences that lead to divergent interests and mechanisms for vetoing executive action. These preferences are difficult to locate and measure, but one conduit is by studying decision-makers' professional backgrounds.

B. Authority and Idea Carriers

i. Party and Party-Technocratic Governments

One noticeable gap in the comparativist literature, is the lack of differentiation between the balance of politicians and technocrats in governments. This distinction is helpful to trace the constellation and substantive content of ideas in government.

Not all decision-makers are subject to the same motivations for rent-seeking in India, as per the logic of the studies discussed earlier.⁶⁷ Some decision-makers are elected officials who need to accrue rents to fund elections, others are bureaucrats, while yet others are technocrats or even civic activists, who most likely do not need rents for the same incentives that elected officials do if at all (see Appendix D.1-D.3 for decision-makers' range of backgrounds in this study). Even when decision-makers extract rents, they do so not necessarily for personal pecuniary gain, but rather to enhance their hold on policymaking power.⁶⁸ It is therefore important to build an account that is sensitive not only to the sources of power externally (votes and rents), that established works have espoused, but also the distribution of power over policymaking internally, which my theory privileges.

⁶⁶ The focus on decision-makers over parties alone also allows pathways in the future to examine cases where there is ideological diversity in single-party majority governments (R. Lavigne, "The Political and Institutional Determinants of Fiscal Adjustment: Entering and Exiting Fiscal Distress," *European Journal of Political Economy* 27, no. 1 (2011): 17–31).

⁶⁷ Leighton and Lopez, *Madmen, Intellectuals, and Academic Scribblers*, 178.

⁶⁸ Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

As such, and using Duncan McDonnell and Marco Valbruzzi's framing, my theory denotes the Congress government in the early 1970s as a "party government" and the UPA coalition government as a hybrid "party-technocratic government."⁶⁹ This ideal-type only approximates reality, but does help us to more effectively identify each government and enhance analytic leverage. Moreover, this conceptualization allows us specificity with regards to decision-makers as idea carriers – veto players reliably known to hold a given set of ideas who move into decision-making institutions in government.⁷⁰

The Congress government in the early-1970s is a "party government" where mainly party politicians take up key decision-making positions. These party politicians are more likely engaged in defining and defending particular concepts of the nation than technocrats.⁷¹ The Congress government led by Prime Minister Gandhi engaged in inclusion-exclusion framing of the JPM movement, wherein the movement was viewed as a threat to her and her government's *inclusive* concept of the Indian nation – rooted in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights. Suppressing this movement and its right-wing *exclusive* nationalist mobilizational core was therefore necessary in the view of Gandhi, for India's survival and development. Indeed, in the political realm, what is to be maximized is far less evident than in the economic realm and cannot be

⁶⁹ Duncan McDonnell and Marco Valbruzzi, "Defining and Classifying Technocrat-Led and Technocrat Governments," *European Journal of Political Research* 53 (2014): 654–71. In a fully "technocratic government": i) All major governmental decisions are not made by elected party officials; ii) Policy is not decided within parties which then act cohesively to enact it; iii) The highest officials (ministers, prime ministers) are not recruited through party. This definition is derived through mirror imaging classic ideal-type definitions of a "party government" (*Ibid.*)

⁷⁰ Jacobs, "Process Tracing the Effects of Ideas," 68. These idea carriers enter institutions at different moments, depending on when institutions open (during a crisis or political fracturing bringing about new alignments) or close. The key is that they often remain in government, even in positions of authority (see: Peter Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case for Economic Policymaking in Britain," *Comparative Politics* 25 (1993): 275–96). In order for new ideas to overcome vested interests, policy "entrepreneurs notice and exploit those loose spots in the structure of ideas, institutions, and incentives" (Leighton and Lopez, *Madmen, Intellectuals, and Academic*, 134).

⁷¹ This could be specific to India given the freedom struggle, but we see it elsewhere too (Turkey, Malaysia), and is most likely a function of later post-Colonial societies. See Jon Elster on political developments in 17th century France ("Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (2000): 685–95).

reduced to economic ends, as perhaps it might be for technocrats.⁷² As today's politics and revolutions in battlefield tactics over the past twenty years remind us, humans can undercut institutions, kill, or even die for a nationalist conception.⁷³

By contrast, in the UPA, in addition to party politicians, technocrats and activists with dominant frameworks around social and economic development held key levers of policymaking.⁷⁴ For example, neo-liberal technocrats entered the Indian government in the late 1980s and 1990s when the nation's main economic architecture was being restructured through liberalization reforms. These decision-makers then took up authoritative positions of power in the UPA as members of the Cabinet, Prime Minister's Office including the premier himself, and senior bureaucracy. In addition, reformist technocrats and activists who, as part of the rights-based movements of the 1990s and early 2000s became the vanguard for renewed nationwide civic activism, went on to take up authoritative positions of power during the UPA government as part of the Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi's de facto parallel cabinet, the NAC.⁷⁵ This is an important facet of the theoretical argument, as idea carriers are not only clearer to trace among technocrats (therefore strengthening causal independence) but their presence in executive decision-making illustrates the influence of specific preferences, collective action, and epistemic communities in government.

⁷² Rodrik, "When Ideas Trump Interests," 191.

⁷³ Scott Atran and Jeremy Ginges, "Religious and Sacred Imperatives in Human Conflict," *Science* 336, no. 6083 (2012): 855–57.

⁷⁴ A technocrat in this sense is any decision-maker who is said to possess non-party political expertise which is directly relevant to the role occupied in government. N.B.: Though I present a neat split between technocrats, party politicians, bureaucrats, activists, and others here, these professional backgrounds are not *sufficient* conditions for determining ideas. This is particularly the case due to formal and informal networks leading to the exchange of ideas and discourse between each of these decision-makers. Thus, some social learning takes place where politicians may adopt the ideas of technocrats, for example. These backgrounds should be seen as a framing device, and the focus should remain on the ideas within government.

⁷⁵ Where experts enter government in a strategic context, their ideas are not epiphenomenal. After all, these carriers have longer-term influence after their initial political masters have departed the scene or they are put into key positions of authority over policymaking power.

ii. *Influence and Network Effects*

Idea carriers' belief systems can often be inferred by reference to their sociological context – i.e. their embeddedness in a professional network or the site of their training or education – or from past verbal communication.⁷⁶ Some elites, chiefly internationally trained and educated technocrats, build epistemic communities or advocacy coalitions through network effects in government to influence policy action.⁷⁷

In democracies, policymaking power is largely about collective action, which involves coordination efforts and the ability to affect others' preferences to shape specific, and eventually shared, political outcomes.⁷⁸ As discussed, there are no objective readings of interests without making recourse to ideas. Perceptions of the outside world are mediated through ideational processes, which can take different forms.⁷⁹ For instance ideas can serve as discursive frames that help actors legitimize reform practices toward existing policies and institutions.⁸⁰ One direct mechanism where we observe these discursive processes taking shape are parliamentary or executive committees, where idea carriers move individual thought into discourse, and then collective action.⁸¹ No mechanism for this deliberation took shape in the Congress government under Indira Gandhi leading up to and during the JPM (in fact, Gandhi's support in her government was such that she was able to side-step

⁷⁶ Kapur, *Diaspora, Development, and Democracy*

⁷⁷ Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford University Press, 1982); Miguel Angel Centeno, *Democracy without Reason: Technocratic Revolution in Mexico* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁷⁸ Beland, "The Idea of Power and the Role of Ideas." Also see Martin Carstensen and Vivien Schmidt on the notion of *power through ideas*; understood as the capacity of actors to persuade other actors to accept and adopt their views through utilizing ideational elements (Martin Carstensen and Vivien Schmidt, "Power Through, Over, and In Ideas: Conceptualizing Ideational Power in Discursive Institutionalism," *Journal of European Public Policy* 23, no. 3 (2016): 318–37).

⁷⁹ Daniel Beland and Robert Henry Cox, eds., *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research* (New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁸⁰ Robert Henry Cox, "The Social Construction of an Imperative: Why Welfare Reform Happened in Denmark and the Netherlands but Not in Germany," *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (2001): 475.

⁸¹ Vivien Schmidt, *Democracy in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2006); Alan Jacobs, *Governing for the Long Term: Democracy and the Politics of Investment* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

all collective institutions and committees, chiefly her own Cabinet, to institute the suppressive emergency decree), while there was a proliferation of committees and Cabinet meetings in the UPA especially during the IAC.

In sum, all decision-makers have separate incentive structures and priorities rooted in their divergent perspectives based on their distinct professional and personal backgrounds. Identifying and studying these differences enriches how we think about political institutions, and moves away from overly abstract formulations of settings in which a single, median policymaker responds to a single, median voter or interest group in society.⁸² These differences also allow us to more clearly identify and trace specific sets of ideas. I now turn to the interactive causal role and independence of ideas in my theoretical model.

2. Ideational Contestation: Cognitive Guidance and Crises

The precise definition I rest on for ideas is: *a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values*.⁸³ The dynamic, not instrumental, study of ideas in political science has come to be known as the constructivist research program.⁸⁴ Constructivists present ideas as norms, frames, narratives that establish how actors conceptualize and diagnose the world and enable them to re-conceptualize the world, thus driving change through “structuration.”⁸⁵ These ideas cover a range of behaviors, from the diffusion of international organizations’ ideas in developing countries through to conceptions of the nation or party ideology.⁸⁶ By

⁸² Not only policymakers with different backgrounds but also different coalition partners with different incentive structures. The communist parties, such as CPI(M), for example will maintain separate preferences than, say AIDMK, that represent communal interests. For more, see Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*.

⁸³ Kathleen Knight, “Transformations of the Concept of Ideology in the Twentieth Century.” See footnote 37, Chapter One.

⁸⁴ The last decade has seen some excellent work in comparative politics using the constructivist research program, but it remains under-utilized: N. Jabko, *Playing the Market: Political Strategy for Uniting Europe, 1985-2005* (Cornell University Press, 2007); C. Woll, *Firm Interests* (Cornell University Press, 2008).

⁸⁵ Alexander Wendt, “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,” *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987): 359–360.

⁸⁶ John Campbell, “Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 21–38.

looking at the role of ideas in causal explanations, constructivist scholars, and my own study, more precisely discusses the experiences of specific decision-makers, namely technocrats, bureaucrats, activists, and party politicians, and how their distinct, and often divergent cognitive frames, explain government response to anti-corruption movements.⁸⁷

I deduce a *pure* form of ideas from each decision-making groups' policy choices, namely nationalism (inclusive/exclusive) and social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist). Of course, real policy choices feature mixed strategies and are often not so reductive. But this is a framing device to illustrate the ideational anchoring of decision-makers (as well as variation therein) and, importantly, how these ideas can counter-balance arbitrary government behavior.

A. Ideas and Interests

Ideas are distinct from, and causally prior to, the concept of interests. How we evaluate different social states and judge whether they advance our “interests” depends crucially on how we define ourselves.⁸⁸ We can see ourselves as members of an ethnic group, nation, social class, academic community, or combine any of these.⁸⁹ In this way, constructivists argue that interests are socially constructed, moving beyond the deployment of objective, material factors in situations where government behavior is negotiated by decision-makers.⁹⁰ In existing accounts of government behavior in India, decision-makers with structurally fixed preferences react to self-apparent political situations in concert with, or reaction to, external interests. These interests are derivatives of electoral or rent-seeking

⁸⁷ Political actors, after all, often aggregate social and political demands and, sometimes, behave in spite of them (Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (The Belknap Press of HUP, 1992)).

⁸⁸ Rodrik, “When Ideas Trump Interests,” 192.

⁸⁹ Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence* (Penguin Books, 2007).

⁹⁰ Blyth, *Great Transformations*. In her influential constructivist study of democratization, Sheri Berman argues that the differential trajectories of Germany and Sweden in the 1930s, into fascism and social democracy respectively, are best explained by the ideas held by key academics, labor unions, and political actors in government in each state (Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*)

motivations. Such static conceptualizations rest on rational choice frameworks that miss the critical causal role of ideas. Ideas provide decision-makers with an interpretive framework from which to diagnose and begin strategizing a response toward the anti-corruption movement. As such, and in line with the constructivist tradition, I do not view ideas in a zero-sum relationship with interests, but rather as causally prior to them. Before interests can be located, ideas, with substantive content, provide a cognitive guide. As no interests are a *given* they are simply *one form of idea* – specifying these interests is less about structural determinism and more about the construction of *wants* as mediated by *beliefs* – ideas.⁹¹

As ideas are dynamic and not fixed, it is also important to avoid essentializing them. Ideas can change over time because their larger frameworks, or “research programs,” are part of constant debates.⁹² For example, the political, social, and economic debates on the economic left and right have altered over years, especially concerning the logic of market competitiveness.⁹³ In step with these changes, the respective research programs have been developed but, crucially, the “hard core” of these ideas has *not been discarded* by those that

⁹¹ Blyth, *Great Transformations*, 29; Beland and Cox, *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, 10. “Wants” are conceptually distinct (similar to the claim by Thomas Hobbes that “status passions” are distinct from material possessions (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Penguin Books, 1982 [1651]), Part 2; Chapter 17). An *a priori* belief within much of the literature on Indian politics is that concepts such as ideas are derivatives from material gains or power. Whereas my theory rests on the claim that ideas are sequentially placed prior to the generation of interests

⁹² P. Kjaer and O. Pedersen, “Translating Liberalization: Neoliberalism in the Danish Negotiated Economy,” in *The Rise of Neoliberalism and Institutional Analysis*, ed. J. L. Campbell and O. Pedersen (Princeton University Press, 2001), 219–48.

⁹³ Peter Hall, “The Economics and Politics of the Euro Crisis,” *German Politics* 21, no. 4 (2012): 355–71.

employ it.⁹⁴ This is especially true for technocrats whose expertise has been garnered in the non-electoral realm and is therefore subject to less volatile threats than party politicians. But even among politicians, concepts of the nation can evolve from their original position without losing their anchoring. For example, the preference for socialism as bound up in the nation's inclusive nationalism under Prime Minister Gandhi, and indeed under her father Jawaharlal Nehru's premiership in the decades following independence, in part derived from ideas about how the market system worked (or failed to do so).⁹⁵ As research demonstrated that the poor were as responsive to price incentives as the rich, Congress policies began to move in a more market-oriented direction in the late-1970s which became integrated into existing concepts of the nation after 1991.⁹⁶ A more precise understanding is that, for their carriers, some ideas are likely to be more plausible for policy prescription, especially in a crisis riddled with uncertainty and informational asymmetries, than others, and so it is important to emphasize the plausibility of a particular configuration of values that decision-makers possess.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ In his seminal interpretation, Peter Hall, leaning on Thomas Kuhn, sees ideas as part of *paradigms* (Hall, "Policy Paradigms"). So, when challenges or failures in a set of ideas sufficiently accumulate, then social learning occurs and paradigms are *replaced and tossed out*. Unlike Hall, I lean on Kuhn's contemporary Imre Lakatos, in viewing ideas as part of a *research program*. In a Lakatosian approach, a set of ideas' *central* hypotheses, or "hard core," are protected by *auxiliary* hypotheses which protect and refine its central claims. In this way, when a particular set of ideas are challenged, adherents do not pin the blame on their "hard core" assumption; instead, they direct criticism at their "protective belt" (auxiliary hypotheses), which are modified to deal with the challenge. In this way, ideas remain robust to new information and are not easily castoff. So, neo-liberals in India are not entirely bullish on trickle-down economics as their American neo-classical counterparts, but both seek to reduce the ambition of the state in favor of market mechanisms in social and economic development. Overall, the longitudinal pattern of ideas for which I go looking in my cases are based strongly on my theoretical priors about the conditions under which ideas change or continue, and this is the Lakatosian research program approach. This allows me to move away from potentially hampering essentialist charges against the treatment of ideas in my argument (Lakatos, "The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes").

⁹⁵ P. B. Mehta and M. Walton, "India's Political Settlement and Development Path," *Mimeo, Centre for Policy Research and Harvard Kennedy School*, 2012, 17–18. This factor of change and continuity in ideas helps explain why I denote *inclusive nationalists* in Chapters Three-Four and their future incarnation *secular-nationalists* in Five-Six. More on this in Chapter Six.

⁹⁶ Anne O. Krueger, "Trade Policy and Economic Development: How We Learn," *The American Economic Review* 87, no. 1 (1997): 1–22.

⁹⁷ Blyth, *Great Transformations*.

With a static conceptualization of the role of ideas in decision-making rejected, we can dynamically identify and texturize the specific ideas in government that shaped response toward anti-corruption movements. In the UPA coalition government, for example, party politicians, technocrats, bureaucrats, and even activists, can be grouped into three main ideational camps which have been referenced earlier: those that utilized a *neo-liberal* framework to diagnose the anti-corruption movement; those that possessed a *reformist* view; and those whose ideology was anchored in *secular-nationalism*. The first two groups coiled their ideas around economic and social development. Neo-liberals accorded primacy to deficit reduction that would imply a contractionary effect on the economy to get inflation under control (to them, the proximate cause of the anti-corruption collective action). These decision-makers sought to signal a credible government commitment to stabilizing the macroeconomic framework, thereby improving conditions for investment and restoring growth to moderate citizens' ire. Contrastingly, reformists followed from a Keynesian response to political upheaval, implicitly or explicitly pushing for an expansionary fiscal stimulus through spending more on, and strengthening, state-led social welfare programs (the absence of which, to these elites, was the proximate cause of the anti-corruption movement) to restore short-term growth directly by increasing demand. The third group, secular-nationalists, viewed the anti-corruption agitation through concepts of the nation wherein the IAC emerged as an extension of the religious-nationalist right, namely the RSS and their political arm, the BJP. Overall, neo-liberals sought limited engagement with the IAC, reformists pursued full engagement, while secular-nationalists wanted to disengage the movement while assertively unveiling the narrow social and political forces allegedly organizing the collective action.

These divergent frameworks, dispersed in authoritative positions of power, not only shaped key public policy discourse 2004-2014, but also varied in the perception of social cohesion and stability as it pertained to anti-corruption collective action, thus acting

as a checks and balance on government committees, elite dialectic, and elsewhere, to produce a tolerant response to the IAC.

In contrast, the Congress government, made up entirely of party politicians, possessed a homogenous ideological outlook enshrined in the Congress Party's *inclusive* nationalism – anchored in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights. Prime Minister Gandhi and her government's ideology dangerously clashed with their diagnosis of the JPM as a movement mobilized by and for right-wing *exclusive* nationalists in India. The government's populist, or “thin” ideology had been concretizing in the lead up to, and after, the unified Congress' split in 1969 and played a constitutive role in political realignments, in which moral boundaries were drawn between groups and categories of *us* and *them*.⁹⁸ The party's unchecked, homogenous ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity within the government and suppress ideological *others* within the JPM.

Cognitive frames therefore make it possible for decision-makers to diagnose the anti-corruption movement by acting as interpretive frameworks that describe the workings of the political, economic, and social world through defining its constitutive elements and providing a general understanding of their *proper* and *improper* causal interrelations. Hence, by deploying their ideas, decision-makers reduce courses of government action. This is most notably the case under situations of *Knighian uncertainty*.

⁹⁸ Stefano Fella and Carlo Ruzza, “Populism and the Fall of the Centre-Right in Italy: The End of the Berlusconi Model or a New Beginning?” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 21(1), 2013: p. 38–52. I consider populism as a “thin-centered” ideology as per Cas Mudde's influential definition: “[Populism is] a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* [general will] of the people” (Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist”, *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 39 (4), pp. 542– 563 (2004): 543).

B. Knighian Approach to Credibility Crises

In his influential work on ideas and institutions, Mark Blyth has argued that most political phenomena should be explained in terms of *Knighian uncertainty*, because they belong to a world which is not directly observable.⁹⁹ Whereas many of those who subscribe to this conceptualization apply it to decision-making during economic crises, I apply this framing to political crises of credibility.¹⁰⁰ After all, the nature of the critical juncture matters. Here, given the volatility of uncertainty, decision-makers are unsure about what their interests are let alone how to maximize the utility of these interests. In such unique moments, or critical junctures that disrupt the existing social, political and economic balance, the waters of statistical prediction are muddied.¹⁰¹ This is the case for when governments face national-level anti-corruption movements and are uncertain about the effects of all the forces that may impact this political reality. Here, ideas guide actionable understandings of causal relationships within the crisis faced and are not merely epiphenomenal.¹⁰²

A nationwide anti-corruption movement creates a crisis environment where political uncertainty obfuscates an understanding of predictable interests such as votes and rents.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Blyth, *Great Transformations*. Also see: Frank Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit* (Martino Fine Books, 2014 [1921]).

¹⁰⁰ The “crisis discourse” has swelled since the 2008 global financial crisis (James Kwak, *Economism: Bad Economics and the Rise of Inequality* (Penguin Random House, 2017); Philip Pilkington, *The Reformation in Economics: A Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Economic Theory* (Palgrave, 2016)).

¹⁰¹ Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*.

¹⁰² Beland, “The Idea of Power and the Role of Ideas.” If interests are a function of beliefs and desires, and if decision-makers are confused about their desires in situations of uncertainty (as during a nationwide anti-corruption movement), then logically decision-makers’ interests must be unstable too. Ideas are therefore causally prior to interests (Blyth, *Great Transformations*). Decision-makers in such environments know that they are functioning under imperfect information, but their cognitions guide their diagnosis with this *negative capability* (understanding the limits of their action) in mind (cf. John Keats, *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. H. E. Rollins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958 [1817]), 193-194).

¹⁰³ On “uncertain” situations in politics, per Blyth, I follow Jens Beckert (who rests on a Knighian conception): “Agents cannot anticipate the outcome of a decision and cannot assign probabilities to the outcome” (Jens Beckert, “What Is Sociological About Economic Sociology? Uncertainty and the Embeddedness of Economic Action,” *Theory and Society* 25, no. 6 (1996): 804). Quoting Knight, Beckert outlines that in uncertain situations, such as that studied here, the decision-makers’ assigning of probabilities to outcomes become “impossible...because the situation dealt with is in a high degree unique” (*Ibid.*, 807).

The full range of alternative strategies and their relative costs become narrowed.¹⁰⁴ Such situations are hardly uncommon in matters of political interest, especially in the messy political realities of India and plausibly other developing country contexts.

Both the Congress government in the lead up to the JPM and UPA government in the lead up to the IAC faced international and domestic pressures which made their credibility plummet. Macroeconomic conditions were deteriorating, international oil prices were volatile, and, most pertinently, both governments saw key sitting ministers up to and including the Prime Minister accused of corruption. Each government's crisis of credibility came to a crescendo with nationwide anti-corruption demonstrations. Such an environment is common across many contexts where anti-corruption movements emerge, where government corruption has been exposed – through scandals or legal investigations – and which then heightens the sense of insecurity within government and lowers their credibility in the eyes of the public.¹⁰⁵ Importantly, re-establishing government credibility serves as motivating internal debate in decision-makers' response to the movement. In this environment of Knightian uncertainty, decision-making elites seek to reconstitute interests, and establish narratives regarding the causation behind the crisis, and functions of the respective movements.¹⁰⁶ In this scenario, ideas serve as *weapons* between decision-making

¹⁰⁴ In other words, if information is asymmetrically distributed, then interests cannot be given by structural location or revealed *ex post* of behavior (Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 45–55). In such situations decision-makers with divergent cognitive frames, or perspectives, process the facts and information differently, as is the case in my study. Yet it is precisely these situations that are of interest to political scientists, otherwise we are simply re-articulating the obvious in a rather circular manner (Blyth, *Great Transformations*, 28).

¹⁰⁵ There is consensus in the scandals literature that incumbents involved in scams suffer at the polls as their perception among citizens plummets (Rodrigo Praino, Daniel Stockemer, and Vincent G. Moscardelli, “The Lingering Effect of Scandals in Congressional Elections: Incumbents, Challengers, and Voters,” *Social Science Quarterly* 94, no. 4 (2013): 1045–61; Philip Cowley, *Revolts and Rebellions -- Parliamentary Voting Under Blair* (London, UK: Politico, 2002)).

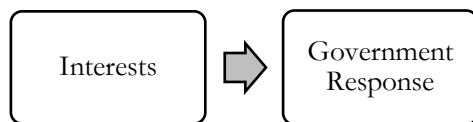
¹⁰⁶ Crisis environments “upset routine calculations of interest, invalidating rational short cuts and injecting a large dose of uncertainty” (Andrew Polsky, “When Business Speaks: Political Entrepreneurship, Discourse, and Mobilization in American Partisan Regimes,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 12, no. 4 (2000): 466). Furthermore, Knightian uncertainty is arguably heightened within a coalition government setting, where bargaining between partner parties further obscures the relationship between policy instruments at their disposal and the political outcomes they seek (Strom, Muller, and Smith, “Parliamentary Control”).

elites in the struggle to diagnose the movement.¹⁰⁷ However, what Blyth and other constructivists do not emphasize sufficiently, is that different decision-makers can hold different, often divergent, ideas that may *co-exist* in the same government, as in the case of the UPA government when faced with the IAC movement (sketched earlier).

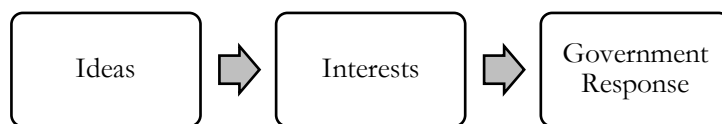
As discussed above, decision-makers' ideas exist causally prior to their interests and shape them through contestation in government (see figure 2.2). Together, then, divergent ideas in authoritative positions of power, in my cases around concepts of the nation (inclusive/exclusive) and social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist), can co-exist in the same government and decision-makers carrying these ideas are therefore likely to respond differently in situations of uncertainty.

Figure 2.2: Causal Role of Ideas on Government Response

Alternative Explanations



Constructivist Approach



¹⁰⁷ As Blyth writes: "In moments of uncertainty, crisis-defining ideas not only tell agents 'what has gone wrong' but also 'what is to be done'" (Mark Blyth, "Powering, Puzzling, or Persuading? The Mechanisms of Building Institutional Orders," *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2007): 762).

1. Ideological Checks and Balances: A Causal Mechanism

The preceding analysis leads now to the explicit articulation of an ideological checks and balance mechanism that results from the interaction between a coalition government and divergent preferences among decision-making elites.

We know from a range of long-standing academic scholarship and thinking that a separation of powers reduces arbitrary behavior among government officials.¹⁰⁸ But which mechanism does the counter-balancing needs explication, case by case. In existing explanations on India, there are two main ways checks and balances affect arbitrary government behavior, in this case suppression of an anti-corruption movement. The first is institutional, in the spirit of the Federalist Papers; for example where the Supreme Court, the Election Commission, and the Presidency act as “referee” institutions to keep arbitrary government behavior in check.¹⁰⁹ The second is political interests; where coalition or minority government survival is conditional on the good will and support of smaller party partners and sometimes even the opposition, and therefore politicians accountable to different constituencies check one another’s authority in government.¹¹⁰ I introduce a third mechanism – ideological counterbalancing (see table 2.3 for illustrative mapping of all approaches).

¹⁰⁸ Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist Papers* (Sweetwater Press, 2010), No. 51; Torsten Persson, Gerard Roland, and Guido Tabellini, “Separation of Powers and Political Accountability,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112, no. 4 (1997): 1163–1202; Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (Simon and Schuster, 1994).

¹⁰⁹ Devesh Kapur, “Explaining Democratic Durability and Economic Performance: The Role of India’s Institutions,” in *Public Institutions in India: Performance and Design*, ed. Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹¹⁰ Nooruddin, *Coalition Politics*.

Table 2.3: Extant “Checks and Balance” Explanations

<i>Checks and Balance Mechanism</i>	Institutions (Kapur, 2005)	Interests (Nooruddin, 2011)	Ideas (My argument)
<i>Explanation of Outcome of Interest</i>	Government response toward anti-corruption movement is mediated through veto players in different institutions across the state.	Government response toward anti-corruption movement would be mediated through veto players as parties representing different constituencies.	Government response toward anti-corruption movement is mediated through veto players as decision-makers with divergent ideologies.

Divergent ideas in authoritative positions of power are more likely in a coalition setting with more veto players than they are in a single-party majority government with less veto players. Ideas render interests actionable, especially when uncertainty is high such as in a credibility crisis environment brought about by a nationwide anti-corruption movement. The interaction between a multi-party coalition government and decision-makers with divergent ideologies – as denoted by elite actors with distinct socialization (technocrat, civic activist, bureaucrat, party politician) – produce an ideological checks and balance mechanism that provides constraints on government behavior.

With divergent perspectives and diagnoses in executive institutions, committees, and more broadly at the dialectic level in positions of policymaking power in the UPA government when faced with the IAC, an ideological check and balance mechanism emerged thus decreasing the likelihood of a suppressive response to the movement. The specific constellation of divergent ideas around social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist) and concepts of the nation (secular-nationalist) produced a tolerant response through negotiations. Such a mechanism was starkly absent in the Congress government when it faced the JPM.

In the Congress Party majority government with less veto players and the salience of a homogenous nationalism binding decision-makers together, a suppressive response became more likely in the face of the JPM. The party's unchecked dominant ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity and re-establish credibility within the government and suppress ideological "others" within the JPM.

Unlike studies that make recourse only to institutions and interests in their articulation of checks and balance, I foreground the role of ideas. This argument builds an interactive causal argument between insights from established work on veto players as well as in the constructivism literature. It is a theory also built off extensive empirical research, to which I turn next.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have detailed my theoretical argument and where it builds upon, and adds to, existing scholarship on government behavior in India.

I have argued that ideational variables are important, as complex sets of cognitions about the workings of the economy or nationalism allow decision-makers to order and intervene in the world by aligning their beliefs, desires, and goals. My argument is not that interests do not matter; but that ideas shape interests. Moreover, cognitive frameworks are not always uniform; different decision-makers can have different worldviews in the same government that then shape different interests. If, for example, decision-makers in government hold different ideas about how the economy works, or what the national interest is and how it may be threatened, then this can lead to such decision-makers taking a variety of actions, thereby producing radically different outcomes in the same circumstances. To prevent undesirable outcomes, decision-makers must delegitimize them by contesting the world-views that underlie them. Together, institutional constraints and divergent ideas in authoritative positions of power produce an ideological "check and

balance” that is the underlying causal mechanism in determining government tolerance to anti-corruption movements.

My ideas-based approach is a fresh contribution to the study of India and plausibly other low- and medium-income developing democracies where rent-seeking and electoral-interest based explanations have been dominant in explicating government behavior.

CHAPTER THREE

ABSENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS: MAJORITY GOVERNMENT AND INTOLERANCE TOWARD JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN MOVEMENT (JPM)

“Jayaprakash [Narayan] has never taken me seriously. He does not understand that for action to be potent, time is of the essence... One has to be really ruthless if the need arises. I am ruthless for what I think right.”
(Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to Puppul Jayakar circa. 1971)

“Indira is India, India is Indira.”
(D.K. Barooah, Congress Party President, CPP Meeting, 18 June 1975)

Introduction

An internal emergency was instituted throughout India on the night of 25 June 1975, thereby suppressing the anti-corruption Jayaprakash Narayan movement (JPM). As per historian Bipan Chandra, “while the functioning of the emergency may be seen in isolation, any analysis of its causes, its historical significance, as well as its consequences, has to be in the context of the JP movement.”¹ The emergency went on for nineteen months, which witnessed the abuse of state powers and suppression of civil liberties and freedom of the press. This period in India’s history (1975-77) has been given incommensurate academic treatment. The main reason is the dearth of primary evidence; and the simplistically

¹ Bipan Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy: JP Movement and the Emergency* (Penguin Books, 2003), 1.

dichotomous historiography of first-hand accounts.² In this chapter, I study the institutional factors, namely the single-party majority government in which the decision-makers functioned, that precipitated the structural conditions for the government to proclaim an emergency and respond intolerantly to the JPM in 1975.

I begin by outlining the political strength of the majoritarian Congress government and the absolute power enjoyed within it by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This type of government, with its low number of veto players, is a key causal factor in the absence of institutional constraints on arbitrary and unilateral action in India. I will then chart the origins, rise, and goals of the JPM; and simultaneously discuss the corruption scandals that engulfed the Congress in the lead up to the movement which damaged government credibility and came to a crescendo right before the proclamation of a national internal emergency. This will take me into discussing the government's response to the movement, thickly tracing the events leading up to the emergency and the specific steps followed by Gandhi and her close, informal and formal, advisors to suppress the JPM.

The following analysis will explain how the Congress' majority power in government and centralized control under the Prime Minister, created the fertile conditions for arbitrary action given the low number of veto players that allowed Gandhi to supersede potentially constraining institutions to push through the emergency decision (intolerant response).

² Emma Tarlo attentively articulates the historiography surrounding the emergency period into two camps: writings that welcome the emergency, generally published between 1975-76; and those which deride it, generally published between 1977-78. This dichotomy continues to provide the vectors for analysis of the period up until today (Bipan Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy* in the former; Coomi Kapoor, *The Emergency: A Personal History* (Penguin Books, 2015), in the latter). It is with this bifurcation in mind that many of the secondary sources relied upon in these chapters must be measured. Those that welcome the emergency consider the step as a constitutional necessity at the time, which gave Prime Minister Gandhi and her government the required tools to deal harshly with disruptive elements and set the nation back on the path to economic and social progress. While those that deride it, which has become the dominant narrative, argue that the emergency was instituted under the corrupt and tyrannical proclivities of Prime Minister Gandhi and her government of sycophants. For excellent coverage of this historiography, see Emma Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi* (University of California Press, 2003), Chapter Two.

Majority Government

Indira Gandhi became the undisputed leader of her government from 1971.³ That year, Congress swept national polls and won a two-thirds majority in the *Lok Sabha* (lower house). The 1971 India-Pakistan War propelled her prestige, as India defeated a regional foe while asserting its national interest. By March 1972, once state assembly election results came in, Congress established its power across India. The Party's dominance, which had been fading since the demise of founding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the 1967 elections, and the party split of 1969, had been revived by Gandhi (see table 3.1).⁴

Table 3.1: Congress Party's General Election Performance, 1951-1971

Election Year	Total Seats in Lok Sabha	Seats Contested by Congress Party	Seats Won by Congress Party	Congress Share of Seats in Lok Sabha
1952	489	479	364	74%
1957	494	490	371	75%
1962	494	488	361	73%
1967	520	516	283	54%
1971	518	441	350	68%

Source: *Elections.in*

³ Raj Thaper, once a close friend of Gandhi, wrote in her 1991 memoirs prior to the emergency: "Power seems to flow from a single source – Indira Gandhi...It is clear that she will stop at nothing. Let all institutions be subverted to her own ends" (Raj Thaper, *All These Years: A Memoir* (Penguin Books, 1991), 401).

⁴ The 1967 election brought about the first shoots of *non-Congressism* in Indian politics. That is, new state governments elected regional parties and non-Congress coalitions. Though most of these governments fell before 1970, the rise of regional parties had begun (more on this later, and particularly in Chapters Five and Six where we see the effects of the rise of regional parties at the Centre (Christophe Jaffrelot, "The First Reign of Indira Gandhi: Socialism, Populism, and Authoritarianism," in *India Since 1950: Society, Politics, Economy and Culture* (Yatra Books, 2012), 26)).

1. 1971 General Election

Indira Gandhi first became Prime Minister through unfortunate circumstance in 1966, after the untimely demise of incumbent Lal Bahadur Shastri in January that year. A leadership struggle ensued, resulting in victory for Gandhi over the veteran Morarji Desai, but the seeds for an internal power and ideological battle had begun. In 1969, the Congress split along ideological lines, resulting in two factions of the Congress Party – Organization (O) under the leadership of the party’s more senior, right-of-center politicians; and Requisitionist (R) under the leadership of Gandhi and her left-of-center loyalists. Congress (R) went into the 1971 elections on the back of a populist platform around Gandhi. Cutting across traditional electoral cleavages, the new, homogenous Congress under Gandhi’s leadership swept the 1971 polls, winning 68% of Lok Sabha seats (see table 3.2).⁵

Table 3.2: General Election Results and Lok Sabha Seats, 1971

Party	Seats in Lok Sabha at Dissolution in 1970	Seats in Lok Sabha after 1971 General Election	Change in Seat Share
Congress (R)	229	350	+121
Communist Party of India (Marxist)	19	25	+6
Communist Party of India (CPI)	24	23	-1
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	24	23	-1
Jana Sangh	23	22	-1
Congress (O)	65	16	-49
Swatantra Party	35	8	-27

⁵ For outside observers, namely the Soviet Union (widely mooted to be Congress’ chief international patrons) the election victory was not welcome news. Although Moscow openly expressed preference for Indira Gandhi, they had privately estimated that if she were able to obtain even a mere majority, then she would creep closer to the ideological center. The Soviet Embassy in Delhi was reportedly “appalled” at Gandhi’s landslide victory (NACP_Department of State_Central Foreign Policy Files_1970-1973_Political and Defense_POL 14).

Sanyukta Socialist Party (SSP)	17	3	-14
Praja Socialist Party (PSP)	15	2	-13
Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD)	10	1	-9
Other/Independents	52	48	-4

Source: *Elections.in*

Gandhi's populist platform included her party's emphasis on secularism, socialism, and minorities, to foreground the government's inclusive nationalism.⁶ Prior to the 1971 elections, many observers did not believe that any one party would gain a majority. Just over 55% of the electorate voted, as against 61% who did in the previous election.⁷ Gandhi's Congress polled nearly 4 million more votes than the undivided Congress had in 1967. Key to this victory were the votes Congress (R) received from minorities – the poor, Scheduled Castes, Sikhs, Muslims, and women.⁸ Indeed, and as I will detail more fully in the next chapter, Congress elites had decided in the key strategy session prior to the election that their party must commit itself fully to a leftist program and, relatedly, unite around Indira Gandhi to maximize party aims.

The 1971 election fully centralized Gandhi's power as the leader of her government which subsumed the Congress Party.⁹ Between 1971-1975, the Congress (R) became less of a federal structure and more power became centralized within the executive under the

⁶ I go into deep detail on the Congress' manifesto and platform in the next chapter when tracing exogeneity of decision-makers' dominant ideology. This ideology, anchored in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights – denoted as *inclusive* nationalism – underpins the government's perspectives on the functions of the JPM and its supporters, who were viewed in hostile terms as mobilized by *exclusive* nationalists – anchored in religious majoritarianism with a sidelining of minority rights. This homogenous framework will interact with the absence of institutional constraints evaluated in the present chapter to produce a suppressive response to the JPM. More on this later.

⁷ NACP_DOS_Central Foreign Policy Files_1970-1973_POL 14

⁸ *Ibid.*; TNA_FCO_37_812_General Elections in India_1971. There was also support from CPI and DMK.

⁹ This is corroborated in an interview Gandhi gave to Socialist India, a Congress weekly, for their Independence Day edition (1975): “*The Centre should at all times have the power to hold the country together and deal with basic national challenges...A vast country like India can remain strong and united only by making adequate provision for the expression of regional loyalties. I do not envisage any change in this concept (my emphasis)*” (Indira Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline: Speeches of Shrimati Indira Gandhi* (Indraprashta Press, 1975), 101).

Prime Minister.¹⁰ Historically, the trend had been the inverse. Gandhi also proceeded to replace Congress Chief Ministers and other state-level leaders who had an independent political base.¹¹ Those that remained or brought in were all ideologically and politically committed to Gandhi for many years.¹² Indeed, a group of powerful Congressmen that had been members of her “kitchen cabinet” or inner circle since she rose to office in 1966, were now in powerful positions in government, either through occupying key Cabinet posts, as President of the Congress Party, as Chief Ministers of key battle-ground states, and even including the President of India at this time, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.¹³ These decision-makers shared in the inclusive nationalist ideology expounded by Gandhi and were fully cooperative in the decision-making process leading to the suppression of the JPM.

By the end of 1972, however, the government’s credibility began to wane in the wake of poor economic growth, an international financial crisis, a sense of unfulfilled campaign promises, and the exposure of corruption scandals at the Centre. It is in this context, that the JPM rose to prominence.

¹⁰ Inder Malhotra, *Indira Gandhi: A Personal and Political Biography* (Coronet Books, 1991), 147. This centralization was reflected in the fact that the PMO was given 60% of the Home Ministry’s portfolio, including the intelligence services and the central administration. Eventually, Indira Gandhi would take over the Ministry herself (Jaffrelot, “The First Reign of Indira Gandhi,” 30).

¹¹ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 18.

¹² In a fascinating meeting on 14 May 1968 with the British High Commissioner, Morarji Desai confides that Gandhi has ceased to be useful to party high command because she has surrounded herself with left-wing “flatterers” (TNA_FCO_37_41_1968).

¹³ Throughout her rise to power, chiefly since she came to office in 1966, Gandhi always had a “kitchen cabinet” of advisors whom she aligned with ideologically and who she trusted. They did her bidding, spread rumors, and strategized against her opponents. In March 1968, for example, these elites combined with the left-wing of the Congress (Congress Forum for Socialist Action (CFSA)) to support S.N. Mishra’s demand that an emergency meeting of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) should be held to consider the state of the organization and debate on the “deteriorating political situation” in the country and within the party – this intra-party agitation went onto lead to the party splitting along ideological lines in November 1969 (more on this in Chapter Four). This “kitchen cabinet” included Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Dinesh Singh, I.K. Gujral, among others who took up key posts in later years, notably 1971-75. Some of these leaders had been cultivated by Gandhi during her time as President of the Congress Party (1959-60), when Gandhi had made herself the spokesperson for younger leftist forces that sought to infuse some new dynamism into the party.

Corruption and Jayaprakash Narayan Movement (JPM)

The JPM, which captivated India between 1974-1975, was symbolized by the Gandhian activist Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). JP, a one-time member of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP), and who was active in the 1942 Quit India movement, led the anti-corruption wave of the early 1970s in India. After CSP broke away from Congress in 1948, JP renounced official party politics and instead became involved in social activism.¹⁴ In outlining his aims for a more activist approach to civic engagement, resulting in the JPM and tactics of marches, sit-ins and fasts-unto-death, he said that the movement aimed to cleanse government of corruption and bring about “a moral regeneration of our [India’s] politics.”¹⁵ Corruption, reflected JP from his time in the Sarvodaya movement (for self-determination and equality promotion), had been the primary source of poor governance, poverty, and other ailments in India by “eating into the very vitals of our nation.”¹⁶

From January 1974 to June 1975, India underwent a turbulent period of demonstrations against government corruption led by JP. They began at the state-level, namely in Gujarat and Bihar, and quickly escalated to the national-level consuming a cross-section of society with up to 500,000 people demonstrating against corruption at the movement’s peak. In early April 1974, JP declared: “I cannot remain a silent spectator to misgovernment, corruption and the rest...it is not for this that I at least had fought for

¹⁴ It is plausible that JP’s confrontation with the Prime Minister stemmed from her government’s working relationship with the CPI, who had sought to undermine the CSP when JP was in the party. However, after 1971, despite continuing electoral pacts at the state-level, the CPI influence in the Congress began to wane.

¹⁵ Jayaprakash Narayan, “Total Revolution,” in *Towards Total Revolution*, vol. 4, 4 vols. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1978): 31, 110. Similar to the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement (in Chapters Five and Six) the JPM was molded around the view that democracy had “to be built from below” and had to be based on “*gram raj* (village self-government)” or “people’s committees” embodying the will of the people at the local level that would significantly undercut corruption at the Centre (Jayaprakash Narayan, “Inaugural Address to All-India Radical Humanist Association Conference,” Calcutta, 29-30 December 1974, *Everyman’s Weekly*, 12 January 1974, 7). N.B: At the end of 1972, JP persuaded a conclave of Sarvodaya workers to launch a new journal devoted to political commentary. The journal, with JP as Chairman of the editorial board, made its appearance in July 1973 as *Everyman’s Weekly* which is widely referenced here.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

freedom [India's independence]."¹⁷ Two months later, in a major speech, he repeated: "The problem of corruption has become more intolerable to me personally and I have come out personally to wage a fight against it."¹⁸ When he was imprisoned, JP would write in his diary: "Corruption has been the central point of the movement [JPM], particularly corruption in the [central] government and administration."¹⁹ Indeed, the agitation took place against the backdrop of high-profile corruption scandals in the Congress government.

1. Government Corruption

Corruption scandals and their exposure were widespread in India in the late 1960s and early 1970s and at their peak implicated the Prime Minister. These conditions precipitated the national relevance and rise of the JPM.

For example, in mid-1971, Gandhi's son and informal advisor, Sanjay Gandhi, was dubiously given a trade license by the Ministry of Industries (out of 18 applicants) to produce 50,000 cars annually. This car, named Maruti, was to be a small and affordable vehicle; an entirely indigenous product. The Congress Chief Minister of Haryana, Bansi Lal, acquired 290 acres of land just outside Delhi, near Gurgaon, at far below the market price for the Maruti factory. Its location violated the rule that no factory should be built within 1000 meters of a defence installation (in this case a munition dump). Meanwhile, Sanjay Gandhi raised a large sum of capital investment from individual businessmen, while the rest was acquired through unsecured loans from nationalized banks. Accusations of nepotism and corruption swept through the entire venture.²⁰

During this time, and especially after the re-election of Congress in 1971, corruption in government became weekly headline news. From the alleged bribery of politicians to the

¹⁷ Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 57.

¹⁸ *Everyman's Weekly*, 22 June 1974, 8

¹⁹ Jayaprakash Narayan, *Prison Diary 1975*, ed. Amritlal Shah (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 104.

²⁰ Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 9, 216-217.

sale of trade licenses for suspected private favors, senior officials and Cabinet ministers in the government were mired in scandals. The most prominent case implicated L.N. Mishra, Cabinet Minister of Railways and Congress Party fundraiser, in the Pondicherry license scam.

Congress minister Tulmohan Ram, allegedly under the instruction of Mishra, was indicted for forging the signatures of 21 Members of Parliament (MPs) to seek licenses from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for a select few businessmen in Pondicherry in return for contributions to the Congress Party. Mishra escaped punishment. Parliament opposition pounced on Mishra, given his Cabinet rank, and sought a government investigation into the affair. Gandhi tried to prevent Mishra from being investigated and refused to remove him from her Cabinet. The Kapoor Commission concluded that there had been no proper accounting of the funds; a conclusion also reached by advisers to the Prime Minister, B.N. Tandon and D.P. Dhar, who poured over the audit reports sent to them by Mishra. P.N. Dhar, specifically, believed that the handling of the Mishra case by the government was incorrect.²¹ P.N. Dhar wanted the Prime Minister to actively initiate an enquiry into Mishra to re-establish the government's credibility. However, Congress Chief Minister of West Bengal and close advisor to the Prime Minister in the lead up to the emergency, S.S. Ray, advised against this, arguing that the motion to have an enquiry should be defeated in Parliament and could be done easily as the government had a majority.²² Gandhi went with Ray's counsel, which protected Mishra. The opposition, in turn, put the government on the defensive and dragged on the call for action against Mishra; but this came to a sudden halt with the minister's sudden demise during a bombing in Bihar in early January 1975.²³

²¹ B.N. Tandon, *PMO Diary-I: Prelude to the Emergency* (Konark Publishers, 2003), 65, 93.

²² *Ibid.*, 12. Dhar, in turn, couldn't understand why so much effort and risk was being taken to save Mishra

²³ *Ibid.*, 72-74. After L.N. Mishra's death in Bihar, Gandhi intimated that it was the JPM (whose base was in that state) who had helped create the disruptive conditions for violence (Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 152). More on this later.

With the above-described allegations engulfing her entire government, Gandhi consistently took a defensive posture on corruption at the Centre.²⁴ The Centre's credibility was eroded not only by mounting charges of corruption against ministers, but the strong sense that Gandhi was not placing corruption as a high priority in her policy agenda and was in fact actively protecting the corrupt in her government.²⁵ B.N. Tandon's diary notes confirm this assertion:

“It became clear from my talk with the PM [Prime Minister] that she is very angry and upset over the whole [Pondicherry license scandal] affair. But she doesn't want to take any action against Mishra. She told me that [Jawaharlal] Nehru had made a big mistake by removing T.T. Krishnamachari [1958] and Krishna Menon [1962] from the Cabinet. She doesn't want to repeat the mistake.”²⁶

The executive's deficient approach to combating corruption finds further evidence in Tandon's 21 May 1975 diary entry where he notes:

“Corruption is viewed purely from a political standpoint [by the Prime Minister]. So many cases of corruption against Congress Chief Ministers and Ministers have been placed before the PM but not a single file has been returned. Om Mehta [Minister of State for Home Affairs] is a close confidante of the PM and he also follows the same policy. I told him that if the central government orders a judicial enquiry even in one or two cases, the people will begin to regain their confidence in the government. But he replied that the circumstances were very difficult and that it was essential to view all such matters from a party viewpoint. He said that the PM also was of this view.”²⁷

²⁴ This defensive position on corruption in her government is corroborated in subsequent remarks at informal meetings and talks: “People have talked about corruption. There is no country in the world where there is no corruption. Those who are accusing us of being corrupt are those who have been proved corrupt in their own states” (Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 173-174).

²⁵ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 72–76.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 53, also see 43

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 347. Tandon most likely saw these corruption laden charge-sheets firsthand given his role in the PMO. N.B.: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) used to be called the Prime Minister's Secretariat before 1977. I use PMO to maintain continuity with subsequent chapters.

On 27 December 1972, at an address to the Indian Political Science Conference in Calcutta, the Prime Minister provided a clear insight into her stance on government corruption by noting:

“When people speak of corruption, there is a tendency to imagine that bribery was unknown in British times...I admit that there were administrators of high rectitude then as there are now. But the entire old system, whether it was colonial rule or princely rule, was thoroughly corrupt...*Merely by running down the present, we shall not be able to generate the will to correct and improve.*”²⁸

The impression that corruption was emanating from, and even being absolved at, the heights of the central government – as JP would allege – became exacerbated when the Prime Minister herself was implicated in abusing her office for private gain.²⁹

On 12 June 1975, Justice Jagmohanlal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court dealt a blow to Gandhi and her government’s credibility by implicating the Prime Minister in a case of corrupt campaign practices while in office.³⁰ Giving a judgement on an election petition filed by Raj Narain (the candidate Gandhi defeated in the 1971 Lok Sabha election), Sinha made recourse to two offenses, the main one being the illegal use of the services of the Prime Minister’s close aide, Yashpal Kapoor, during the 1971 campaign. Kapoor had resigned from government service, but his resignation had not been accepted by the President and properly gazetted. Second, the building of a dais by police and the provision of electricity by the state electricity department went against legal use of government mechanisms during political campaigns. Gandhi’s star came crashing down as the conviction meant that she could not seek election to Parliament or hold public office for a

²⁸ Indira Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings* (Harper & Row, 1975), 189.

²⁹ Minocheher Masani, *Is JP the Answer?* (Delhi: Macmillan Co. of India, 1975).

³⁰ Justice Sinha had dismissed the more serious charges including bribery, lavish election expenditure, the illegal soliciting of votes, and the use of religious symbols. Even a sharp critic of Gandhi, the journalist Kuldip Nayar, who was jailed by the government during the emergency, was to write that the two offences for which Gandhi was convicted were “too thin to justify unseating a Prime Minister.” Making recourse to a *Guardian* news report at the time, Nayar continued, “it was almost like unseating the Prime Minister for a traffic offence” (Kuldip Nayar, *The Judgment: Inside Story of the Emergency in India* (Vikas Publishing House, 1977), 4).

period of six-years and, therefore, legitimately continue as Prime Minister.³¹ The JPM was galvanized.

2. Rise of JPM

The JPM was an elite movement that captured citizens' anger at corruption against a backdrop of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions. Though between 1967-1972 the national economic and political mood was positive (due to an increase in the GDP growth and the successful liberation of Bangladesh), 1972-1975 marked a deterioration resulting from a domestic and international economic crisis.³² An economic recession, growing unemployment, and rampant inflation created a sense of crisis in the country. This was accompanied by the acute shortage of essential items of consumption such as cooking oil and matches.³³ These shortages gave unscrupulous traders and manufacturers an opportunity to indulge in hoarding and black marketing which, in the eyes of the citizenry, was being taken advantage of by corrupt politicians.³⁴ Meanwhile, corruption scandals implicating senior ministers and officials emanating from the central and state governments continued to rise. There was thus an erosion of support for the ruling Congress government.³⁵

From January 1974, large demonstrations against corruption led by JP sprouted up across India and put the government under strain.³⁶ Demonstrations began by students on university campuses kicked-off most prominently in the states of Gujarat spreading to Bihar

³¹ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 382–385. The threat from courts ended up being less potent than the JPM, as the judges soon granted a conditional stay to Gandhi which allowed her to remain in office. More on this later.

³² Price increased +17% from FY73 to FY74 (NACP_DOS_Briefing Books_1958-1976_Box 92). For FY75, *two* budgets had to be presented in the Lok Sabha such was the deterioration of the economic outlook! Another shock arrived with the 1973 global oil crisis, when the oil producing countries cut back crude oil production and the world price of crude increased more than four-fold within a year, leading to a massive increase in the price of petroleum and key food-producing inputs for India such as fertilizers.

³³ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 34–36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 34-35, 55

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 18

³⁶ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 90, 128

and subsequently across the country that consumed a cross-section of society.³⁷ Upon taking formal leadership of these loosely gathered agitations in early 1974, JP declared: “I have decided to fight corruption and misgovernment...this is not meant as a threat, but as a friendly warning. That shall be the beginning. The rest will follow.”³⁸ At one of the first public meetings of the JPM in Patna on 9 April 1974, JP said: “For 27 years I have watched [corrupt] events unfold, but I can stand on the sidelines no longer. I have vowed not to allow this state of things to continue.”³⁹

At the start, JP repeatedly expressed the sentiment that India was ripe for revolution and that the anti-corruption movement that he was leading was its vanguard.⁴⁰ Thereafter, JPM rallies went national, drawing larger crowds, especially in the political capital Delhi.⁴¹ The movement spread across the nation from November 1974 onwards to states such as U.P., Orissa, West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan among others.⁴² Despite not having a fully-fledged program, the movement did present a Charter of Demands to Parliament at its most prominent demonstration in March 1975, which called for the implementation of the Santhanam Committee findings to combat corruption, that had resulted in recommendations for inter alia the institutionalization of an anti-corruption ombudsman

³⁷ Bhola Chatterji, *Conflict in JP's Politics* (Ankur Publishing House, 1984); Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 98–99; Narayan, *Prison Diary 1975*, 46. Economic and social conditions had deteriorated the most in Gujarat and Bihar, where corruption was rampant. Prior to Gujarat and Bihar, JP and his Sarvodaya colleagues were thinking along the lines of a revised strategy that focused on movement activism and compelling the central government to change behavior and reform. So they intellectually welcomed a popular mood against corruption (Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 71).

³⁸ Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 57.

³⁹ Allan Scarfe and Wendy Scarfe, *JP: His Biography* (Orient Blackswan, 2014 [1975]), 422.

⁴⁰ *Everyman's Weekly*, 23 February 1974, 1; Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 97

⁴¹ *Everyman's Weekly*, 21 September 1974, 2

⁴² Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 115, 167. The JPM became national quickly after Bihar, though, because this state was ground zero for the movement and JP home state, it is also often referred to as the “Bihar movement”

(Lokpal) to investigate cases of political corruption against ministers at the Centre.⁴³ As the movement evolved, the JPM became more focused on the purported sources of corruption within the ruling Congress government, principally targeting the Prime Minister.⁴⁴ As such, the movement vowed to support non-Congress, allegedly non-corrupt candidates in state elections. In the aftermath of the Allahabad judgement, which charged Prime Minister Gandhi with corrupt campaign practices, the movement turned squarely toward displacing the Congress government at the Centre.

In its expansion, the movement came to include many students, citizens across classes and rural-urban divides, business elites, politicians, and a large portion of RSS as well as Sarvodaya members.⁴⁵ For its supporters, the JPM-government confrontation was between “people’s power” expressed in the mass movement, on the one side, and “state power” vested in the corrupt system of politics.⁴⁶

A. JPM Support and Composition

As the movement gathered momentum, the JPM gained external backing from opposition political parties, such as the Jana Sangh, Anand Marg, Congress (O), Bharatiya

⁴³ The committee was appointed by Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1962 to “review the existing instruments of checking corruption in the Central Services” and to provide advice on the “practical steps that should be taken to make anti-corruption measures more effective” (quoted in L. Palmier, *The Control of Bureaucratic Corruption: Case Studies in Asia* (Allied Publishers, 1985), 14). The Committee submitted its report in 1964. With matters pertaining to political corruption among government ministers, the report outlined that specific allegations against any minister should be promptly investigated by “an agency whose findings would command respect.” Upon the conclusion of the first Administrative Reforms Commission in 1970 as well as prevailing debates in Parliament since 1963, the recommended agency for combating political corruption was the setting up of the institution of the Lokpal (Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, darpg.gov.in (Accessed 20 April 2017)). More on the Lokpal both during the JPM agitation and, more prominently, the IAC agitation later.

⁴⁴ Geoffrey Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution in India* (Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1985), 131, 170; *Everyman’s Weekly*, 1 December 1974; Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 141–142.

⁴⁵ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 69, 92, 167; Kapoor, *The Emergency*; Ghanshyam Shah, *Protest Movements in Two Indian States: A Study of the Gujarat and Bihar Movements* (Ajanta Publications, 1977), 133–134 (the only first-hand study of the JPM).

⁴⁶ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 95.

Lok Dal (BLD), DMK, Akali Dal, and SSP among others.⁴⁷ Despite this support, JP consistently maintained that he was leading a people's movement and not a political one of parties.⁴⁸ In fact, he continued to be frustrated by claims to the contrary.⁴⁹ JP's confidante and prominent activist in the JPM, K.S. Radhakrishna, repeated up until the Allahabad judgement: "The movement has never sought the removal of this or that person. If throwing out a Chief Minister or Prime Minister were all that there was to the movement then it would be in no way different from the earlier attempts at the political level [by opposition parties]."⁵⁰ In November 1974, at a meeting with all non-Communist parties, JP reiterated that the purpose of the JPM was to purify the government and politics from corruption – not replace one party with another.⁵¹ He declared that he would do what he can to "bring opposition parties together on the national level, [but] again in the context of the people's movement [JPM]" and continued the call that parties should eschew their

⁴⁷ JPM failed to garner support among prominent left-wing parties. Whereas the CPI explicitly backed the Prime Minister, the CPI(M) initially took a neutral position and eventually decided to distance itself from any semblance of support for the JPM once the right-wing Jana Sangh and Anand Marg increased their support. However, the CPI-M still backed the call for the Prime Minister's resignation in light of the Allahabad judgment (Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 55; David Lockwood, *The Communist Party of India and the Indian Emergency* (SAGE Publications, 2016), 94–95, 98).

⁴⁸ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 74, 125, 167, 169, 191, 193, 202. Despite a coalition of opposition parties joining to support the JPM, many of them didn't form a cohesive bloc until May 1975 when they came together to form the Janata Front for the Gujarat elections in June 1975 – this happened separately to, and in the final two months of, the JPM. Moreover, despite this coalition, the ruling Congress remained extremely powerful and these parties did not represent the type of opposition threat at the polls that subsequent governments, including the one studied in Chapters Five and Six, would face. (*Ibid.*, 212–213; Masani, *Is JP the Answer?*, 103; Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York, USA: Columbia University Press, 1998), 265.

⁴⁹ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 196.

⁵⁰ *Everyman's*, 15 June 1975

⁵¹ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 134. He also said at the time: "It is not political parties with which we are identifying ourselves but with the people struggling against a corrupt, oppressive and incompetent regime and an iniquitous social order." Thus the JPM, according to JP, was "a vast upsurge of the people in which the parties merge and lose their identity like rivers in the sea" (Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 132). JP would later reflect in his prison diaries that the involvement of political parties was important for the movement's organizational zeal. He wrote: "If the movement had been confined to the Sarvodaya workers alone and its principle was to keep away all political parties (*including the ruling party*), it would have been impossible to keep them away. But, then, there would have been no people's movement" (Narayan, *Prison Diary*, 56).

“party mentality” when participating in the movement.⁵² The opposition parties’ support for the JPM intensified after the Allahabad judgment once combating corruption for JP became synonymous with removing Prime Minister Gandhi from office after her 1971 election was judged corrupt and void.⁵³ Overall, the government’s suppressive treatment of the JPM had begun before the deepening support from opposition parties, mainly, as I will detail in the next chapter, given the mobilization of the right-wing religious-nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the JPM.⁵⁴

Unlike support from opposition parties which increased throughout the movement, members and workers of the RSS were involved from the start within the JPM as a mobilization force.⁵⁵ Though a critic of the RSS and its political arm, the Jana Sangh, for many years when he had referred to the nationalist group as the “enemies” of Hinduism and India, JP eventually came not to oppose the RSS’ involvement in the JPM in order for the movement to realize its national goals.⁵⁶ The JPM and RSS did not share an ideology per se, with many JPM activists concerned about the RSS presence, but there were some overlapping interests.⁵⁷ The JPM, for example, shared with the RSS their concern for political decentralization. In this way, they were ideologically opposed to the Nehruvian

⁵² *Everyman’s*, 1 December 1974. The JPM and parties didn’t agree on some key matters, fundamentally disagreeing on “people’s candidates,” not party politicians, being selected by constituency councils composed of representatives of citizen action committees (Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 115). In this regard, as we will see in Chapters Five-Six, the IAC took a similar approach to the JPM.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 210-211. For JP, the conditional stay illustrated that Gandhi’s “credibility stands destroyed” (quoted in *Ibid.*, 214).

⁵⁴ This religious-nationalism is also referred to as Hindutva. A Hindu nationalist sect, the RSS considers itself to be a non-political social organization. The organization is linked to networks of educational and welfare institutions in India, drawing upon the commitment of an extensive volunteer cadre (*pracharakas*) (Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 35).

⁵⁵ The RSS’ student-wing, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Prasad (ABVP), provided support throughout the Gujarat and Bihar movements. Trained along paramilitary lines, the RSS cadres are weaned on a communal ideology.

⁵⁶ Jayaprakash Narayan, *Nation Building in India* (Ulan Press, 2012 [1975]), 132-133.

⁵⁷ Anand Patwardhan, part of the JPM and ardent follower of JP, wrote in an article two months before the Emergency: “When old political enemies like the RSS or old individual politicians of dubious virtue have come out in his support, JP has almost invariably welcomed them as prodigal sons who have undergone a change of heart [JP must overcome this] naiveté or otherwise [this] strange myopia [will make it difficult for his] credibility as a champion of a clean social order to be maintained” (Anand Patwardhan, “Is JP’s Movement at the Crossroads?” *Everyman’s Weekly*, 20 April 1975).

modernization championed by Indira Gandhi.⁵⁸ One major difference between JPM and the RSS, was that for the former welfare maximizing efforts such as the removal of corruption had intrinsic value along humanitarian grounds; whereas for the RSS such policies served the ultimate aim of endowing Hindu society with a new ideology.⁵⁹ Overall, where the JPM relied on the RSS for mobilization purposes, the RSS, and its political arm the Jana Sangh, found in JPM a vehicle to integrate themselves into a more legitimate form of political engagement.⁶⁰

On balance, we are perhaps constrained to side with JP sympathizer, Bhola Chatterjee, who argues that the RSS were brought into the JPM due to their mobilizational strength, and JP, in turn, felt it necessary to placate them to achieve movement goals.⁶¹ The fact that JP later became critical of the RSS again, lends credence to this view.⁶² Moreover, beyond the RSS, the JPM included many other citizens across class and caste, especially students across college campuses. What is important for the purposes of the current case study, is that the RSS-JPM relationship became visible to the government whose ideological vector was forcefully oppositional to this make-up.

⁵⁸ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 255, 263-264, 280.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 261. Replying to those who criticized him for allowing exclusionary nationalists to support the movement, JP said: “The Jana Sangh and RSS are neither [right-wing] reactionary nor fascist. How can any party which has lent support to total revolution [against corruption] be called [right-wing] reactionary or fascist?” And then he went as far as to say: “If the Jana Sangh is fascist, then I am too a fascist” (*TOI*, 6 March 1975; *Everyman’s Weekly*, 16 March 1975). He would later reaffirm this statement (Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 150–151).

⁶¹ Chatterji, *Conflict in JP’s Politics*, 191.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 191-192

*Absence of Institutional Constraints***1. Government-JPM Confrontation**

When the JPM first emerged, Indira Gandhi worried a great deal about the unrest such a mass movement could cause against the backdrop of international uncertainty and internal economic difficulty.⁶³ Outwardly, she sought to disparage it and commented at the time:

“It is unfortunate that some people, including certain social workers [JP], have lost interest in the village development work [of Sarvodaya] and are trying to become politically active. *We all know that this kind of peaceful movement is never successful.* Their intention has nothing to do with the results of this kind of movement [anti-corruption].”⁶⁴

Within a few months, on 1 November 1974, Gandhi and JP had their only meeting during the movement’s demonstrations in Delhi.⁶⁵ The Prime Minister offered a compromise; she was willing to dismiss the government in JP’s home state of Bihar, where the movement had begun, provided the JPM campaign ended nationally. Gandhi sensed a growing tide in the movement. JP declined, sensing that the Centre was trying to dilute the anti-corruption agitation and its emergent appeal nationally, and continued demonstrations across India.

⁶³ During a *Meet the Press* interview on 20 August 1975, two months after crushing the JPM, Gandhi reflected: “Earlier they [JPM] tried to paralyse the government of these two states which I mentioned, Gujarat and Bihar. It is obvious that if it happened on a nationwide scale – and this is what was announced – there would have been wide-scale violence. In a period of international uncertainty and internal economic difficulty, I think there was grave internal danger to the country” (Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 117; also see 102).

⁶⁴ Quoted in Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 77.

⁶⁵ They had had a meeting just prior to the JPM emerging in early 1974, with regards to the deteriorating macroeconomic conditions in the country (Gandhi periodically met and exchanged letters with JP in the past given his stature in Indian social and political life). Not long after this meeting the JPM kicked off, and Gandhi said that despite his call against corruption JP himself took funds from highly dubious sources (*Ibid.*, 75). Years later, during the IAC, Congress Party spokesperson, Manish Tewari, would similarly accuse movement leader Anna Hazare of allegedly corrupt financing.

A few days later, the central government instructed the Bihar government and state security forces there to crush the JPM demonstrations.⁶⁶ Despite the government's attempts to prevent people from travelling to Patna for the march (cancelling trains, capturing boats), at least 20,000 people still took part.⁶⁷ A police clampdown ensued, with security forces using tear gas and batons (*lathis*) to suppress the demonstrators including JP and other leaders such as the RSS' Nanaji Deshmukh who were both injured on the day. Nearly 3000 people were arrested.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the movement remained undeterred and, going further, was emboldened in the face of this first explicit act of suppression by the government. JP claimed that the "rumble" of the movement "chariot" would now be heard in Delhi.⁶⁹ As anti-corruption fervor rose, small sections of the government favored dialogue with the JPM.

A minority of ministers continued to push for dialogue, but Gandhi ignored their calls as a quorum failed to emerge.⁷⁰ Congress politician Chandra Shekhar, for example, who would be imprisoned by the government during the emergency for his alleged closeness to JP, later recorded how he "pleaded with Mrs. Gandhi time and again" that her and JP should meet and resolve their differences. He argued that, "with the political power Mrs. Gandhi enjoyed and the moral power Jayaprakash [Narayan] possessed both should unite to lift the country out of the morass."⁷¹ This is corroborated in the autobiography of one of Gandhi's advisors and main technocrats in the government, Principal Secretary P.N. Dhar, who writes that he made efforts to reach across the aisle to JP.⁷² Instead, when the corruption-mired Cabinet Minister, L.N. Mishra, died in acrimonious circumstances in

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 159

⁶⁷ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 47; Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 128.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 129

⁶⁹ *Everyman's*, 23 November 1974

⁷⁰ These politicians were an exception. Congress leader, K.D. Malaviya, prepared a note with regards to the government's offensive against the JPM which said: "The entire democratic system hangs in the balance. The basic question is whether the process of social and economic change will take place within the matrix of democratic institutions or whether the vested interests [of the right] would succeed in thwarting the process through extra-constitutional methods" (quoted in Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, 132).

⁷¹ Quoted in Bhola Chatterji, *Conflict in JP's Politics*, 3.

⁷² Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 255.

Bihar, where the JPM had a stronghold, the Prime Minister sensed a direct attack on her government and was taken aback such that she considered preventatively arresting JP.⁷³ By this point negotiations were completely off the table. At the All India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting in late 1974, she said: “I do not understand what “negotiations” mean. What do you negotiate about? How to destroy democracy? Is this negotiable?”⁷⁴

After denouncing the JPM as solely an attempt to change government through unconstitutional means, Gandhi called for the movement to legally test the legitimacy of the government by contesting in the general elections due February-March, 1976.⁷⁵ She claimed this was the appropriate mechanism through which to measure the will of the people.⁷⁶ JP, in turn, agreed to take the agitation to the polls – though not as a party, but as a movement that would rally the populace around corruption and support uncorrupt candidates from opposition parties. On 18 November 1974 at a large rally at the Gandhi Maidan in Patna, Bihar, JP declared:

“I have accepted the challenge we shall wait till the next elections for the people’s verdict. Since the Prime Minister has dragged the conflict into the electoral arena, I shall take my position in the battlefield, not as a candidate, but as a leader. The contest will be only between those who support the struggle and the other of those who oppose it.”⁷⁷

Consequently, JP led a 20-member National Coordination Committee (NCC) at a conference of fifty political parties and groups in Delhi. The role of the committee would

⁷³ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 139.

⁷⁴ Interview with Blitz newspaper, December 1974, in Rustom Karanjia, *Indira-JP Confrontation: The Great Debate* (New Delhi: Chetana Publications, 1975), 38. N.B: Blitz was a news magazine run by Karanjia, who was a friend of Indira Gandhi (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 113).

⁷⁵ Gandhi developed the impression that the JPM was all along aimed at undermining her government at the Centre, and not corruption; in an interview in December 1974, she said: “From the very beginning we have known that his movement [JPM] was aimed at the central government and me” (quoted in Karanjia, *Indira-JP Confrontation*, 43.)

⁷⁶ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 60.

⁷⁷ *Everyman’s Weekly*, 23 November 1974, 10

be to direct and continue movement-style agitations across the country, especially in the capital at Parliament and even undermining All-India Radio, while waiting for elections.

On 6 March 1975, JP led a procession of half a million citizens to Parliament.⁷⁸ The government tried to prevent people from joining the demonstrations by cancelling bus permits and other transportation methods to the capital. Nevertheless, people marched peacefully. Members of the RSS as well as students, citizens across classes and rural-urban divides, business elites, politicians, and a large portion of Sarvodaya members mobilized together.⁷⁹ No party flags or slogans were raised – all groups and parties had come under the JPM umbrella.⁸⁰ At the march, a Charter of Demands were presented to Parliament, which sought the eradication of corruption from government and public life; as well as the implementation of the Santhanam Committee findings, which led to calls for the establishment of a Lokpal.⁸¹ The government's rhetoric, in turn, sought to undermine the agitation. Congress leader and Gandhi loyalist Jagjivan Ram called the march “an insult to the Constitution”⁸² while Congress President, D.K. Barooah, called it a “flop.”⁸³ One national newspaper, *The Hindu*, commented that the RSS presence within the JPM had “infuriated Mrs. Gandhi to the point of ruling out the possibility of any talks with him [JP] in the near future.”⁸⁴ Within three months, the movement and its supporters were crushed through the institutionalization of an internal emergency. The events leading to this suppression began in mid-June 1975.

On 12 June, the Allahabad High Court judgement, implicating the Prime Minister in corrupt campaign practices, plummeted the government's credibility to rock bottom. At

⁷⁸ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 163.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 69, 92, 163, and 167; Ghanshyam Shah, *Protest Movements in Two Indian States*, 133-34

⁸⁰ Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution*, 164.

⁸¹ *TOI*, 7 March 1975. An investigation into the diaries of B.N. Tandon from this time reveal that the institutionalization of a Lokpal was considered by him and Principal Secretary P.N. Dhar as a mechanism to combat corruption and respond to the JPM (Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 140-41). Indeed, as the day of the march approached the government proposed to introduce in that Parliamentary session a Lokpal bill to combat corruption (Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, 163).

⁸² *TOI*, 8 March 1975

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 9 March 1975

⁸⁴ *The Hindu*, 11 March 1975

10am, the Allahbad judgment reached the PMO. Within 30 minutes, Minister of Law and Justice H.R. Gokhale, S.S. Ray, legal counsel N. Palkhivala, Additional Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, R.K. Dhawan, and her son, Sanjay Gandhi, gathered at the Prime Minister's House (PMH) to strategize with Gandhi.⁸⁵ There was intense discussion, and confusion, regarding whether the Prime Minister should resign, or not.⁸⁶ Her advisors were unanimous that she should not resign.⁸⁷ In the evening, another credibility blow hit the government – the state election results from Gujarat showed that Congress' political capital was diminishing. Despite Gandhi's active campaigning in Gujarat the previous two months, the Janata Front, a right-of-center alliance of parties led by Morarji Desai and backed by the JPM, won 87 seats against the Congress' 75, in a house of 182 seats.⁸⁸

The Allahabad judgement and Gujarat election results energized the JPM and more intensely aligned the movement and the rightist coalition in their call for the ouster of the Prime Minister. Whereas the coalition of opposition parties had for some time been calling for regime change (as detailed above), the JPM now faced greater common cause with them as the Prime Minister had been exposed as corruptly occupying the highest office in the country. The movement, its leaders and supporters, called for the Prime Minister to resign immediately in case any dubious appeal would be lodged by the government. Subsequently, the JPM launched a countrywide campaign to remove the allegedly corrupt Prime Minister from office. Demonstrations erupted in Delhi, outside Parliament and the President's house on 13 June 1975. The newspapers also joined in the chorus and called for the Prime

⁸⁵ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 383-385

⁸⁶ B.N. Tandon writing in his diary on 15 June 1975, three days after the Allahabad judgment, strongly intimated that corrupt practices had taken place during the campaign: "The truth is that [Yashpal] Kapoor had submitted his resignation only on 25 January [1971] but he backdated it to 13 January. Action was taken on it on the 25. The official noting makes it clear that there was nothing to suggest that its acceptance had been mooted before the 25. The noting is followed by the signatures of two officials and then [P.N.] Haksar's. He accepted the noting and if the resignation had been accepted on the 13 or 14 he would have written so on the file. But he wrote no such thing and signed the file. Later, [N.K.] Seshan conveyed the PMs approval. In the light of these notings and signatures, there can be no doubt left in anyone's mind that *Kapoor's resignation had not been accepted before the 25 [January]*" (*Ibid.*, 389).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 385

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 382-385

Minister to uphold democracy and step down from high office which she had gained illegitimately.

In response, Gandhi refused to concede, and found agreeable voices throughout her Cabinet and advisors. They viewed Justice Sinha's judgement as insufficient cause for invalidating her election. She was widely advised that the evidence against her was not strong enough to withstand being held up in the Supreme Court and should therefore appeal the decision. Moreover, and per P.N. Dhar's memoirs, the Prime Minister worried "about the consequences of her exit to the governance of the country," and "the opposition [parties] coming to power...was a specter that haunted her because she believed it would be a disaster for the country."⁸⁹ Indeed, Dhar, who we will later see was sidelined in the decision-making leading up to the emergency, privately held reservations about the Prime Minister's counsel, namely that these decision-makers would prescribe "gimmicky" populist measures to please her and that these would not revitalize the government's credibility. In contrast, Dhar wanted to implement the following policies: "First, to keep the prices of items of common, everyday consumption under control; second, to implement land reforms; and third, a strong effort to raise production in industry and agriculture. He thought that...gimmicky measures would only damage the economy not benefit it." Dhar, one of the few technocrats among Gandhi's close advisors, still believed that policy solutions lay at the core of the popular angst swelling up in the JPM. Ultimately, however, he was "helpless to do anything since the PM was surrounded by people who were giving her all kinds of foolish advice [that she wanted to hear]."⁹⁰

Government decision-makers met in Parliament on 18 June 1975 to reiterate their "fullest faith and confidence" in Gandhi's indispensable leadership of the government. All government ministers signed a loyalty pledge which stated: "Mrs. Indira Gandhi continues to be our Prime Minister. It is our firm and considered view that for the integrity, stability,

⁸⁹ Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 259–260.

⁹⁰ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 406.

and progress of the country, her dynamic leadership is indispensable.”⁹¹ The resolution was moved by leaders of significant following in the government, Jagjivan Ram and Y.B. Chavan. It was at this meeting that the now notorious phrase was uttered by the Congress Party President, D.K. Barooah, who claimed “Indira is India, India is Indira,” in a distasteful hearkening to similar language used by Deputy Fuhrer Rudolf Hess to relate Adolf Hitler and Germany.⁹² Subsequently, pro-government demonstrations and rallies were staged (in line with Dhar’s “gimmicky” prediction) in Delhi from 20 June onwards by the Prime Minister’s close advisors, namely her son, Sanjay Gandhi, to counter the ongoing rallies by the JPM.⁹³ While the government tried to recover, the movement received another boost.

Though the Supreme Court was to hear the Prime Minister’s appeal against the Allahabad judgment on 14 July, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, the vacation judge of the Supreme Court, gave both sides a pyrrhic victory on 24 June through pronouncing a *conditional* stay in office for Gandhi. While Gandhi’s appeal had asked for an *absolute* stay on the original order, Justice Iyer, while holding Gandhi had not been convicted of “any of the graver electoral vices,” gave her only a *conditional* stay because the High Court ruling, until upset, holds good however weak it may ultimately prove to be. He concluded that until the Prime Minister’s appeal be heard by the full bench of the Supreme Court, her electoral disqualification “stands eclipsed” and she should continue as Prime Minister. She could not, however, vote or draw salary as a Member of Parliament. Both the government and the JPM and its supporters claimed victory. For the latter, the conditional stay was a snub to the Prime Minister’s credibility; while for the government, the order virtually exonerated Gandhi’s standing.

⁹¹ Quoted in the *Indian Express*, 19 June 1975

⁹² Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 397

⁹³ Gandhi’s advisors manufactured a circus of rallies and popular demonstrations to illustrate that the Prime Minister maintained popular support (Era Sezhiyan, ed., *Shah Commission Report: Lost and Regained* (Aazhi Publishers, 2010) (henceforth SC), chapter 5; Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 72; Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 382-385).

Buoyed by the conditional stay decision, JP led a huge rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on 25 June, affirming that the Prime Minister continued to hold onto office corruptly and had therefore lost the moral and ethical right to rule.⁹⁴ He urged citizens, from students to the police, to not listen to or take orders from a "disqualified head of a discredited government."⁹⁵ They would therefore not let her continue to corrupt the nation's top post any longer, and compel her to resign by organizing week-long rallies, demonstrations, and civil disobedience throughout the country from 29 June. The campaign was to be organized by a new body, the Lok Sangharsh Samiti (People's Struggle Committee), set up on that very day by JP in conjunction with a wide range of opposition parties and groups.⁹⁶ These demonstrations would seek to "bring everything to a standstill."⁹⁷ What followed was completely unanticipated by the JPM and its supporters.⁹⁸ After the rally, JP returned to the Gandhi Peace Foundation where he was staying and retired to bed. In the early hours of the next morning the police knocked on his door with a warrant for his detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and informed him that a state of emergency had been proclaimed.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi instituted an internal emergency under article 352 of the constitution in the early hours of the morning on 26 June to suppress the JPM. The orders led to the arrest of JPM leaders and activists, among them university students, as well as the banning of right-wing parties and organizations that helped mobilize for the JPM. The fundamental architecture of the Indian constitution, including civil liberties such as freedom of speech, the press, and assembly including the holding of meetings, processions, and demonstrations guaranteed under article 19, were suspended.

⁹⁴ Kapoor, *The Emergency*, x.

⁹⁵ *TOI*, 26 June 1975

⁹⁶ Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 128; Ostergaard, *Nonviolent Revolution in India*, 163, 214).

⁹⁷ Nayar, *The Judgment*, 31–32.

⁹⁸ JPM and its leaders were not expecting the sudden suppression from the Prime Minister. In an interview on the very evening of 25 June Morarji Desai gave an interview in which he stated that he did not believe that the Prime Minister would crack down on the movement. He continued, "I prefer to believe that before committing such a monstrosity Mrs. Gandhi would commit suicide" (Oriana Fallaci, "Mrs. Gandhi's Opposition – Morarji Desai," *New Republic*, August 1975, 13-18).

In tightly tracing the steps leading up to the emergency proclamation, next, I further underscore the primacy of Gandhi's centralized power in government with no veto players to counter her decision-making, which provides strong evidence for the absence of institutional constraints in the Congress-majority government.

2. Proclaiming Emergency

Around midnight on 25 June 1975, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, acting on the advice of Prime Minister Gandhi, signed a proclamation that would come into effect the next morning declaring a state of internal emergency in India to crush the JPM. It was signed on the grounds that, and alluding to the JPM, "a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbances."⁹⁹ The Prime Minister's Cabinet remained uninformed regarding the proclamation and the decision-making process leading to it, becoming aware of it only when they were summoned for a meeting the following morning. Their deference to and ideological alignment with the Congress and Gandhi meant that she faced no compulsion to consult her Cabinet among other advisors. Overnight, a select few decision-makers and Gandhi absorbed immense powers into the executive.

After the declaration of emergency, for nineteen months, mainly under the draconian MISA among other laws, 110,806 citizens were arrested. JPM activists, leaders, and supporters were the first to be imprisoned; 30 MPs from the opposition parties that had supported the movement and some dissidents from the Congress who had shown sympathy to its movement, were detained.¹⁰⁰ In a strong illustration of the government's ideological lens that I will detail in the next chapter (inclusive nationalism), a massive 26

⁹⁹ Proclamation of the Emergency by President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (reproduced in Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 23.) This "grave emergency" justification was later rejected by several relevant actors, most notably the Intelligence Bureau, the institution in charge of briefing the Prime Minister on such disturbances (SC, 5.57).

¹⁰⁰ SC, especially Annexure to Chapter XIX

communal groups and organizations, mainly those that had formed the locus of the JPM, chiefly the RSS, were banned and their workers and members arrested. Indeed, the ideological frames behind a suppressive response akin to the emergency, had been visible months before.

In her 2015 account of the emergency, journalist Coomi Kapoor reproduces a previously unseen handwritten note from S.S. Ray to Indira Gandhi, which clearly illustrates that the West Bengal Chief Minister along with H.R. Gokhale, D.K. Barooah, and Bombay PCC leader Rajni Patel, floated the idea of government action similar to an internal emergency as early as 8 January 1975.¹⁰¹ In the letter, Ray writes that “some people do not realize the seriousness of the situation in the country” and that a secret message should be sent to every Congress Chief Minister “directing him to prepare a list of all prominent Anand Marg and RSS members in his state” – who mobilized under the JPM.¹⁰² Indeed, they had come up with this plan at the exact time Gandhi had been rattled by corruption-scandal-ridden L.N. Mishra’s sudden and acrimonious demise during a bomb explosion in Bihar, which she blamed on the JPM’s anti-corruption demonstrations in the state.¹⁰³ Though the Prime Minister ended up back-tracking on suppressive action that January

¹⁰¹ Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 5-6

¹⁰² We can now corroborate this letter’s findings with two other pieces of evidence. First, Ray stated to the Shah Commission that Gandhi had on two previous occasions made references to the internal security of the nation, and sought “some sort of emergent power or drastic power” to deal with the upsurge of agitations. Second, in an interview with German TV, three months after the emergency, on a question about her decision-making being unilateral, Gandhi says: “One very big lie that is propagated is that the whole emergency and so on is run by some small group including my son, which is absolutely false. The decision was taken by the Chief Ministers of this country *and they were wanting me to take some action for quite some time before*, because they are the ones who have to manage the states...so they were saying: ‘if you allow these movements [JPM], while it is confined to one state or another, it is all right, but if it’s going to spread, it will be very difficult for us to manage the states.’ So the decision was taken by the Chief Ministers...” (Indira Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 166).

¹⁰³ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 130-141

upon the advice of P.N. Dhar, the actual emergency events of 25 June were similar to those outlined in the letter from Ray.¹⁰⁴

On 25 June, Prime Minister Gandhi took into confidence a select group of advisors, all members of the ruling Congress party or close confidantes such as her son and personal secretary, regarding the government's plans to respond to the JPM. Congress Chief Ministers of several states were instructed by R.K. Dhawan and Minister of State for Home Affairs, Om Mehta, to wait for important orders from PMH that evening.¹⁰⁵ S.S. Ray was summoned there earlier in the morning.¹⁰⁶ Upon sitting down to talk, Gandhi informed her long-time friend, former-Cabinet Minister in her government, and then Congress Chief Minister of West Bengal, Ray, that "the country was in great difficulty and that, in view of all round indiscipline and lawlessness, she wanted something to be done."¹⁰⁷ She read out from a report in her hand, that purportedly gave advance information about what JP was going to say at his rally on that day in Delhi, and that he would effectively be making a call

¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that this letter illustrates that it is Ray who is urging Gandhi to take strong action, akin to an emergency, against allegedly disruptive right-wing groups and parties mobilized within the JPM; whereas in his Shah Commission testimony Ray claims that the Prime Minister conjured all decision-making on 25 June (SC, 5.47). Indeed, Pranab Mukherjee writes in his memoirs that "Indira Gandhi told me that she was not even aware of the constitutional provisions allowing for the declaration of a state of emergency on grounds of internal disturbance, particularly since a [external] state of emergency had already been proclaimed as a consequence of the Indo-Pak conflict 1971" (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 45). On balance, and triangulation of available material, both Gandhi and Ray had mooted and been aware of strong action akin to an emergency against the JPM and its supporters at least since January 1975. However, the specific constitutional provisions were most likely investigated and framed to Gandhi by Ray.

¹⁰⁵ SC, 5.46; Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 5. Dhawan was a powerful mouthpiece at this time for the Prime Minister and was listed as one of the chief instigators of suppressive tactics in the Shah Commission report (SC, 24.14). In an interview with Coomi Kapoor, Dhawan says: "I never did anything on my own. If I called someone to give orders I did not say the PM [Prime Minister] desires it. It was understood I was following her orders" (*Ibid.*, 14). The PMH, led mainly by Dhawan and Sanjay Gandhi, had become an alternative, informal power source to supplement the Cabinet and very much in line with the government's dominant ideology and deference to Gandhi.

¹⁰⁶ Ray and Prime Minister Gandhi had been close for a long-time and were both students at the same time in the UK (Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 6). Pranab Mukherjee corroborates Ray's significant impact on Gandhi's decision-making during this period, especially since the Congress split in 1969, in his memoirs. As a member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) and the Central Parliamentary Board, Ray had "considerable influence" over the decision-making process of the organization and administration. His voice was also prominent in the meetings of the National Development Council and at the conferences of Chief Ministers" (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 46–47). Indeed, Ray was often referred to as a "Delhi-based" Chief Minister given his proximity to the PMO (*Ibid.*, 107).

¹⁰⁷ SC, 5.47

for a massive nationwide movement within 2-3 days.¹⁰⁸ This movement, as per Gandhi, served as a threat of lawlessness in many parts of northern India. The Prime Minister wanted to act, and needed a trusted, audacious figure who understood the constitutional parameters, to move. Ray, a barrister presiding over a troubled state, fit the bill.¹⁰⁹

Ray, tasked with finding the constitutional justifications for what clearly looked like an impending crackdown, asked for some time to consult the relevant law and left the PMH. He returned around 5pm and suggested to the Prime Minister the use of Article 352 of the constitution for imposing an internal emergency. She immediately asked Ray to accompany her to see President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Ahmed was a close confidant of Gandhi who had served in her informal “kitchen cabinet” when the Congress began to fray into separate ideological factions in the mid- and late-1960s (more on this in the next chapter), and would later serve in her formal Cabinet after the 1971 election victory before becoming President of India. At the mere 25-minute meeting, Gandhi informed the President of what she had told Ray, who then was also asked to provide the constitutional justification to the President regarding possible pathways for action against the JPM. The President asked Gandhi to make her recommendation by that evening.

On their return to PMH, Gandhi posed three questions to Ray that are instructive of her desire for swift decision-making in responding to the JPM: i) Could she make a decision without going to the Cabinet? ii) What should be the language of the letter to the President? and iii) What should be the text of the Emergency proclamation? Upon laying out the possible pathways for her as per the Business Rules within the constitution, the Prime Minister decided that she would send a letter to the President in the evening asserting that the emergency must be instituted immediately and that she would then call a meeting with her Cabinet first thing the following morning. Indeed, as discussed earlier, only in

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.33-5.34; also see deposition of Sushil Kumar, District Magistrate, Delhi (*Ibid.*, 11.1-11.5; 11.7).

¹⁰⁹ During this period, Ray was counselling Gandhi on the L.N. Mishra case and the Kapoor Commission, Parliament’s stand-off with the Judiciary, the Naxalite insurgency in West Bengal, her election petition, and election strategy at the national and at the state levels (Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 8-10, 13, 41).

recent weeks had the Cabinet and senior party figures committed their unwavering support to Gandhi, and so she was confident in presuming their cooperation and acting without concern for prevention from her government. Together with Ray and D.K. Barooah, the Prime Minister crafted her letter to President Ahmed who had to ratify the decision. The process took around 3 hours.¹¹⁰

Only a select group of elites, formal and informal, were part of this decision-making process that included the main patrons of the Congress party and government. In addition to Ray and Barooah, there was Gandhi's youngest son, Sanjay Gandhi, Om Mehta, and Dhawan. They were all in agreement with the Prime Minister.¹¹¹ Home Minister Brahmananda Reddy was summoned to the Prime Minister's house at 10.15pm and was informed that due to the "deteriorating law and order situation" there would be an internal emergency announced that evening. Reddy, in his deposition to the Shah Commission, echoed that his response to the Prime Minister was that she should undertake whatever action she believed best.¹¹² His deference reflected Gandhi's centralized power in government and over the Congress. Reddy then signed the letter to the President.¹¹³

At about 11.20pm, Akhtar Alam, Special Assistant to the President received R.K. Dhawan, who brought with him some documents from the Prime Minister which stressed that Gandhi wanted to act expeditiously knowing that she had her government's backing.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ SC, 5.47

¹¹¹ Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's youngest son, played a key, though informal, role in government decision-making. This much is corroborated by evidence in personal diaries and accounts of officials within the PMO and government (Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*; Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*; B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys Finish Second: Memoirs* (Viking, 1997). Nehru, who was very close to the Prime Minister and was her High Commissioner to Britain, would comment that the Prime Minister was "absolutely blind as far as that boy [Sanjay Gandhi] was concerned" (B.K. Nehru, *Nice Guys Finish Second*, 564). Sanjay Gandhi's role in decision-making increased during the emergency; for a vivid and harrowing account of slum demolitions, sterilizations, and related policies pursued under the direction of Sanjay Gandhi, see Emma Tarlo (*Tarlo, Unsettling Memories*). But Sanjay Gandhi is far too much of a shadowy figure, and his relationship with the Prime Minister psychologically complex, to fully investigate with the current dearth of primary evidence.

¹¹² SC, 5.49. Reddy was also a Gandhi loyalist. He had been removed at a stroke as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh by Gandhi, so that the government could avoid electoral weakening through the secession of the state.

¹¹³ Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 47; SC, 5.68

¹¹⁴ SC, 5.50

Secretary to the President, K. Balachandran, presented these documents to the President which included a letter that referred to the discussion which Gandhi had with the President earlier in the day. Balachandran's deposition confirms that the Prime Minister made it explicit in this letter that she was not consulting her Cabinet due to "shortage of time" and that the matter was urgent and that she was, therefore, permitted a departure from the Transaction of Business Rules exercise of her powers under rule 12 (as advised to her by Ray, earlier in the day).¹¹⁵ The draft proclamation, dated 25 June, addressed to the President with "top secret" along the letter head, underlined that "there is an imminent danger to the security of India being threatened by internal disturbance" [i.e. the JPM] and that "a requisite Proclamation under Article 352(1) has become necessary."¹¹⁶ The President concurred, and signed the proclamation of emergency close to midnight. The emergency execution, which would lead to the only period of despotic rule in India's post-Independence history and suppress several hundreds of thousand citizens chief among them JP, took just over six hours. The Prime Minister stood atop this decision-making chain, acting within minimal institutional constraints and the full cooperation of her government.

Cabinet Secretary, B.D. Pande, received a phone call from PMH at around 4.30am on 26 June and was told that a Cabinet meeting should be scheduled to take place at 6am that morning – a mere 1.5 hours between the arranging and session of the meeting illustrated the simple formality of Gandhi informing her Cabinet.¹¹⁷ Per Pande, the need for the declaration of emergency, or the conditions in the country warranting any such declaration, had not figured in any of the Cabinet meetings preceding that day. There was thus no prior illustration to Gandhi that she would have had any obstruction from her Cabinet colleagues; on the contrary, only recently, their support for and deference toward

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.52

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.55

Gandhi was fully established.¹¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, the only decision-maker who could have displayed disagreement but remained silent, P.N. Dhar, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, was only called to the PMH at 11.30pm on the night before when he and the Prime Minister's Information Advisor H.Y. Sharada Prasad were given for perusal the draft speech that Gandhi was going to make over radio.¹¹⁹ The Prime Minister's presumption here with regards to her Cabinet and closest staff in the PMO further underscores the unrestrained space she occupied in government to act unilaterally and arbitrarily.

Prime Minister Gandhi could act suppressively toward the JPM by instituting the emergency and the despotic powers this decision afforded in part because she had full power in office and there were no political constraints, or veto players, that would compel her to act otherwise. The decision was taken in concert with cooperative advisors whom she knew shared her diagnosis of the JPM, as revealed by her conversations with S.S. Ray and other leaders months earlier. Instead, the Prime Minister told the President, who had previously served in her Cabinet and was a former Congress politician reverential toward Gandhi, that she would inform her Cabinet the next day, which was always a formality. In so doing, Gandhi illustrated the centralization of her power over policymaking, especially in a crisis such as she faced with the JPM, in a Congress-majority government.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis provides robust evidence illustrating the absence of institutional constraints that in part shaped the Congress government's intolerant response to the JPM. I detailed the electoral strength of the Congress government after 1971 leading up to the JPM; as well as the origins, context, and rise of the movement. I then described

¹¹⁸ Senior ministers, such as K.D. Malaviya and H.R. Gokhale, who claimed they found out about the emergency after it had been instituted were long-time proponents of strong action against the JPM (*Ibid.*, 5.58, 5.59, 5.60)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.54; also see Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 414.

the confrontation between the JPM and the Congress government. I went on to thickly trace the specific steps taken by a select group of decision-makers, chief among them Prime Minister Gandhi, who proclaimed and instituted the internal emergency. Overall, I show that the strength in government that Gandhi enjoyed and the deference she received from decision-makers around her, informal and formal, precipitated the conditions that made a unitary and arbitrary response to the JPM more likely.

However, these institutional drivers of the causal narrative do not sufficiently explain the dynamics behind the government's intolerance – they illustrate constraints (or the absence thereof) on elite behavior but not its content. For this, we must study decision-makers' unified ideas to understand why they preferred to crush the JPM. It is the interaction between a homogenous ideology, explored next, and the absence of institutional constraints, as discussed here, that present a fuller picture of suppressive government response. I will argue next that Congress Party ideology, rooted in an *inclusive* nationalism, became weaponized by Prime Minister Gandhi in the face of the JPM, that to the government was a function of an *exclusive* nationalism. Suppression of the JPM was therefore used to build solidarity within a majority government by crushing ideological others within the anti-corruption movement.

CHAPTER FOUR

IDEAS AS CAUSES I: ELITE CONCEPTIONS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 1974-1975

“Whenever you take a step forward, you are bound to disturb something. You disturb the air as you go forward, you disturb the dust, the ground. You trample upon things. When a whole society moves forward this trampling is on a much bigger scale and each thing that you disturb, each vested interest which you want to remove, stands as an obstacle... You have to have moral courage then to stick to that – no matter what comes in your way, no matter what the obstacle and the opposition.”
(Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, *Madras University*, 1967)

“[Populism is] a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups.”
(Cas Mudde, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, 2004: 543)

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present strong evidence for the independent, causal role of ideology. I begin by first examining the perspectives through which decision-makers in the Congress government, namely Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, viewed and diagnosed the anti-corruption Jayaprakash Narayan movement (JPM). This analysis illustrates how the dominant ideology in the Congress, anchored in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights – denoted as *inclusive* nationalism – underpins the government’s perspectives on the functions of the JPM and its supporters, who were viewed in hostile terms as mobilized by *exclusive* nationalists – anchored in religious majoritarianism with a sidelining of minority rights. The party’s unchecked, homogenous ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity within the government and suppress ideological “others” within the JPM. Crucially, I then use process-tracing to show that the government’s dominant ideology, albeit seeped in populism, is rooted however “thinly” in a source exogenous to the crisis brought on by the nationwide JPM.

That is, the events that shaped the Congress party in the lead up to, and after, the party's split along ideological lines in 1969. This will lend credence to the causal independence of ideas in my argument.

Elite Ideas

Indira Gandhi rose to power in 1971 on a populist platform.¹ After the party split of 1969, Gandhi and her Congress faction, (R), came to sweep power on a *Gharibi Hatao* (remove poverty) message that advanced secularism, a preference for socialism, and a focus on minority rights – i.e. an *inclusive* nationalism.² This concept of the Indian nation, per Gandhi, was bound up in the Congress itself: “The unity of India is in many ways due to the unity and strength of the Congress. If the Congress had not been so dominant, perhaps the country would have split up into several states when the British Empire ended. *The role of the Congress continues as long as the social revolution in India remains uncompleted, and we are very*

¹ Recall from Chapter Two that I consider populism as a “thin-centered” ideology “that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* [general will] of the people” (Cas Mudde, “The Populist Zeitgeist,” *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 543).

² Shankar Dayal Sharma, who would go on to become President of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in 1972 and later President of India, wrote in a letter to Congressman Henry Austin, General Secretary of the AICC at this time, on 23 July 1971, that the Congress’ ideology could be summed up as, “democracy, socialism, and secularism as the content of our national polity” (S.D. Sharma_Letter to Dr. Henry Austin_July 3rd 1971_NMML_Dr. Henry Austin Papers_Correspondence with Shankar Dayal Sharma). Secularism for Indira Gandhi meant the equality of all religions, not a rejection of religion itself. She went further to say that there cannot be any socialism – her main social and economic development framework – if there is no secularism (Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 139)

conscious of this role.”³ Gandhi’s populism went on to play a constitutive role in political realignments after the unified Congress party split in 1969 (as I will illustrate more fully, later), in which moral boundaries between groups were redrawn confrontationally, and categories of “us” and “them” emerged.⁴ Indeed, populism is otherizing; and this is certainly the case with regards to the Congress government under Gandhi after 1971.

The JPM became the target of Congress’ “otherizing” under Prime Minister Gandhi. With their growth and the inclusion of inter alia right-wing groups and organizations in its mobilizing, and later the alliance with a coalition of mainly right-of-center parties, the JPM became an object of suppression for Congress decision-makers, chiefly Gandhi. As I will show, Gandhi, weaponized with a homogenized ideology in a majority government, focused on the movement only as a function of an exclusive nationalism that represented a threat to her party’s concept of the nation and power over policymaking. Thus, given the unquestionable role of Gandhi as the head of government and de facto Congress Party commander leading up to the emergency, I study mainly her statements and perspectives pertaining to the JPM.

³ *Ibid.*, 59. These themes were prominent throughout her time in office, especially 1971-75. During an address, “Democracy in India,” to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, at Chatham House October 1971, she says: “Our democracy is dedicated to planned economic development, the peaceful transformation of an old social order and the uplifting of millions of people from conditions of social, economic, and technological underdevelopment.” She continued: “There are forces in our society as in others which pull in opposite directions [alluding to the right-wing]. The competitiveness of democracy and of contemporary living seems superficially sometimes to have strengthened the hold of caste, religion, and region, for these are now exploited for social and economic gain. *But this is a passing phase and these differences cannot weaken India’s fundamental unity nor the basic sense of Indianness which is a powerful binding factor*” (Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 182). “Indianness” for Gandhi, was “not confined to the legal interpretation of being born within a geographical area or the constitutional imperative of accepting the equality of all citizens. To me Indianness implies a positive duty to understand and honor other points of view in consonance with the injunction that the ways to Truth are many... *Thus freedom from [right-wing] fanaticism and a capacity for acceptance and assimilation have been the genius of the Indian people*” (Talk at the Indo-French Colloquium, 13 December 1969; Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 91). Finally, in her first Independence Day address after the emergency, Gandhi said: “Real democracy will come when socialism and secularism are fully established” (Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 89). More on these themes throughout this chapter.

⁴ Gandhi often said of the *exclusionary* nationalists, the RSS, that they have “no faith in secularism, socialism or non-alignment [Congress foreign policy framework]” (*Ibid.*, 102). Furthermore, she believed that the RSS being called a nationalist organization was a “contradiction in terms” (*Ibid.*, 39). For a recent theoretical treatment on populist “otherizing”, see: Stefano Fella and Carlo Ruzza, “Populism and the Fall of the Centre-Right in Italy: The End of the Berlusconi Model or a New Beginning?,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 21, no. 1 (2013): 38–52.

1. Unified Backgrounds and Perspectives

To examine the ideological causes of the Congress government's response to the JPM, I will look mainly at Congress Party ideology under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.⁵ It is important to note here, particularly in contrast to the next two chapters and as evident from Chapter Three, that not only were all decision-makers from one party, the Congress, but there was also no significant quorum of technocrats in positions of authority leading to the emergency. Nearly all leaders within positions of authority were party politicians (see Appendix D.1). Therefore, there was a diminished likelihood of technical and established ideas or alternative party ideologies that could diagnose the JPM contrastingly. Decision-makers led by Gandhi shared an ideology within government that was anchored in the Congress' secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights – denoted as *inclusive* nationalism.⁶

Prime Minister Gandhi, shortsightedly, believed that the JPM solely sought power at the Centre. In an interview with one of her biographers, Pupul Jayakar in 1975, Gandhi said: “Why does he [JP] refuse to accept that he has never ceased to be a politician and desires to be Prime Minister?”⁷ B.N. Tandon, Joint-Secretary to the Prime Minister, confirms this sentiment in his diary from this period where he notes that Gandhi “believed JP is a frustrated man and he wants power now.”⁸ More discerningly, P.N. Dhar, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, notes in his memoirs that JP did indeed want policymaking influence but not necessarily to take any political role, including that of the Prime Minister, himself. One of the intermediaries Dhar used to reach out to JP, Sugata Dasgupta, the

⁵ For a similar approach, see: Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*.

⁶ As mentioned, this concept of the nation had been in place for most Congress members, including Gandhi, since the freedom movement, and strategic calculations didn't wholly obliterate this.

⁷ Pupul Jayakar, *Indira Gandhi: A Biography* (Penguin Books, 1992), 285–286, 391. JP, as mentioned earlier, had resigned several years earlier from elected office as he had come to believe in a party-less democracy. He was mooted as candidate for Prime Minister after the demise of Jawaharlal Nehru so Gandhi was convinced that he was mainly seeking to unseat her from office (Scarfe and Scarfe, *JP: His Biography*).

⁸ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 7

Director of the Gandhian Institute of Studies in Varanasi, U.P. told him that all JP wanted from the Prime Minister was some reverence.⁹ In other words, JP wanted to share a relationship with Gandhi analogous to that which Mahatma Gandhi struck with Jawaharlal Nehru – the moral conscience to the political voice.¹⁰ Indira Gandhi and her decision-makers, driven by their homogenous ideological framework and unchecked power over policymaking, were unable to make this distinction.

Pranab Mukherjee, Member of Parliament and Minister of State for Finance until 1974, has written in his recently released memoirs that he also believed the JPM was trying to unlawfully push the Prime Minister out of office. Corruption scandals, such as the Prime Minister's alleged abuse of state mechanisms during her 1971 campaign, were overblown according to Mukherjee. The JPM and its supporters, in turn, revealed their political motivations by failing to wait for the Supreme Court decision. JP, for Mukherjee, was “without a doubt... spearheading the strategy of the opposition.” He continues:

“Rationally speaking, I could not support the movement. To me it appeared to be directionless. *It was contradictory in that it was a movement fighting against corruption yet composed of people and parties whose integrity was not above board* [he means the supportive opposition parties not JP, who he describes as wanting to “truly restore moral values in Indian politics”]. Not only personalities but organizations [RSS] too joined the movement to further their own interests.”¹¹

For Mukherjee, the JPM sought to undermine an elected government – no democracy, per Mukherjee, would or should have allowed this to happen.¹²

Information Advisor to Gandhi, H.Y. Sharada Prasad, echoes these perspectives of the JPM as undermining democratic government. Writing many years later, though he

⁹ Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 255.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Dasgupta said: “Frankly speaking, these policy questions are secondary matters. My advice to you is, *un ko kuch maan deejye* (he should be shown some reverence)” (quoted in *Ibid.*, 255). This point is corroborated from JP's perspective, by Masani, *Is JP the Answer?*, 133.

¹¹ Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 79–80.

¹² *Ibid.*, 78

agreed with his colleague in the PMO, P.N. Dhar, that the emergency was “an evil” and a painful period in India’s history, he was nevertheless convinced at the time of writing as well as during the emergency and its preamble that “if Indira Gandhi had thrown in the towel at that point of time, it would have greatly weakened the Indian state. Yes, the emergency did damage our democratic roots badly, but the state had been saved from a grave challenge.”¹³ This challenge, perhaps more precisely, presented itself to the government internally as opposed to in power electorally.

Gandhi had reason to believe that her government’s harmony was being threatened by the JPM.¹⁴ Like most social movements and agitations around the world, the JPM sought institutional sympathizers within government to help advance their cause and aims.¹⁵ In early 1975 JP repeatedly appealed to senior politicians in government, Jagjivan Ram, Y.B. Chavan, among other Congress leaders to join the movement.¹⁶ JP had little success, as we saw in the previous chapter, given the intense deference shown to the party and Gandhi within the government. However, there were a handful of exceptions. Congress politicians who had attempted to bring JP and Gandhi together, such as Chandra Shekhar and Mohan Dharia, became explicit in their support of the JPM near the end of the movement and suffered the consequences by being imprisoned during the emergency and/or thrown out of government. It is plausible that such attempts by JP to attract institutional sympathizers led Gandhi to be even less trusting of her ministers and Cabinet, in the event they were

¹³ H.Y. Sharada Prasad, “Can There Be a Repeat of the Emergency?” *Asian Age*, 28 June 2000

¹⁴ It is revealed in the Shah Commission (henceforth SC) that the Prime Minister had put surveillance on her own ministers and colleagues in the party, namely party senior minister Jagjivan Ram, especially at the time of the Allahbad court decision (SC, 5.27-5.28).

¹⁵ Social movement theories posit that, within democratic structures, existing sympathizers that enjoy some degree of influence can positively impact the prospects for social movement aims, as they aid more favorable conditions for movement activists such as enhanced power, repertoires, and legitimacy, to pursue their political objectives (M. Giugni, D. McAdam, and C. Tilly, eds., *How Movements Matter: Theoretical and Comparative Studies in the Consequences of Social Movements* (Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1998)). For example, the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women during the Kennedy Administration in the U.S. brought in existing feminist activists into the state that then led to the creation of the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966. Such government elites are known as “institutional sympathizers.”

¹⁶ Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, 149.

courting the JPM.¹⁷ After all, she was proud to say in later years that Congress unity was strengthened after the emergency.¹⁸

The abovementioned perspectives of decision-makers around and including Gandhi coalesce over the government viewing the JPM in hostile terms. This is unsurprising given that the Prime Minister surrounded herself with party politicians and advisors who shared her perspectives. There was a distinct absence in this circle and her Cabinet of decision-makers who could diagnose the JPM alternatively, especially from a policy stand-point. During one Cabinet meeting on 1 April 1975, B.N. Tandon recounts that Gandhi was not interested in dissenting voices, especially those that did not optimize party considerations:

“I want to mention especially something about today’s [Cabinet] meeting. Depending on the circumstances, the PM goes through her other papers during Cabinet meetings and its committees. She also sends slips to ministers and officials. But today, after a while, she started off a separate meeting with Swaran Singh and Jagjivan Ram. She is interested in economic issues only to the extent of the inherent politics in them. When [P.N.] Haksar and others were speaking, she interrupted them once to say that these questions needed to be viewed from a political angle as well. Then she got busy with her own work.”¹⁹

A notable exception in Gandhi’s decision-making circle was P.N. Dhar. Dhar, from both his memoirs and Tandon’s diary, is often found frustrated that the Prime Minister privileges populist measures, as had been mentioned in the earlier chapter. Another example is instructive as to how Dhar, Tandon, and others in the PMO who interacted with and advised Gandhi daily came to view her decision-making style. On one occasion in April

¹⁷ On 1 March 1975, five days before a JPM march on Parliament, Mohan Dharia, Minister of State for Works and Housing, called for talks between JP and Gandhi at a public lecture. The following day, he strongly condemned the brutal police treatment of young JPM demonstrators in Bihar and condemned the CPI for trying to weaken the Congress and make it dependent on the communist party (*TOI*, 2 and 3 March 1975). The Prime Minister immediately stripped Dharia of his ministerial position, asserting that his views were not in conformity with the perspectives of the Congress or compatible with his position as a member of the council of ministers (*TOI*, 3 March 1975).

¹⁸ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 20

¹⁹ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 260

1975, Dhar gave a note to the Prime Minister on setting up an informal committee of lawyers and academics to make suggestions on anti-corruption and other reforms – directly linked to the JPM’s demands. Upon seeing the note, Tandon observed:

“I said [to Dhar] that this was such a lightweight group [they were all deferential to the Prime Minister and Congress Party] that no one would take its recommendations seriously. It was then that he told me that he too had not been in favor of this but had given the names because the PM [Prime Minister] had got after him. Now she is saying that Prof. Aloo Dastur whose name was in the list is a sympathizer of JP and that her name should not be there. I could not prevent blurting out that while she wants expert opinion, she wants only such experts who will toe the government line.”²⁰

In short, Gandhi, and many of her advisers, maintained the perspectives of party politicians who, in turn, gave primacy to party and populist concerns in diagnosing the JPM. In an interview with the *Observer*, 13 July 1975 she claimed:

“At a time of global financial crisis there was a determined effort [by JPM] to sabotage our efforts to keep our economy going, by frequent strikes and calls for complete disruption of national activity. The law and order situation was becoming volatile. All this was a tremendous burden on a country at our stage of development. *Any government worth its name had to checkmate these designs.*”²¹

Next, I explore the ideological content of these concerns that allow us to understand more fully why Gandhi diagnosed the JPM as an ideological “other” that embodied an *exclusively* defined nationalism detrimental to the *inclusive* concept of the Indian nation enshrined in the Congress majority government under her leadership.

²⁰ Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*, 265.

²¹ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 22; also see, 158

A. Congress Government's Inclusive Nationalism

i. Proclaiming the Emergency

The Congress government, led by Gandhi, had enshrined within it a homogenous ideology that was anchored in the Congress Party's secularism with preference for socialism and focus on minority rights – denoted as *inclusive* nationalism. One of the two major “master narratives” of Indian nationalism since the turn of the 20th century and up until today has been secularism (the other being religious nationalism). Indian secularism, which denotes religious equidistance not non-involvement by the state, has been principally represented by the Congress Party during and after the independence movement.²² Indira Gandhi's nationalism is strongly rooted in these ideas, most prominently espoused by figures such as M.K. (Mahatma) Gandhi (no relation), Rabindranath Tagore, and her father, Jawaharlal Nehru. In an article she wrote in July 1957, “My Reminiscences of ‘Bapu’” Indira Gandhi outlines toward her comprehension of a secular order:

“Another of his [M.K. ‘Mahatma’ Gandhi’s] glorious legacies is the secularism for which he gave his life. *Secularism means neither irreligion nor indifference to religion, but equal respect for all religions – not mere tolerance, but positive respect. Secularism demands constant self-examination and unceasing exertion.* That great truth is inscribed on rocks by Asoka, that no man reverences his own religion unless he reverences others’ religion also. *India has been great and has risen to high places in those periods when the truth was acknowledged and practiced by her rulers.* In our times Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru made it [secularism] a living reality for us. *Without it there is no future for our nation...* Jawaharlal Nehru integrated our ideals into our national life laying the *firm foundation of a secular democracy directed towards socialism.*”²³

²² Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, 56.

²³ Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 29-34; also see 63. This is corroborated elsewhere in many of her private letters with Dorothy Norman as well as in Nayantra Sahgal's biography of Indira Gandhi (Indira Gandhi and Dorothy Norman, *Indira Gandhi: Letters to an American Friend, 1950-1984* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1985); Nayantra Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi: Tryst with Power* (Penguin Books, 2012). N.B. Sahgal was Prime Minister Gandhi's first cousin but did not share positive relations with her.

I will trace and detail this secularism and additional components which denote the government's *inclusive* nationalism later in this chapter, but in this section expand upon how this ideology presented the lens through which the government and Indira Gandhi diagnosed the JPM. The prime justification for the emergency and crushing of the JPM therein, emerged from an inclusive nationalism vector.²⁴

Throughout the JPM, its suppression, and in years after the emergency, Prime Minister Gandhi referenced the movement synonymously with right-wing groups and parties, underlining the otherizing that occurred in her government's decision-making with regards to the anti-corruption movement. All her available speeches, letters, and notes studied here confirm this outlook. She variously referred to the JPM as *inter alia* an opposition "group,"²⁵ "front,"²⁶ "morcha,"²⁷ "combined opposition,"²⁸ and "alliance."²⁹ When making recourse to the "opposition," she'd often refer to movement activities of the JPM and vice versa.³⁰ In an interview with a UK newspaper, she made this explicit when talking about the JPM as "divided into many groups pulling in different directions."³¹ That Gandhi saw the JPM as oppositional in this way underlines the "otherizing" that went on during, and subsequent actions to, the government's decision to implement the emergency. Despite some salient ideological and political differences between these entities, as discussed in the previous chapter, and that suppression of the JPM had begun far earlier than when opposition parties extended their support, the government observed an exclusionary nationalist function to the JPM which undermined Indian democracy.³²

²⁴ At the May 1967 CWC session Gandhi identified exclusionary nationalism in the mould of the RSS-front Jana Sangh as oppositional to her and the Congress' concept of an inclusive nationalism (TNA_FCO_37_40_1967).

²⁵ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 13, 114, 175.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 24, 37, 116, 168. All of Gandhi's examples of "internal disturbance" that made the emergency more urgent, refer to the JPM's activities in Bihar and Gujarat (*Ibid.*, 10, 15, 19, 23, 31, 36, 37, 41).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 23

³² *Ibid.*, 16

Gandhi and the Congress' concept of the Indian nation was bound up in the very system of Indian democracy, and so defining the nation, and what threatens this meaning, in turn threatened democracy.³³ According to the government's white paper, "Why Emergency?" laid out in Parliament on 21 July 1975, the emergency was imposed "to withstand the calculated onslaught on the country's political institutions and economic progress."³⁴ Furthermore, it is claimed that the emergency was an important step in the defence of India's democracy, as the JPM together with the RSS "had combined with a set of frustrated politicians to challenge the very basis of democratic functioning and to destroy the country's self-confidence."³⁵ In a speech to the lower house less than four weeks after enacting the emergency, without acknowledging the irony of her very strangling of democratic institutions, she says:

*"Democracy has not been endangered by what government has done [emergency] but democracy was being weakened, was being endangered and would have been destroyed had the opposition front [JPM] been allowed to launch direct action and its *plan of sabotage under RSS guidance* and to go ahead with its campaign to create dissatisfaction in the army, the police, and amongst industrial workers [in reference to JP's speech in Delhi on 25 June]."*³⁶

For the Prime Minister, the exclusionary nationalist and right-wing RSS, which formed a key mobilization vehicle for the JPM as we saw in chapter three, provided the primary threat to democracy which her government needed to safeguard against. In a TV interview on 1 August 1975, she said:

³³ *Ibid.*, 31

³⁴ Official summary of White Paper reproduced in Balraj Puri, *Revolution, Counter-Revolution* (Newman Group of Publishers, 1978), Appendix I, 130-136.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 31-33

“Indian democracy will be threatened when any party of the extreme Right or extreme Left comes to power. *It is being weakened by those who, claiming to be non-violent and democratic [JP], give respectability to and ally themselves with fanatic religious organizations [RSS] and with parties wedded in terrorism [Jana Sangh].* What holds India together is the trust that all regions and all its religious groups will have a fair deal [Congress’ secularism]. If a political alliance, which depends upon the muscle power of the sinister Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, should come to power at the Centre, then not only Indian democracy but India’s very integrity will be threatened.”³⁷

Per Gandhi, this exclusionary nationalism mobilized under the JPM threatened Indian democracy and, therefore, needed to be crushed using the might of the state:

“The muscle men of the opposition front [JPM], the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh activists, are a fanatical organization based on the doctrine of Hindu superiority. It has been preaching hatred of Muslims and Christian minorities. It is opposed to rational and scientific thinking and is against our economic and foreign policies. It has been giving para-military training to thousands of young people and infiltrating many services...*Sane and secular elements have long demanded their banning.* But such is the permissiveness of the law in India that we were told this could not be done.”³⁸

According to Gandhi, the RSS and their political arm, Jana Sangh, were communal, anti-minority, and had a secret constitution as part of their exclusionary nationalism which to her was logically in line with the dominant traits of fascism during early-, mid-20th

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 63

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19

century.³⁹ She said in her aforementioned 22 July Lok Sabha speech, with regards to the conditions under which the emergency was instituted:

“I deplore the type of training they [RSS] give to our younger people in the *sakhas*, the violence they preach. But their real weapon is something else – it is the whispering campaign they indulge in. Yesterday another member of the opposition [parties] wanted to know what fascism was. Fascism does not mean merely repression; it does not mean merely that the police use excessive force or that people are imprisoned. Fascism is the use of falsehood. Over and above everything, it is the propagation of the big lie. *It is the rise of whispering campaigns, the search for scapegoats. This has been the major weapon of the Jana Sangh and the RSS.*”⁴⁰

Gandhi repeatedly linked fascism and the RSS in this way, often focusing on the religious-nationalists’ penetration of the JPM as distinct from the support the movement received from opposition parties. The anti-corruption agenda of the JPM was superseded by this nationalism frame. In an interview with a German reporter three months after the emergency, she said:

“I would like to say that I have not called all the political opponents [parties] “fascists” at any time. I have called one group so, which does not consider itself a political group, which is the RSS. They follow what is almost, I would say, the text-book techniques of fascism, that is, *believing in the superiority of one race, having a sort of private army; even propagating the big lie day in day out so that people start thinking*, well there must be some truth if it is said so many times, and then a minority group trying to force its opinion on the majority.”⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-19, 32-40, 79-80, 173-175. The RSS-front Jana Sangh were not a party for the minorities: 35% of their voters lived in towns (white collar, middle class) compared to less than 22% of the Congress, whose base was primarily rural, low-income workers. Despite some efforts, they were unable to be more inclusionary with regards to Scheduled Castes and Tribes because of their reliance on the landed and princely elites, industrialists, and other notables (Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 243–248). Moreover, the RSS and Jana Sangh generally maintained an aggressive attitude toward minorities. They toned, but didn’t discard, this attribute of their exclusionary nationalism as part of the JPM. Though JP felt at the time, and indeed years later, that being part of the JPM or in government would temper their ideology, the RSS did not open the door to non-Hindus (*Ibid.*).

⁴⁰ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 27-28

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 161

This fascism, argued Gandhi, found projection under the JPM which threatened the survival of the Indian nation just as Europe had faced a few decades earlier. In an interview with a foreign journalist on 24 July 1975 she outlines this position:

“Our party – and my father and I specially – realized the danger of Fascism and Nazism at a time when very few people, even in Europe, had an understanding of the situation. That is why we were and we are so committed to democracy. Fascism means that a small group – a minority – tries to take power somehow and destroys democracy, or works for the interests of only one section of the people...yet a small section of the opposition [JPM] was making it impossible for Government to function. People [JP] were inciting our armed forces to revolt, they were inciting the police and the industrial workers. They were encouraging students to leave the schools and colleges and indulge in violent acts.”⁴²

For some government decision-makers, the exclusive nationalists weren't necessarily ideologically embedded within, but certainly taking strategic advantage of, JP; though ultimately this did not absolve the JPM in Gandhi's perspective. JP, as we saw in Chapter Three, claimed that the RSS, which had mobilized as part of the anti-corruption movement, had tempered their previous world-view, hence he had allowed them to join the JPM. P.N. Dhar recounts this particular divergence of beliefs:

“I intervened and told him [JP] that the Prime Minister felt that the opposition were taking advantage of him. ‘The Jana Sangh and the RSS had trained cadres and a well-defined ideology from which they were not going to be swayed,’ I said. JP replied that he knew some people thought they had made a fool of him, but the fact was ‘they have met me, including the Poona [sic] group [the RSS leadership] and surrendered to me.’”⁴³

Gandhi, though, believed that by allowing these groups into the movement, the JPM lost its moral authority to champion against corruption. In a reply to renowned American

⁴² *Ibid.*, 53

⁴³ Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 316.

pediatrician and activist, Benjamin Spock, who implored Gandhi to restore democratic liberties after the emergency, she wrote:

“I know that you are deeply committed to pacifist causes. But I am not sure that you have been properly informed of what has been happening here. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has for a long time carried on a campaign against the government and against me personally, but we did not do anything to curb his movements or his free speech. *More recently he aligned himself with the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], the organization which instigated Mahatma Gandhi’s murder and which is fanatically Hindu, preaching discrimination against Moslem and Christian minorities.* At the same time he encouraged the extreme Left [Naxalites]. Neither of these groups has ever claimed belief in democracy. *In his extreme anger and frustration at the lack of support, he called upon the Army and the police to disobey orders.* This is what compelled me to take the unpleasant decision. *Democratic liberty is not jeopardized by the action that has been taken [emergency], but it would have been if we had permitted the country to drift.*”⁴⁴

By allowing the RSS and its affiliates, namely the Jana Sangh, to penetrate the movement, the JPM became a threat to India’s very identity “and survival as a nation,” she told the *Rajya Sabha* (upper house). She continues:

“It [JPM] did threaten our unity. Shelter was given to parties [Jana Sangh] which did not interpret unity or integrity in the manner that we had done all these years, as the founders of this democracy had envisaged. This was a big danger. And the question was whether we should allow this deterioration to go on or put a stop to it. It is very difficult to measure how drastic a step is or should be.”⁴⁵

In the same speech, she points out that contra JP’s remarks about the organization, the RSS had not tempered its ideology or approach, and in fact ended up foreshadowing the anti-corruption agenda within JPM:

⁴⁴ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 174

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 38; also see 105

“We have known the history of RSS. This organization came into being when all of us – I think there may be a few young members who were not here, but the rest of us – were very much here. We saw how it [RSS] grew. *We saw how it spread hatred. We saw how the atmosphere of hatred resulted in the assassination of the greatest Indian [referring to Mahatma Gandhi’s killing by Hindu nationalist Nathuram Godse]. Can we believe that that organization has suddenly changed?...They do not believe in democracy, whatever they may say about it today.* These were the groups that were taken in this wide sweep [JPM] *that was going to eradicate corruption, that was going to clean up society, that was going to bring total revolution!*”⁴⁶

The above themes come together in a speech inaugurating the first All-India Conference of Educators for Secularism, Socialism, and Democracy in New Delhi on 19 September 1975, where Gandhi continues her reasoning that she didn’t take issue with the JPM’s collective action per se but the specific ground ceded to the RSS to mobilize within the JPM:

“I have always said that if somebody wants to do such a satyagraha [non-violent movement; JPM], it does not matter because we are not against satyagraha as such; we are not against criticism as such; we are not against opposition; *what we are against is when a small minority [RSS] tries to gag the vast majority of our country...* This is what was happening before emergency was declared.”⁴⁷

She then goes on to foreground the threat of the exclusionary nationalism sheltered by the JPM to India’s inclusive nationalist order:

“Within the country there are people who do not want the social change we consider to be essential. By social change I mean *bringing in a more real secularism, not just in action, but, I would say, in thought* because while you are thinking that somebody is different or he is not part of the country, that is what leads to action. So there are parties [Jana Sangh] who are against this concept.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 141

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 147

This is corroborated in an interview on 14 August 1975: “Our complaint against Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan [JP] and some of the other senior leaders is not just about what they said, but that they gave shelter and respectability to such groups [RSS] and that the control of this coming agitation [JPM] was put in the hands of the leader of another very chauvinistic party called the Jana Sangh.”⁴⁹ Fundamentally, the JPM and its leaders, per Gandhi, “had no qualms about handing over the management of their campaign to the RSS in spite of the known record of the RSS in fomenting communal riots and communal hatred.”⁵⁰ Her government, Gandhi widely declared in her proclamations, would never permit the spread of communalism or allow organizations representing such views as the RSS, that helped propel the JPM across the nation as per the government, to function in India.⁵¹ In an interview with M. Shamim of the *Times of India* in New Delhi on 3 July 1975, Gandhi says: “The government can be opposed *but not national interests.*”⁵²

Lastly, and perhaps most directly, the Prime Minister’s written statements to the Shah Commission are instructive, and corroborative, of the assertions above relating to competing nationalisms producing the suppressive response to the JPM. Although Gandhi did not give evidence under oath, she did write letters to the commission explaining the lead up to the proclamation.⁵³ In her first note, dated 21 November 1977, beyond criticizing the very procedures of the commission itself for being politicized, she says:

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 79-80; Speech inaugurating the XI General Assembly of International Federation of Catholic Universities, New Delhi, 14 August 1975

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 32. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the central government adopted a tougher attitude toward Hindu nationalists resulting from increased communal violence, year-on-year, over the previous decade. A Ministry of Home Affairs report revealed that the RSS had become the largest association of volunteers in the country (Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 238). Congressmen close to Mrs. Gandhi enthusiastically adopted this renewed anti-communist zeal (*Ibid.*).

⁵¹ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 1, 94, 145; Indira Gandhi, *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi*, vol. 3 (September 1972-March 1977) (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1984), 289, 299.

⁵² Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 13

⁵³ All those in her Cabinet and Office who did give testimony, did so under oath, and their accounts have been widely referenced in my study.

“For two years preceding the emergency the country was in the grip of a grave crisis. The economic situation had deteriorated due mainly to internal and international causes beyond our control. Interested parties and groups [RSS] wished deliberately to aggravate the situation for their own gain. *Freedom of speech and expression were used to spread hatred and parochial regional sentiments [exclusive nationalism].*”⁵⁴

In another reply on 2 December 1977, Gandhi goes on to talk in detail about the collaboration between the opposition coalition of parties and RSS coming under the umbrella of the JPM, which attempted to undercut her government’s inclusive nationalism and thus determined her decision:

“The political opposition had been using this strategy [barbs against the Prime Minister] *to weaken the central government and subvert its socialist and progressive programmes for quite some years.* It was a question of change versus status quo. *Secular, democratic socialism on the one hand and retrograde, communal and capitalistic forces on the other had been struggling against each other to gain the upper hand.* The split in the Congress in 1969 gave an edge to this confrontation. The nationalization of banks and other measures which disturbed entrenched privileges and vested interests, and offered opportunity and help to the poor and weaker sections of our society, created such tremendous popular upsurge that communal and capitalistic elements probably lost all hope of being able to successfully fight on an ideological plane. *Hence they changed their methods [by joining the JPM].* Similar such political phenomenon was not peculiar to India.”⁵⁵

Within this same letter, it is interesting to note that she makes recourse to the U.S. presidential system and how such a system provides better protections for the executive to defend national interests. She talks about the split between secular, socialist, forces on one side, and capitalist and communal forces on the other – precisely how she viewed the government and JPM respectively.

⁵⁴ SC, 5.61

⁵⁵ SC, 5.62.8

To the Prime Minister, only she could counter the exclusionary nationalist threat from the RSS and right-wing within the JPM. As she told one of her biographers, Dom Moraes, in 1978:

“After my judgement in 1975, what could I have done except stay? You know the state the country was in. What would have happened if there had been nobody to lead it? I was the only person that could, you know. It was my duty to the country to stay, though I didn’t want to.”⁵⁶

This is corroborated in her interview with another biographer, Mary Carras, also in 1978, that in her absence at the helm “there would have been utter political and economic chaos and nobody to fill the vacuum.”⁵⁷

The mobilization of the RSS within the JPM blurred their lines thus making them mutually threatening to the Congress government.⁵⁸ For decision-makers the JPM’s aim was to “paralyze the government and indeed all national activity and walk to power over the body of the nation.”⁵⁹ Therefore, for Gandhi, the imposition of the emergency was a logical step. The JPM, allegedly, could not have been constrained by the law, and “some rights had to suffer” in “the cause of strengthening and survival of our country. It is only when we have a country that we have a democracy,” she told the Rajya Sabha.⁶⁰ Gandhi and her government’s actions pertaining to the JPM and its supporters after proclaiming the emergency provides further evidence of this ideological framing, wherein the government

⁵⁶ Moraes, *Mrs. Gandhi*, 220

⁵⁷ Carras, *In the Crucible of Leadership*, 232

⁵⁸ Gandhi, *Democracy and Discipline*, 11, 85, 105, 162-175; Gandhi, *Selected Speeches*, 224, 241-263

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-20, 37-125, 167-179

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 144; Gandhi, *Selected Speeches*, 296

used the legal and security architecture of the state to crush the JPM, its leaders, and sympathizers.⁶¹

ii. *After Proclaiming the Emergency*

The 42nd constitutional amendment (introduced as the 44th amendment bill), aimed at strengthening the executive's powers specifically with regards to anti-national dissent. This included several articles. For example, the alteration to the description of India in the preamble of the constitution wherein the words "Sovereign Democratic Republic" were substituted with "Sovereign *Socialist Secular* Democratic Republic." The Statement of Objects and Reasons said this move was to spell out expressly the high ideals of socialism, secularism and the integrity of the nation.⁶² One of the more regressive clauses enabled the government to pass legislation banning "anti-national activities and associations" without giving reasons to do so and being placed beyond judicial review. Anti-national activities were denoted broadly, including advocacy for secession from the Union, but also questioning the sovereignty and integrity of India, creating internal disturbances, as well as threatening and questioning the security of the state and intending to disrupt public services and general harmony. Incidentally, all these steps were used by Gandhi to justify suppression of the JPM.

The most clear-cut evidence for the Congress' ideological opposition being the cause of the response to the JPM, are the number and nature of arrests by the police during

⁶¹ It is noteworthy that the international community condemned Gandhi's steps but this did not prevent the emergency from being instituted or continuing for 19 months. Indeed, on 15 August 1975 (India's Independence Day), 700 prominent intellectuals, writers, artists, and politicians around the world signed an appeal protesting the emergency (Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 99). This is corroborated in Dorothy Norman's letters, which she exchanged privately with Gandhi for over three decades. Upon the declaration of the emergency, Norman brought together individuals, notably writers and intellectuals in New York City, to appeal against the decision, claiming distress at "the loss of fundamental human rights in India...shows that when human rights are suppressed anywhere they are threatened everywhere" (Gandhi and Norman, *Indira Gandhi: Letters to an American Friend, 1950-1984*, 148).

⁶² Granville Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (South Asia Books, 1999), 308.

the emergency (Appendix A.1). After the proclamation, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) – in place since the 1971 India-Pakistan War – was amended on 29 January 1975 and 15 July 1975. These amendments, in the main, introduced section 16A and 18 into the MISA which aimed at speeding up arrests by shifting powers to state security forces and underscoring that detainees under the MISA would not “have any right to personal liberty by virtue of natural law or common law, if any.”⁶³ Specifically, given that Gandhi believed the JPM to have mobilized with exclusionary nationalists, there was a clear crackdown using MISA on communist and right-wing organizations, chiefly the RSS. No major action was taken against the secular or left opposition parties or groups.

The numbers recorded for the arrests of right-wing nationalist organizations that mobilized for and supported the JPM make for stark reading (and were likely higher than is believed).⁶⁴ Proportionately, the highest number of arrests correspond with states in which the JPM had a stronghold, such as U.P., Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Delhi.⁶⁵ Indeed, 43% of arrests in Delhi, where the Centre wields power over security forces and the JPM reached national prominence, were RSS members and affiliates.⁶⁶ The first person to be arrested after JP in Delhi was K.R. Malkani, Editor of the Jana Sangh-RSS-controlled *Motherland* newspaper.⁶⁷ These numbers and Shah Commission testimonies also illustrate that state governments and security forces therein were actively instructed by the Centre to prioritize detaining citizens belonging to banned right-wing organizations that supported the JPM.⁶⁸ The state governments acted in a “frenzy” to detain these individuals, often

⁶³ SC, 19.4

⁶⁴ In many emergency arrest cases, warrants were not scrutinized or they suffered from major legal flaws including failure to record necessary documentation. There were also several instances where state authorities did not confirm the order of detention passed by the detaining authority (SC, 11.34-11.37; 19.12-19.14).

⁶⁵ Apart from arrests made of ideological foes, the other arrests mainly included criminals and anti-social and economic (gambling, bootlegging, etc.) offenders, going back between 5-10 years in offences committed. It is important to note that there are a finite number of banned groups and a much larger pool of other criminals, meaning that the force, and numbers, in which right-wing organizations were suppressed is far more significant.

⁶⁶ SC, 19.399; and Annexure to Chapter 19

⁶⁷ Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 30.

⁶⁸ SC, 19.22-19.23. Not only activists, but even students associated with the Jana Sangh or RSS were among the main detained (*Ibid.*, 19.28).

without having to mention any specific activity thereof.⁶⁹ Again, this was particularly the case in JPM strongholds.⁷⁰ Relatedly, detainees released from prison during the emergency were those who had “genuinely” severed their relations with right-wing groups and parties and declared support for the Prime Minister’s Twenty-Point Program.⁷¹ The political “conversion” process here underscores the ideological battle and antagonism that the Prime Minister and her government were engaged in during the emergency with the JPM and its supporters.

Perhaps most indicative of the government’s targeting of right-wing groups is evidenced by an exchange between then *New York Times* journalist, Anthony Lukas, and Minister of State in the Home Ministry, Om Mehta. The government claimed that the police had obtained clues to secret hordes of arms and ammunitions with the discovery of weapons in the offices of right-wing organizations.⁷² Lukas, in an official interview with Mehta regarding photos published in Indian newspapers of wooden swords and staves found in RSS headquarters, recounted:

“I asked Om Mehta, Minister of State in the Home Ministry, about this, and he replied vaguely, ‘there were some metal swords too.’ Even with some metal swords, I asked, how could boys with staves pose much of a threat to a superbly equipped army of about one million men, the Border Security Force of about 85,000, the Central Reserve of Police of about 57,000, and some 755,000 state policemen? ‘Well,’ Mehta said, ‘there were undoubtedly some rifles too.’ Did you seize any?’ I asked. ‘No,’ he said, ‘but they

⁶⁹ This much is corroborated in journalist Coomi Kapoor’s personal experience (Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 73–74, 104–105). N.B.: Kapoor’s husband, journalist Virendra Kapoor, was arrested and imprisoned during the emergency; while her brother-in-law, Jana Sangh MP Subramanian Swamy, was on the run during the clampdown.

⁷⁰ SC, 19.23. Kapoor (Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 111) also argues that the RSS-Jana Sangh prisoners were disproportionately detained. She goes further to say that RSS and Jana Sangh activists remained in prison even when many opposition leaders were released (*Ibid.*, 299; also see L.K. Advani, *A Prisoner’s Scrap-Book* (Prabhat Prakashan, 2016 [1978])).

⁷¹ Launched in 1975 to frame the government’s policy goals during the emergency. It promised, inter alia the application of land ceilings, increase to agricultural wages, sufficient land to the landless peasants, freeing up of peasants’ debts, eradication of forced labor, controlling inflation, and creation of jobs (Christophe Jaffrelot, “The First Reign of Indira Gandhi,” 37).

⁷² Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi*, 229.

probably kept them at home. Don't underestimate these people's [RSS] capacity for mischief."⁷³

It is clear from this vignette and the data above, that the government's justification for the suppression of the JPM (highlighted earlier) and the subsequent action taken against right-wing groups that mobilized with the JPM cohere. However, was the government's ideological vector through which the JPM was diagnosed and suppressed – namely the Congress' *inclusive* nationalism coming up against the *exclusive* nationalism of the JPM and its supporters – contingent at that time or do these ideas have an exogenous source? This key question will be answered next, to strengthen the causal independence of ideology in my argument and illustrate that strategic calculations alone do not sufficiently tell us why the Congress government under Prime Minister Gandhi crushed the JPM through instituting the emergency. Therefore, before concluding this chapter, I will trace the genesis of the Congress Party's ideology under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which shaped the government's intolerance in 1975.

Exogeneity

In the preceding section I have outlined the dominant ideology – inclusive nationalism – among decision-making elites in authoritative positions of power, chiefly the Prime Minister, in the Congress government when it faced the JPM. Overall, intolerance toward the JPM was a highly likely course of action as the party's homogenous ideology, interacting with the dominant power enjoyed by the executive (Chapter Three), created the conditions for Prime Minister Gandhi to build solidarity within the government and suppress ideological others within the JPM.

⁷³ Anthony Lukas, "India is as Indira Does," *NYT Magazine*, 4 April 1976 (quoted in *Ibid.*, 229).

To illustrate the causal independence of this inclusive nationalism, I will now trace its exogenous development through the concept's constituent parts: Secularism, socialism, and minority rights. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is a more difficult task with party politicians (who dominate the Congress government under Gandhi) than when tracing the exogeneity of technocrats' ideas (in the next two chapters) who tend to have established professional associations and writings and tend not be subject to the same incentives as political actors. As such, the burden on me has been to present a very rich amount of data covering the entire period of Gandhi's time as Prime Minister leading to the emergency (1966-1975), and some evidence outside this phase, to very thickly illustrate the presence and causal independence of the Congress government's inclusive nationalism. Much of this evidence, given the power she yielded in government and over her party, pertains to Prime Minister Gandhi.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Copious amount of work and investigation has gone into deconstructing the personal life of Indira Gandhi. That is not my goal here; unfortunately, there is simply not enough primary data to lean on. One set of insights on the Prime Minister's life do emerge from the private correspondence between Dorothy Norman and Indira Gandhi, spanning three decades (Gandhi and Norman, *Indira Gandhi*). All of Gandhi's letters are very revealing about her personal and political development. Letters reveal a well-travelled, cosmopolitan woman who was inspired by Joan of Arc, but went onto become increasingly insular and distrusting in office (this is corroborated in the private diary of Joint Secretary to the Prime Minister, B.N. Tandon (Tandon, *PMO Diary-I*) and Principal Secretary P.N. Dhar's memoirs (Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*). She wanted to emulate her father, who she near shadowed while he was Prime Minister, and whose secular and socialist leanings meaningfully influenced her policies as Prime Minister. Though Gandhi appears to seek out ideological centrism where she possibly can with regards to policy problems, she is revealed to be far more instinctual with regards to social issues and nationalist articulation. There is a noticeable impression of a figure seeking to be a unifier and bridge between communities. During and immediately after partition, for example, Gandhi, at the behest of M.K. "Mahatma" Gandhi, went into conflict-ridden Hindu and Muslim communities in Delhi ghettos to prevent violence and provide social benefits. Her observations as a 30-year-old are instructive toward the emergent components of her inclusive nationalism: "I asked Muslims which Hindus were 'good' and asked Hindus about Muslims. Then I held separate meetings of the 'good' from each group, ignoring bad elements... We went into Muslim communities and, in spite of the danger of contracting cholera, drank from cups offered to us. To refuse would have been considered anti-Muslim. It took days to inspire trust. Finally, we persuaded as many as twenty workers to help bring harmony between the opposing factions" (Indira Gandhi and Dorothy Norman, *Indira Gandhi*, 18).

1. Congress Government's Inclusive Nationalism

A. Party Split and Rise of Homogenous Congress (R) Ideology

The Congress split in November 1969 precipitated ideological definition along left-right lines in the party system until then inchoate in India. This split gave birth to two rival Congress factions, the right-of-center Congress (“O” for “organization”) under the leadership of Morarji Desai and the Syndicate, and the left-of-center Congress (“R” for “requisitionist”) under the leadership of Prime Minister Gandhi and dominated by the Young Turks.⁷⁵ I will briefly discuss the background of these two ideological factions and the party split, below, which sets up the rise of the ideologically homogenous Congress (R) that swept the 1971 elections and would face the JPM, 1974-1975.

From the start of her tenure in high office, Indira Gandhi openly articulated her inclusive nationalism outlook with recourse to the Congress' ideological foundations that became increasingly dominant.⁷⁶ For example, interviewed in 1965, one year before her ascent as Prime Minister after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri on 11 January, Gandhi said India had “swerved from the right path” after Jawaharlal Nehru's death, and that socialism was being forgotten.⁷⁷ On becoming Prime Minister on 19 January 1966, she said: “I must say I was worried at the thought of Mr. Morarji Desai [who would go on to lead the right-

⁷⁵ The Congress Forum for Socialist Action (CFSA) was founded in 1962 and formed the leftist wing of the unified Congress Party. CFSA championed the nationalization agenda. Their leaders and loyalists were called the Young Turks. The CFSA disbanded in April 1973.

⁷⁶ Prior to her ascent as Prime Minister, Gandhi occupied the office of President of the Congress Party for just under a year (normally a two-year term). Despite this, once major initiative during this time gives an insight into her inclusive nationalism. She urged the central government to intervene in Kerala, where the communist government formed in 1957 was locked in a confrontation with the Roman Catholic and Nair communities over the issue of state control of schools and colleges. Presidents rule was established in Kerala, and fresh elections were held in 1960, when an alliance of parties led by the Congress won a majority. During this decision, Gandhi displayed her anti-communist, or extreme-left, position which appealed to the inclusive proclivities in her nationalism. Interestingly, and illustrative of her desire for centralized power over policymaking, when reflecting on why she quit her position as Congress Party President one year early, she told Nayantra Sahgal: “They wouldn't let me do what I wanted to do” (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi*, 371).

⁷⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 11.

of-center faction post-Congress split] becoming Prime Minister, because his policies were so diametrically opposed to what we stood for and I feared that India would immediately change direction.”⁷⁸ The direction Gandhi wanted to take the Congress in, or back to as she believed, became explicit in her first broadcast to the nation on 26 January:

“In 1947 that pledge [Indian Independence] was fulfilled. The world knew that a new *progressive force*, based on democracy and *secularism*. Had emerged. In the seventeen years that Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister, the unity of this country with its *diversity of religion, community, and language* became a reality, democracy was born and grew roots.”⁷⁹

During a Lok Sabha address in the winter of 1967, Gandhi stamps down these concepts of the nation as well as those that stood oppositional to it:

“*Secularism and democracy are twin pillars of our state, the very foundations of our society. From time immemorial, the vast majority of our people are wedded to concepts of secularism, religious tolerance, peace and humanity...India has the privilege of being the world’s largest composite society, and the home of many great and ancient faiths. Communalism is an evil which divides man and fragments society; it goes against our [India’s] very genius and cultural heritage. It holds a threat to the unity and integrity of our country which must be our foremost concern.*”⁸⁰

After she became Prime Minister in 1966, Gandhi immediately sought to enhance the Congress government’s power and autonomy over policymaking in line with her ideological outlook outlined above. For example, upon rising to office, she inherited the Congress government’s attempts at re-orienting economic policy toward liberalisation, in-step with global trends among developing countries at the time and deteriorating conditions

⁷⁸ Indira Gandhi, *My Truth* (Orient Paperbacks, 2013 [1980]), 107–108.

⁷⁹ Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 51

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 78

at home.⁸¹ The policy began under the support of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, but found lukewarm support under Gandhi.⁸² These actions were met with opposition from within the party and executive and, when the Congress performed poorly in the February 1967 elections (the party's seat share was reduced from 361 to 283) Gandhi and her advisors viewed the results as a further rejection of a pro-trade economic orientation and sought to re-establish the party's socialism, or dirigiste, roots.⁸³ A note from P.N. Dhar to Principal Secretary P.N. Haksar confirms the ideological foundations of this move:

“We all but lost our independence in that period [attempts at liberalization in the mid-60s]. A Plan holiday was imposed on us in the name of consolidation of the economy. Our world image as a *progressive* non-aligned country suffered...During the same unfortunate period, the World Bank forced upon us a devaluation of the rupee...The economy, instead of improving, plunged into deeper crisis.”⁸⁴

Indeed, Dhar goes on to note in his memoirs that Haksar, as Gandhi's closest advisor and later the de-facto head of the Planning Commission in the lead up to and during the emergency when Dhar took over as Principal Secretary, believed that the government needed to return to their Nehruvian (dirigiste) recent past.⁸⁵

When Gandhi and her leftist supporters within the Congress sought to galvanize the party by pushing forward the Ten-Point Programme – which advanced nationalization of

⁸¹ India was highly dependent on Western donors for foodgrain and foreign exchange by mid-1966 (Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation*, 41). NACP_Department of State_Visit Files_1966-1970_Box 1

⁸² Gandhi hesitantly devalued the rupee in June 1966 under pressure from international institutions and the U.S., but was not entirely happy with this move and very quickly reversed the decision (*Ibid.*, 41; Lockwood, *The Communist Party of India*, 49–64).

⁸³ Thus emerged the Left-ward turn over the course of the next 8-10 years until a return to considering liberalisation again in the mid-1970s (Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation*; Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Harper Perennial, 2008), 435-436).

⁸⁴ P.N. Dhar_A Note on Economic Situation and Remedies to Correct the Economic Difficulties_NMML_PN Haksar Papers_Installment Two_Subject File 248_1973

⁸⁵ Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 143. Interestingly, the business community was not aware of the direction of government thinking and actually believed that the push for reform in the direction of liberalization would continue under Indira Gandhi (G.D. Birla, speaking on 2 January 1967, in Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 306). This is to say, that change in direction from Gandhi and her advisors was not being driven simply from external pressures thus centralizing the role of ideology.

the major banks, general insurance industry, curbs on monopolies, rapid implementation of land reform and the abolition of the princes' remaining privileges – the rightist Syndicate faction in the Congress reacted furiously.⁸⁶ Syndicate stalwart Morarji Desai, who was Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, was particularly displeased at the rampaging socialism of some Congress politicians under Gandhi. Meanwhile, in her speech at the October 1967 AICC session at Jabalpur, Gandhi took the double-down approach, assuring members of the party that the government believed in socialism, with “no ifs and buts.”⁸⁷

By mid-1968, revealed by a fascinating private meeting with the British High Commissioner, Morarji Desai made it explicit that the Syndicate were determined to overthrow Gandhi and her leftist supporters in the Party.⁸⁸ Subsequently, the right-of-center asserted itself at the 72nd Congress session in late April 1969. The Congress President and Syndicate leader, S. Nijalingappa, criticized the public sector and the state reigns over industry, the so-called “license raj,” as fomenting corruption: “Where there are control and licensing...there is always corruption and the sooner we do away with licensing and controls the better it [will] be.”⁸⁹

Prime Minister Gandhi and her close advisers in the party were undeterred and strongly continued in their left-ward shift. A note from P.N. Haksar to the Prime Minister in July 1969 underlines that her leftist march was ideological. Addressing Gandhi as a

⁸⁶ Frankel, *India's Political Economy*, 397–399. Congress Party veterans, who came to be known as the “Syndicate,” rose to prominence after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru and during Lal Bahadur Shastri’s tenure. They included, S.K. Patil of Maharashtra, Atulya Ghosh of West Bengal, Kamaraj of Tamil Nadu, Morarji Desai of Gujarat, Biju Patnaik of Orissa, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, K. Kamaraj of Tamil Nadu, among others. They formed an informal group with the idea of pressuring Prime Minister Gandhi to act on their advice. Many of them and their supporters would go on to be defeated in regional elections in 1967, defect or create their own parties, and most would become the vanguard of the right-of center breakaway Congress (O) faction. In a series of private meetings between the British High Commissioner and Syndicate leaders in 1967 and early 1968, namely Morarji Desai, S.K. Patil, and C.B. Gupta, it is revealed that they were against nationalization and the left faction, led by Gandhi. By virtue of pushing for such policies, they claimed, Gandhi illustrated that she and her loyalists were incongruent with the party and her policy prescriptions could damage the Congress. Patil claimed that Gandhi held her office “on sufferance,” adding that the “Left” faction of the party was hardening and wrongfully attacking business elites (TNA_FCO_37_40_1967; TNA_FCO_37_41_1968)

⁸⁷ TNA_FCO_37_40_1967

⁸⁸ TNA_FCO_37_41_1968

⁸⁹ Carras, *Indira Gandhi*, 137–138.

“fellow believer” Haksar says that the Prime Minister “should reiterate her faith in a socialist society alone being able to solve the problems of our country...The problem is to convert our system of class banking into banking for the masses.” To do this, the influence and capture of industrialists and capitalists had to be “reduced and finally eliminated.” The public sector had to be made more efficient and had to be accompanied by “a vast educational programme in favor of socialism.”⁹⁰ By the summer of 1969, both left and right factions came to a boiling point over the nationalization programme among other key issues.⁹¹

At the AICC meeting in Bangalore on 12 July 1969 Gandhi came out with a clear agenda calling for, and subsequent stringent move toward, a stronger state sector and focus on secularism as her and her allies’ inclusive nationalism became vocal.⁹² In her speech, Gandhi said:

“Today there is a very great need for the AICC to reiterate *our basic ideas and our basic policies*. Where do we want to go? We want to eradicate poverty. The capitalist system says it wants to eradicate poverty, and the communist system also says it wants to eradicate poverty. But we have not adopted any of these systems because we find that they have not worked in their own country, and they have had to pay a tremendous price. That is why we chose another way...*The basic principle and policies are commitment and deep involvement*

⁹⁰ P.N. Haksar_Note to Prime Minister_9 and 25 July 1969_NMML_P.N. Haksar Papers_Instalment One_Subject File 42_July 1969; corroborated by Dhar, *Indira Gandhi*, 143. This education had to start with the Congress itself: “The Congress Party has been so long in power that it has forgotten the most elementary principles of politics, *namely to help the people in fighting injustice*” (P.N. Haksar_Note to Prime Minister_14 December 1970_NMML_P.N. Haksar Papers_Installment One_Subject file 213_1970-71). Per Member of Parliament Madhu Dandavate, a vocal opponent of Indira Gandhi, Haksar was a major influence on the Prime Minister vis-à-vis bank nationalization (NMML_Oral History Project_Madhu Dandavate_2000_221-22). Indira Gandhi trusted Haksar implicitly and considered him to have “extraordinary common sense and competence,” which she rarely said of others (letter from Gandhi to her son, Sanjay; quoted in Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 179).

⁹¹ The need to elect a new President of India after the unexpected demise of Dr. Zakir Husain in May 1969 became another occasion for confrontation between the two Congress factions beyond the nationalization debate. The Prime Minister fought the Syndicate’s choice “tooth and nail,” fearing that the candidate might hamper her functioning as a Prime Minister as well as her policy program (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 57). After a complicated and repeat vote, the Prime Minister’s candidate, V.V. Giri, won.

⁹² Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation*, 10; Frankel, *India’s Political Economy*, 403–404.

with socialist policy, and commitment and deep involvement with the policy of secularism."⁹³

As tensions heightened, Gandhi dropped Morarji Desai from the Cabinet and nationalized fourteen commercial banks – or 83% of the total banking system – on 19 July 1969.⁹⁴ In her broadcast to the nation, she said:

*“Control over the commanding heights of the economy is necessary, particularly in a poor country where it is extremely difficult to mobilize adequate resources for development, and to reduce the inequalities between different groups and regions. An institution, such as the banking system, with touches – or should touch – the lives of millions, has necessarily to be inspired by [a] larger social purpose and has to serve national priorities and objectives.”*⁹⁵

In response, on 12 November, Nijalingappa expelled Prime Minister Gandhi. In her letter to members of the Congress party after her expulsion, on 18 November 1969, she laid out that two separate ideological outlooks had come to a crescendo and could no longer co-exist in government. The components of her faction’s inclusive nationalism were on full display:

“There is a crisis in the Congress and in the nation...It is a conflict between two outlooks and attitudes in regard to the objectives of the Congress and the methods by which the Congress itself should function. It is a conflict between those who are for socialism, for change and for the fullest internal democracy and debate in the organization on the one hand, and those who are for the status quo, for conformism and for less than full discussion inside the Congress...I want unity which is unity on principles and on methods of work. To speak of socialism and secularism, to vote for them in meetings, but to have a public image of association with those who are opposed to secularism and socialism is

⁹³ Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 98-100. She is also reported to have said that beyond steps such as bank nationalization, “it was important to ensure that persons who managed these institutions [banks and industries] had a commitment to our ideologies and policies” (Moin Zaidi, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 20, 1968–69: Facing the City Bosses (New Delhi: Chand and Company Ltd., 1983), 363).

⁹⁴ Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 57

⁹⁵ Indira Gandhi, “Broadcast on Bank Nationalization,” 19 July 1969, in Zaidi, *Encyclopedia of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 20

not service to the Congress...there is a tendency to be influenced by the forces of [right-wing] reaction, revivalism, and vested interests.”⁹⁶

Two separate meetings of the AICC ensued, thus giving birth to two ideologically separate parties, the Congress (O) and the Congress (R).⁹⁷ Now allied with centralized power as well as an ideologically homogenous Congress faction (R), Gandhi and her colleagues could map out their governance platform which would lead to an electoral sweep in the 1971 elections.

B. Congress (R) Ideology: Secularism, Socialism, and Minority Rights

Indira Gandhi’s faction, Congress (R), held their first plenary session in Bombay, 25-29 December 1969, where ideological defining took place through shifting explicitly to the left and committing to a socialist platform with a focus on secularism and minority rights – denoting their concept of inclusive nationalism. At the AICC session in Delhi, 13-15 June 1970, the party set out two priorities: First, that Congress (R) must unite around Gandhi; second, the party’s commitment to a leftist program showing that (R) is a favorable alternative to the extremes of the left and right.⁹⁸ While the socialist Young Turks were fast imposing themselves as the “conscience” of the party, Gandhi, in turn, continued to provide them support.⁹⁹ This session proved to be the key strategy session prior to the 1971 elections, setting up the ideological tone for that administration.

The session began with, and became dominated by, a discussion on communalism and how communal groups were anathema to the party’s newly homogenizing ideology.

⁹⁶ Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 111-114.

⁹⁷ Guha, *India After Gandhi*, 439. Right-wing Jana Sangh President, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said at the party’s 16th Annual Session in Patna, 28-30 December 1969, that the formal Congress split had “precipitated [a] radically new situation in Indian politics” creating two genuine political blocs (TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India).

⁹⁸ At this session, Young Turks such as Chandra Shekhar were appointed to the Working Committee.

⁹⁹ Ex-Communist Young Turks were closer to Gandhi than the ex-Praja Socialist Party (PSP) Young Turks, such as Mohan Dharia, Chandra Shekhar, Krishan Kant, and Y.B. Chavan (TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India).

Party workers and Congress politicians explicitly attacked Jana Sangh and Hindu nationalist groups such as the RSS. One Congressman said that rapid economic progress could not be made while the country was still victim to communal violence and therefore at the session there was a “strong body of opinion...in favor of banning the RSS” and other communal organizations.¹⁰⁰ An amendment was incorporated into the session’s resolution directing Congress governments across the country to consider whether communal organizations should be allowed “to continuously poison society with communal hatred and violence.” As well as this amendment, the CWC accepted another amendment to a resolution condemning a recent statement made by the RSS chief, M.S. Golwalkar, that Muslims in India were not in the mainstream of society.¹⁰¹ For Congress (R) officials, groups such as the RSS “blemish the All-India vision and give a fragmented view of the national problem.” In her speech at the session, Gandhi compared right-wing parties and groups to Nazis, undermining their exclusionary nationalism to enthusiastic applause.¹⁰²

In-step with her now indisputable power in the Congress (R) and homogenizing party program, on 27 December 1970, Gandhi dissolved the national assembly and called for general elections in 1971.¹⁰³ The Prime Minister, in line with the narrative building from the AICC session in Delhi said:

“Economic difficulties and the growing impatience of the people are being exploited by political elements, violent activities are being organized by extremists, [right-wing] reactionary groups are arousing communal passions and trying to divide our people. This has often led to a breakdown of

¹⁰⁰ TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India

¹⁰¹ Even though there was criticism of both left and right extremes in the party system, there was special attack on the RSS on which Congressmen “exhausted” themselves (TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India). Indeed, in the late-60s, the Muslim vote swung back in favor of the Congress in the critical state of U.P. Muslims and other minorities were alarmed by the growing strength of the Jana Sangh and began turning actively toward the Congress.

¹⁰² TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India

¹⁰³ With the rise of opposition and regional parties from the previous election, and Gandhi’s goal to strengthen her faction’s power at the Centre, the calling of an early national election in 1971 primarily allowed for state-level election cycles to be separated from national ones thus favoring Congress (R) at the ballot (Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 135).

law and order and the dislocation of normal life. The challenges posed by the present critical situation *can be met only by the proper and effective implementation of our secular socialist policies* and programmes through democratic processes.”¹⁰⁴

Her statement here is perhaps the most instructive in setting up the ideological tone for the 1971 victory and is clearly rooted in the AICC session outcomes from 1969-70. At the Delhi session, a political resolution was passed which said: “In the great task of reconstructing and restructuring our society, the Congress seeks the co-operation of all those who believe in democracy, *socialism, and secularism.*”¹⁰⁵ In March 1971, Gandhi and the Congress (R) won a landslide general election, against the predictions of outside observers and the press (see Chapter Three).

Any assessment of the ideological foundations of the Congress’ victory under Gandhi requires a close look at the party’s manifesto and proclamations leading up to the election. After all, it is this faction’s majority government that would suppress the JPM in 1975. The features below highlight the Congress’ secularism and preference for socialism with a focus on minority rights.

The major issue of divergence between the right parties and Congress (R) manifestos concerned the power of the Judiciary over Parliament on constitutional amendments, particularly the Fundamental Rights section, that would allow the Congress to implement its statist economic program. Gandhi and her Congress faction wanted to conduct more “progressive” changes to the constitution in order that their policy program could be implemented and “to overcome the impediments in the path of social justice.”¹⁰⁶ Since the Golak Nath case of February 1967, Parliament had effectively been denied this

¹⁰⁴ Indira Gandhi, *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi*, vol. 2 (August 1969-August 1972) (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1975).

¹⁰⁵ However, it should be noted that at the AICC session in Patna on 12-14 October 1970 (two months before dissolving the Lok Sabha), Gandhi rejected a proposal to explicitly build a front with left parties, keeping central-left space occupied. She wanted to remain maneuverable, and here, once again, her politics shows full interplay with her ideology (TNA_FCO_37_594_1970_Congress Party in India).

¹⁰⁶ TNA_FCO_37_812_1970_General Elections in India.

right. The Judiciary-Parliament stand-off became foregrounded as an area of contention mainly because of the Supreme Court's striking down in 1970 of the ordinances on bank nationalization that were championed by Gandhi and her allies.¹⁰⁷

Additionally, and compared with the 1967 unified Congress manifesto, the 1971 Congress (R) document paid markedly more attention than the right to detailed concessions to minorities, particularly Scheduled Castes and Muslims as well as enhanced state controls of the economy.¹⁰⁸ The manifesto made specific recourse to reducing glaring disparities in income and opportunity; making every effort to prevent discrimination against minorities in the matter of recruitment in services; and putting down communal forces of violence and disorder, among other factors in line with its inclusive nationalism.¹⁰⁹ The point to note here is that this was the first election where two genuine ideologically distinct manifestos were presented to the electorate and that top leaders, who presided over and shaped the content of these manifestos, observed and believed in the importance of ideological distinctions between their parties and policy programs. This presents a strong indication of how leaders behaved. As we saw in the previous chapter, Congress (R) went on to win a landslide victory at the 1971 general election. Where the opposition campaigned on a platform of *Indira Hatao* (remove Indira), Gandhi's faction campaigned on the populist platform, *Gharibi Hatao* (remove poverty).

¹⁰⁷ The opposition, meanwhile, championed the independence of the judiciary, and did not feel the constitution should be tampered with.

¹⁰⁸ TNA_FCO_37_812_1970_General Elections in India.

¹⁰⁹ The platform also outlined: an end to anachronistic privileges such as privy purses; enlarging the role of the public sector (and improving its performance) by i) taking over general insurance, ii) increasing state participation in the import-export trade, iii) providing a greater role of the state in industries where substantial public funds have been invested, and iv) expanding the activities of the Food Corporation of India; giving scope to the private sector to play its proper role in the economy while curbing the concentration of economic power and wealth; state control of prices; talk of a National Works Programme (which formed the seeds to the NREGA we will see in the contemporary case chapters); and a large scale state-run housing program.

C. Congress (R) Government Under Indira Gandhi

At their first AICC session, 3-4 April 1971, since sweeping the 1971 election, Congress (R) politicians and workers presented the victory as a verdict against the right and the marginalization of minorities. Weaker sections of society, Congress leaders argued, had been brought into the mainstream by their faction and they strongly felt that these minorities, cutting across caste, religion, and region, supported them on secularism and socialism. Subsequently, three main talking points were covered at the session: First, a “pledge to people”; second, underscoring “Harijan” (Scheduled Caste) welfare; and third, “Tasks Before the Organization.”¹¹⁰ The party pledge at this session is worth highlighting here as an indication of the government’s dominant, homogenous ideology that would spearhead policymaking during this tenure:

“Congress has to now work as an organizer, mobilizer, and defender of the *weaker sections of the society in their struggle for social transformation of India*. To achieve this task, the Congress has to involve this new consciousness of the people in the direction of national reconstruction, without which rapid social and economic changes are not possible.”

In other words, the doctrine for an inclusive nationalism which privileged minority rights to achieve political and economic ends was advanced.

Resultantly, the AICC decided to instruct all party units in Congress governments throughout the country to ratchet up activities against organizations and parties that advocated an exclusionary nationalism. Inter alia, Congress committees and Congressmen were commanded to “involve themselves in the fight against social discrimination and administrative indifference [against minorities]” for an overall program of “social emancipation.” The Congress party was also instructed to “stand by Harijans [Scheduled

¹¹⁰ TNA_FCO_37_815_1971

Castes], minorities and others who are being harassed by the vested interests [of the right wing] because of their support to the Congress [R] in the last elections [1971].” The pledge continues that prior to the elections:

“The country was going through a period of turmoil. *Fissiparous tendencies, religious fanaticism and intolerance...serious doubts were engendered regarding the future of democracy and the unity of the country.* All these doubts and uncertainties have now been dispelled [after the 1971 election victory].”¹¹¹

At the end of the session, 12 “Tasks Before the Organization” were announced that further underscored the Congress’ championing of inclusive nationalism, as they sought to:

“*Defend secularism and safeguard interests of minorities and the weaker sections of the community, particularly the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward sections so that they may attain equality of status and opportunity and fraternity assuring the dignity of individuals...Put down forces of violence and disorder so that all our citizens can live in peace and harmony...Continue the advance to socialism through democratic process and devise an administrative system capable of speeding implementation.*”¹¹²

These tasks, among other statements at the session, can be seen as the framework of an inclusive nationalism that, taken to its most unchecked extreme led to the suppression of the JPM viewed as mobilized by exclusionary nationalists.

It is important to note that the contents of party manifestos and party meetings, highlighted above, do indeed have an impact on policy outcomes and are not wholly platforms to project populist narratives. Consider, for instance, the Congress’ pledge to combat, in their view, conservatism within the judiciary referenced above. By 24 July 1971, a few months into the (R) administration, two constitutional bills backed by Cabinet Ministers Mohan Kumaramangalam and H.R. Gokhale had been circulated in Parliament

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

that would go on to become law and reflect a match between the Congress' manifesto strategy and policy implementation.¹¹³ First, the 24th amendment. This would restore the Parliament's power to amend any parts of the constitution, including part III relating to Fundamental Rights, by restructuring article 368. Second, the 25th amendment. Here, there was the substitution of a new clause (2) in Article 31 replacing the word "compensation" with the word "amount" and making the amount and mode of payment for the takeover of property by the government for public purposes (i.e. nationalization) non-justiciable.¹¹⁴ Clearly there was a strategized route to implement the party's ideological objectives through policy, in this case enhancing state control of the economy, as enshrined in the party's inclusive nationalism.¹¹⁵

Not only policy generation and implementation, but the appointments within and among Gandhi's advisers and Cabinet officials also remained in line with the party's homogenous ideological objectives wherein key decision-makers were also all party politicians (see Appendix D.1). Chief among them, for example, was a long-time confidant

¹¹³ In a letter to the Chief Justice on 18 December 1971, who had written to the Prime Minister expressing concern regarding the 24th amendment, Gandhi replied: "I personally have no doubt whatsoever that as our nation moves forward and our society gains inner cohesion and sense of direction all our great institutions, Parliament, Judiciary, Executive, will reflect the organic unity of our society... We have all to guard against the danger of substituting those inarticulate major premises of social and economic thinking of which we as individuals might happen to approve for a given time for the will of the people as reflected in Parliament" (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 68). For Gandhi, the homogenizing of ideology undergirding state institutions is key (also the counsel of close advisor and Cabinet Minister, Mohan Kumaramangalam; see footnote 116, below). The primacy of Parliament, and therefore her government, in this regard was key. See also Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi*, 116.

¹¹⁴ The Supreme Court had in two judgements, in 1951 and 1965, upheld Parliament's right to amend the fundamental right to property to make any legislation regarding it non-justiciable. However, in 1967, Chief Justice Koka Subba Rao of the Supreme Court in the *L. C. Golak Nath vs. State of Punjab* case reversed the earlier decision to uphold the Parliament's supremacy to amend fundamental rights to property (voted 6-5). This sowed the seeds of confrontation between the government and judiciary, and resulted in the sidelining of the Congress' flagship bank nationalization and abolition of privy purses policy goals key to the inclusive nationalism of the Gandhi faction. The 24th and 25th constitutional amendments sought to undercut the Supreme Court's apparent conservatism.

¹¹⁵ A couple of weeks prior to the introduction of the constitutional amendments, above, a presentation was given to Prime Minister Gandhi wherein 210 Congress (R) MPs demanded that the government should, in the current Parliament session, set about implementing the "progressive socialist policies" laid down in the party's 1971 General Election manifesto. Perhaps most interestingly, in terms of measuring the weight of ideological considerations against more pressing, strategic policy concerns, politicians believed it necessary to push the party pledge to the Prime Minister while the government was in the full throes of war with Pakistan (TNA_FCO_37_815_1971).

of Gandhi, Mohan Kumaramangalam, who until 1966 was a member of the Communist Party. He was appointed to the key ministry of Steel and Heavy Engineering. Joining him as the key advisers on policy were H.R. Gokhale (Minister for Law and Justice) and S.S. Ray (Minister for Education).¹¹⁶ There was no significant quorum of technocrats among her close advisors, though the new head of her secretariat, P.N. Dhar, came from an academic setting. Under Dhar, in the first 100 days of the administration, a policy group was established which did consult experts inside and outside India, chiefly the British leftist Economist, Lord Thomas Balogh. Balogh, an academic and former Cabinet Minister, believed that the state should be heavily committed to a policy of faster growth, sustained by strong income policy and supported by more state intervention in industry.¹¹⁷ Upon the rise of her government, Gandhi said: “The [new] Congress is committed to enlarge the economic base, until every man gets his full needs and we have a truly free India – free from economic, social, and political exploitation.”¹¹⁸ The consistency of her government’s inclusive nationalism, therefore, was displayed fully in Gandhi’s picks for her Cabinet.

The link between the government’s homogenous ideology and decision-making is illustrated through several policy measures in which the socialist platform, a key component of the Congress’ inclusive nationalism, was implemented. This provides us with further evidence that government decision-making was not bound simply by strategic concerns.

The government, for example, undertook several measures to strengthen the regulatory powers of the state. In August 1972, general insurance was nationalized as was

¹¹⁶ Kumaramangalam and Ray would be key in the government’s turf battle with the judiciary, while we have already seen in Chapter Three the role Ray specifically played in the emergency decision (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 63-66). Kumaramangalam, meanwhile, would be a close adviser in 1973 to lobby Prime Minister Gandhi to supersede three Supreme Court judges – J.M. Shelat, K.S. Hegde, and A.N. Grover – with junior judge, A.N. Ray, as Chief Justice. Significantly, all three senior judges had ruled against the government in the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala* case, wherein the Supreme Court decreed that the constitution couldn’t be tampered with, even by an enactment of Parliament. Indeed, Kumaramangalam was a staunch advocate of the bureaucracy and judiciary being ideologically consistent with the government for the state to enact progressive policies. Gandhi was in full alignment with this view (Sahgal, *Indira Gandhi*, 88; Kapoor, *The Emergency*, 179).

¹¹⁷ Philip Arestis and Malcolm Sawyer, *A Biographical Dictionary of Dissenting Economists* (Edward Elgar Publications, 2001), 29.

¹¹⁸ TNA_FCO_37_812_1970_General Elections in India

the coal mining industry soon thereafter. The Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) was passed in 1973 and placed further restrictions on foreign investment and the functioning of foreign corporate entities in India; while the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) commission was appointed in 1971 to implement the act which aimed at checking the concentration of industrial enterprises in a few entities.

The government also implemented many anti-poverty programs in line with its party manifesto. This included schemes for creating employment in rural areas; while it became compulsory for nationalized banks to open branches in areas with few banking facilities, mainly rural and low-income locales, to make credit available to small industries and farmers. Naturally, not all party promises came to fruition. Where other pro-poor schemes went unimplemented, the government had failed to get local stakeholders therein (workers or landed elites) sufficiently enthused about the socialist causes behind reforms.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, at the macroeconomic level, Gandhi went some way to strengthen the planning mechanisms toward industrialization in the Planning Commission and appointed one of her closest advisers and fellow statist, P.N. Haksar, to lead the Commission.

From the 1971 victory onwards, as well as implementing the party's programmatic commitment to a state-controlled economy and protection of minority rights, Gandhi's power within the ruling Congress government also increased. For example, Prime Minister Gandhi made Pradesh Congress Committees (PCC) – an elected body of party members that directs the Congress at the state-level – more leftist and loyal. This was the case in Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa. Many PCCs were dissolved and replaced with ad hoc committees, which invariably had loyalists and ideologically aligned politicians to Gandhi on them.¹²⁰ Cabinet Minister, Chandrajit Yadav, was tasked with organizing these committees. Gandhi used the PCCs to ensure her power extended to the grassroots of the party, and went against the choices of her fellow members

¹¹⁹ Christophe Jaffrelot, "The First Reign of Indira Gandhi," 33.

¹²⁰ NACP_DOS_Briefing Books_1958-1976_Box 92

of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee – chiefly, Swaran Singh, Jagjivan Ram, and Y.B. Chavan – for the PCCs. These conditions allowed Congress to rout the Communists in their stronghold of West Bengal – a major coup and signifier that the Congress government was now an effective competitor to the left in Indian state politics. State-level reach allowed Gandhi to control both her party’s policy agenda and also to cultivate loyal leaders within the party.¹²¹ Indeed, P.V. Narasimha Rao, future Prime Minister of India and who Gandhi selected as Chief Minister of the potentially secessionist state of Andhra Pradesh, remarked upon his ascension as head of that state: “Whatever she [Indira Gandhi] says I will meticulously, implicitly, and expeditiously implement.”¹²²

In step with her centralizing power over policymaking, the government’s projection of an inclusive nationalism continued to homogenize. She wrote in an article for *Foreign Affairs*, October 1972, on the 25-year anniversary of Indian independence and at the height of her power:

“Under Mahatma Gandhi’s inspiration, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress movement formulated a set of principles which have served as our guidelines and which are still valid for us. *These are democracy, socialism, and secularism as far as our internal affairs are concerned, and non-alignment in our external relations [...]* *What holds people together [in India] is not religion, not race, not language, not even commitment to an economic system.* It is the shared experience and involvement in the conscious and continuous effort at resolving internal differences through political means. *It is a sense of “Indianness” which unites our people despite ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. Most conflicts and tensions in the world originate in the failure to take note of the importance of nationalism.*”¹²³

¹²¹ Defections were a hallmark of political maneuvering throughout the intra-party struggle in the Congress from the mid-1960s onwards. From 1957-67, 540 defections took place, while from 1967-December 1970, 1400 defections took place from among approximately 4000 legislators in the country. Until 1967, Congress had been net-gainer of defections, whereas from 1967 (when the intra-party struggle began in earnest) to the Congress split in November 1969, the party was a net loser of defections. After the split, and during the lead up to the 1971 elections, Congress (R) was the biggest gainer of defections. These trends served to re-focus polarization in the party system, but also made Gandhi focus on consolidating her government and preventing disloyalty to the policy program (TNA_FCO_37_812_1970_General Elections in India).

¹²² TNA_FCO_37_815_1971

¹²³ Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings*, 203-204

In 1973, however, the Congress' star began to fade, as outlined in Chapter Three, leading to the rise of the JPM. The party was defeated in several state by-elections, and the macroeconomic environment remained sluggish.¹²⁴ In 1974 alone, 31 million work days were lost by industry due to strikes as against 6.5 million in 1965.¹²⁵ The government's response, in line with the dominant perspectives of decision-makers regarding the primacy of state-led control of the economy, led to further centralization and state capture via trade nationalization.¹²⁶ But even the explosion of a nuclear device in 1974 couldn't boost the government's credibility. Many people began to see *Gharibi Hatao* as a slogan. Gandhi, increasingly on the defensive, argued in April 1973, that "if anybody tries to say that poverty can go in my lifetime or during my tenure as Prime Minister, it just cannot. It has deep roots."¹²⁷ She was right; but her and the Congress' populism had roused expectations that were beginning to burst open. Throughout this period, the government's alleged corruption scandals came to the fore, and subsequently agitations kicked off that precipitated the rise of the JPM and the *Bhrashtachar Hatao* (remove corruption) movement.

D. The End of Emergency

The final illustration for the causal role of ideology in the Congress government under Gandhi, comes in the ending of the emergency.

¹²⁴ Despite importing 5 million tons of food grains in 1974, there remained a significant shortage of food grains which fueled their prices and negatively impacted the fiscal deficit. Moreover, due to India's dependence on imports of petroleum and petroleum products, its import bill went up significantly by nearly \$1bn. This produced an even larger gap between imports and exports and drained India's foreign exchange reserves, further increasing the budget deficit. The government, much to its chagrin, had to appeal to the World Bank and IMF for emergency aid and, in turn, accept harsh conditions on the loans while displaying efforts toward economic reforms (as they had to in 1966 and then again in 1991).

¹²⁵ Chandra, *In the Name of Democracy*, 18.

¹²⁶ Reflecting in his memoirs, Congress MP, Pranab Mukherjee, claims that during this time while nationalization in sectors such as coal mining created confidence in the minds of the working class, these measures extracted their own "pound of flesh" from the Indian economy; while measures such as MRTP deterred private investment (Mukherjee, *The Dramatic Decade*, 50).

¹²⁷ Quoted in Tariq Ali, *The Nehrus and the Gandhis: An Indian Dynasty* (Picador, 2005 [1985]), 177.

In a top-secret memo to the Prime Minister around late 1976, P.N. Haksar appraised Gandhi of the general mood toward the emergency. He writes the memo with some honesty, outlining that the atmosphere toward the government is not ideal. In this note, Haksar makes it explicit that opposition parties and banned groups such as the RSS had lowered their activity and appeared on the wane. Gandhi is clearly interested in the activities of the RSS, references to which Haksar emphasizes in the document through underlining names, especially the release of RSS Sangh Sanchalak, Krishna Ballabh Prasad Narayan Singh, aka Babuaji, in bold black ink.¹²⁸ Moreover, Haksar notes that BLD Chairman Charan Singh claims that the RSS and Jana Sangh are in favor of announcing withdrawal of their previous support for the JPM. Singh, whose party supported the JPM in the latter stages, goes onto say that he and the top leaders of the RSS agree that the struggle against the government was wrong.¹²⁹ JP, in a letter to Singh, which Haksar also references in his note, says that if he had known the political upheaval the JPM would cause he “would have certainly tried to lead the movement with much more thought and given more attention to finding another way.”¹³⁰ For Singh, all this points to viewing the movement as a mistake. Whether genuine reflection or strategic proclamations, what is clear from this note is that Haksar deliberately stresses to the Prime Minister that her ideological opposition was, at this point, fractured. This would clearly appease her. In mid-January 1977, Prime Minister Gandhi called for elections, thus ending the emergency.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis provides robust evidence that a homogenous ideology existed within the Congress government. This ideology, anchored in secularism with a

¹²⁸ P.N. Haksar_Untitled Top Secret Memo to the Prime Minister_NMML_PN Haksar Papers_Subject File 57_1977. Incidentally, Babuaji would go onto be imprisoned again in 1992 under a Congress government for joining protests against the ban on the RSS after the organization’s role in the Babri mosque demolition.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

preference for socialism and focus on minority rights – denoted as *inclusive* nationalism -- interacting with the absence of institutional constraints within the single-party majority setting where Prime Minister Gandhi enjoyed centralized power (Chapter Three), set up the conditions for decision-making elites to suppress the JPM. In short, the Congress' unchecked, homogenous ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity in the government and suppress ideological "others" within the JPM

In the next two chapters, I will contrast the institutional and ideational conditions in this and the preceding chapter with a case study from the contemporary period. I will illustrate the presence of an ideological check and balance mechanism on decision-making elites' behavior that led the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government to respond tolerantly toward the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement between 2011-2012.

CHAPTER FIVE

INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS: COALITION GOVERNMENT AND TOLERANCE TOWARD INDIA AGAINST CORRUPTION MOVEMENT (IAC)

“Where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.”

(James Madison, Federalist 10, 1788)

“I think we [UPA] were a double coalition. The Congress party itself was a coalition. There were people in the party that did not believe in policies that myself and those close to me put forward. But, superimposed on this was that we were a coalition government – the communists, regional partners, and others. Their commitment to our party and our government was never watertight.”

(Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India (2004-2014), Author Interview, 18 May 2015)

Introduction

In this chapter, I study the institutional factors that precipitated the conditions for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government to respond tolerantly to the India Against Corruption movement (IAC) in 2012.

I begin by outlining the political composition of the multi-party UPA coalition government and the distribution of electoral strength and power within it. This type of setting is a key causal factor in the presence of institutional constraints on arbitrary and unilateral action given the greater number of veto players therein. I will then chart the origins, rise, and goals of the IAC; and simultaneously discuss the corruption scandals that engulfed the UPA in the lead up to the anti-corruption movement which plummeted the government’s credibility. I then discuss the government’s response to the movement, thickly tracing the divergent diagnoses and subsequent strategies decision-makers sought out to respond to the movement – some advanced full toleration while others did not. Here, I will detail the various institutions, their committees, and decision-makers and their

dialectic therein, that were tasked with crafting a response to the anti-corruption agitation, namely including the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Cabinet, senior politicians within the Congress Party, and the National Advisory Council (NAC).

This narrative will explain how coalition management across parties in the ruling coalition, as well as the separation of powers between decision-makers in different institutions of authority within the government, resulted in institutional constraints on elite behavior such that a unitary and arbitrary response to the IAC became less likely.¹

Coalition Government

The Congress-led UPA government (2004-2014) functioned within a coalition with a high degree of internal fractionalization making coalition management a priority for decision-makers. In 2004, the UPA obtained 219 seats, 53 short of the 272-majority needed in the 543-member Lok Sabha. To ensure a minimum number of Parliamentary seats to secure a simple majority, the UPA obtained pivotal outside support of the Left Front parties that together added the provision of 61 seats.² The CPI(M), with 43 seats, thus became the second largest party in the ruling alliance. In 2009, the UPA returned stronger on its own (with 262 seats), all be it with less outside support reducing its overall (net) seat share by 13 seats. The Congress performed well off its first administration's record, and had a larger contribution (+61), but still needed to include more than 11 parties in the coalition to secure a simple majority. Between both administrations, UPA-1 (2004-2009) and UPA-2 (2009-2014), coalition allies, notably Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and the Left Front, would threaten to, and then actually, withdraw their support over policy disagreements with

¹ Although some works have begun to appear that recount how the IAC movement emerged and its goals, there is not yet any account of how and why the government pursued the strategies it did during the two years that of the IAC.

² The Left's "outside support," a common feature of the coalition era in India, meant that they did not take on the responsibilities of governance, but would exert substantial influence on central government policies through a negotiated Common Minimum Program (CMP) to guide policy and governance (more on this in Chapter Six).

the government; while between 2009 and 2014, UPA members, notably All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), would acrimoniously leave the coalition during the IAC crisis (see Appendix B).

Decision-making with many parties (or, veto players) in the UPA coalition, complicated by key players extending “outside” support, was made more complex given the division of power within the executive between the Prime Minister and Congress Party President. The 2004 and 2009 elections provided the UPA a mandate to govern, but also afforded the Congress Party an opportunity to affect a stronger role in the government-party relationship. Executive-level power, which tends to be vested in the same person in parliamentary democracies, was split in the UPA. Under the new framework, Manmohan Singh, with no political base of his own became Prime Minister; while Sonia Gandhi, whose political base and support had helped secure a successful campaign and bring together a governing coalition, remained as Congress Party President.³ The fact that Gandhi eschewed the role of Prime Minister created an additional power center in governance through the party which had historically been subsumed within, or subservient to, the Prime Minister.⁴ This government-party dynamic was heightened when the UPA returned to power in 2009 with greater seat-share for the Congress than it had witnessed in the previous 18 years (see Appendix B.2).⁵

³ Singh is the only Congress Prime Minister never to have won a Lok Sabha election, instead taking the Rajya Sabha route to Parliament since 1991. Pre-empting further acrimony around the issue of her foreign birth (Italian), Gandhi anointed Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister, despite herself having the support of over 300 MPs (*TOI*, 18 May 2004).

⁴ At least since the time of Indira Gandhi, as we saw in Chapters Three-Four.

⁵ Sonia Gandhi remains the longest serving Congress Party President. There is no doubting the leverage the Nehru-Gandhi family enjoys in the Congress. Over time, and especially post-emergency 1975, this dynastic penetration of the party has weakened the Party’s capacity to develop organizational cohesion and internal democracy (Zoya Hasan, *Congress after Indira: Policy, Power, Political Change (1984-2009)* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 111–113). Paradoxically, there has risen a simultaneous political demand for the dynasty to play the role of arbiter to promote democratic norms in Congress (see Kanchan Chandra, ed., *Democratic Dynasties: State, Party, and Family in Contemporary Indian Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); James Manor, “The Congress Party and The Great Transformation,” in *Understanding India’s New Political Economy*, ed. Sanjay Ruparel et al. (London: Routledge Press, 2011)).

Under the umbrella of the new power dichotomy between government and party, new and disparate institutions came under executive-level policymaking, namely the NAC. Whereas the Prime Minister led the Cabinet and PMO, a statutory body, comprising of technocrats, civic activists, and some politicians, was set up under Sonia Gandhi to give the Congress President executive-level input in policy. This body, the NAC, would be the primary vehicle to design and implement key features of the Common Minimum Program (CMP) struck between all UPA parties and allies to ensure coherence on policy matters.⁶ Furthermore, the NAC, given the backgrounds of the decision-makers who comprised the institution, would act as an interface between the government and civil society to provide further inputs alongside the Cabinet on policymaking.⁷ Crucially, and as I will explore more fully in the next chapter, decision-makers coalescing around the Prime Minister and Party President maintained divergent ideological prescriptions to social and economic development issues, including nationwide anti-corruption collective action. For the purposes of the current chapter, this polycentric institutional environment in government, together with the larger number of parties therein, placed institutional constraints on the behavior of the executive to act arbitrarily and unilaterally in the face of the IAC movement when it emerged in 2011.

Corruption and India Against Corruption (IAC)

The IAC, which captivated India between 2011-2012, was symbolized by the Gandhian activist Anna Hazare. Before 2011, Hazare had spent most of his life in the state of Maharashtra, where he led social movements to promote rural development, the right to information (RTI), and citizens' fight against corruption. His main tactic was the fast-unto-death. Though Hazare was the symbol of the IAC, its war-room was led by the savvy

⁶ The CMP had unraveled by UPA-2 (2009-2014) when the Left parties departed the coalition. More on this, later.

⁷ Hasan, *Congress after Indira*, 102

bureaucrat-turned-activist, Arvind Kejriwal.⁸ Indeed, it was Kejriwal who brought Hazare to Delhi in the first place to fire up and lead the nascent movement against corruption.⁹ The IAC came to view the institutionalization of an anti-corruption ombudsman (or *Lokpal*) as a necessary step to combat corruption.¹⁰ The first public meeting of the movement that would evolve into the IAC took place in November 2010.¹¹ It was a gathering of civic activists of many stripes that had all fought against corruption for several years across the country.¹² They started to meet every day at 6pm in central Delhi, and began to work on early drafts of what they deemed the *citizen's* anti-corruption ombudsman (or *Jan Lokpal*) bill.¹³

From early 2011 to November 2012, India underwent a turbulent period of demonstrations against government corruption led by the IAC. By April 2011 India was rocked by the exposure of alleged large-scale misappropriation of public funds during the preparation and conduct of the Commonwealth Games held in Delhi, 2010. This unfolding scandal lit the tinder from which the IAC mobilized, first in Delhi and then across the country. Kejriwal reflected in his 2012 book, *Swaraj*: “In Delhi, in the name of CWG, the government blew up Rs. 70,000 crore [\$15.5 billion]. Perfectly fine roads were demolished and redone. At the same time MCD [Municipal Corporation of Delhi] sweepers did not receive their salaries for three months.”¹⁴ The IAC’s first public demonstrations began 5 April 2011 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, for the passage of the Jan Lokpal Bill. Immediately the media and wider public perked up to the movement. Thereafter for over a year, large crowds came out onto the streets in their hundreds and then tens of thousands to support

⁸ Del-2; Del-30; Del-31

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Arvind Kejriwal, *Swaraj* (Harper Collins India, 2012), 30. Though the IAC had a more structured programmatic agenda than the JPM, as both movements grew they moved away from initial aims and became more directly focused on the specific cases of corruption within the Congress-led governments they faced. More on this, later.

¹¹ Saba Naqvi, *Capital Conquest: How the AAP's Incredible Victory Has Redefined Indian Elections* (Hachette India, 2015), 31.

¹² *Ibid.*, 30

¹³ Del-1; 2015-fgACTV

¹⁴ Kejriwal, *Swaraj*, 13

the IAC.¹⁵ The agitation was advanced through fasts-unto-death, sit-ins, and march demonstrations against a cacophony of high-profile government corruption scandals at the Centre.

1. Government Corruption

Despite the creep of corruption destroying the credibility of central governments throughout most of India's independent history, it would be the ten-year rule of the UPA coalition that would become synonymous with corruption scams on a scale and level that surpassed government indiscretions previously seen in India.

The scale and exposure of corruption scandals during the UPA administration became the impetus for the IAC and its mass appeal. The scandals' disclosure arrived mainly through the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) office. Of the most noteworthy, first up was the Adarsh Housing Society scam that began in 2002. Here, land for a housing cooperative in the up-market Colaba area of Mumbai, Maharashtra (that was reserved as welfare housing for retired personnel of defense services) came to be allotted as apartments to politicians, their close relatives, bureaucrats and military officers at artificially lowered prices. Elsewhere, the notorious 2G spectrum and coal scandals were rooted in the reported exploitation of existing government allocation mechanisms of distributing contracts to private companies. And then there was the Commonwealth Games (CWG) scam, mentioned above. These scandals embroiled senior government officials and Cabinet ministers all the way up to and including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The exposure of and investigations into these corruption scandals stymied the credibility of the UPA government and exacerbated a crisis environment of which the IAC movement was the chief manifestation.¹⁶ For example, not only did the IAC erupt against

¹⁵ Vinay Sitapati, "What Anna Hazare and the Indian Middle-Class Say About Each Other," *Economic and Political Weekly* 46, no. 30 (2011); *TOI*, 28-29 July; 1 August 2012

¹⁶ 2015-fgBURC; 2015-fgINTL; Del-25b; Del-68

the backdrop of the 2G scam but also at the exact time when the V.K. Shunglu Committee report on the CWG scam revealed that the government should have sacked Congress leader Suresh Kalmadi a year prior to the start of the Games. Kalmadi was arrested just as the first wave of the IAC agitation began in spring 2011. High-profile arrests of government officials both further plummeted the sense of crisis around the UPA and in some cases, such as with the 2G scam, bruised the coalition – the main accused in the 2G case, Telecom Minister A. Raja, was a Cabinet Minister from coalition partner DMK. And later, in April 2012, Congress politician Daljeet Singh was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the food grains scam in U.P. just as an interim draft of the CAG report on coal allocation in India embroiled the Prime Minister.

The impression that corruption was emanating from, and even being absolved at, the heights of the central government became exacerbated when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who held the Coal portfolio between 2005-2009, was implicated in the coal allocations scam. In March 2012, an interim draft report from the CAG, Vinod Rai, accused the government of inefficient allocation of coal blocks between 2004-2009, with the underpriced sales to steel, cement, and power companies estimated at as much as \$33 billion. By September 2012, the Supreme Court explicitly supported the CAG and subsequently began monitoring the official investigations into the coal block allocations.¹⁷ The CAG's report claimed that though the government had decided to allot coal blocks through a system of competitive bidding, what it ended up following was a method that was opaque and subjective.

The CAG reports on 2G and coal were most damning of government involvement and brought the executive squarely into the focus of the IAC.¹⁸ Throughout these scams the

¹⁷ In August 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that coal blocks allocated by the government between 1993-2010 were illegal.

¹⁸ The CAG, Vinod Rai, has been considered an activist due to the exposure and volume of his reports. He has widely been compared in India to T.N. Seshan, the former Chief Election Commissioner, whose clampdown on government malfeasance is credited with the strengthening of the Election Commission during the 1990s.

CAG reasoned that had proper methods of contract allocation or procurement practices (2G and coal) or proper executive oversight over ministries (CWG) been followed, then the national exchequer could have been saved several billions of dollars. These funds, the CAG reports implied, went, instead, into the pockets of crony capitalists in government.¹⁹ In turn, sections of the government went on the offensive, interrogating the notional loss logic of the CAG to the exchequer.²⁰ The CAG's exposure of corruption and its sources lit the tinder from where the IAC organized and galvanized citizens across India.²¹ A million mutinies erupted against corruption once again, and the IAC became its vanguard.

2. Rise of IAC

The IAC was an elite movement that captured citizens' anger at corruption against a backdrop of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions. Between 2004-2010, the national economic and political mood was positive, with India's GDP growing at an unprecedented average of 8%, inflation contained at around 5%, and the U.S.-India civil nuclear deal raising the national morale and international recognition.²² However, by early 2011, as the effects of the global financial crisis and an international oil price shock dug in, the government raised spending at an unsustainable rate while private investment fell by 4 percentage points to 22% of GDP.²³ Additionally, prices rose of essential food items at an average of 10% with inflation running twice as high as the emerging world average.²⁴ As

¹⁹ Reports here: <http://bit.ly/2poFkWE> (Accessed 20 April 2017)

²⁰ See Sandip Sukhtankar, "The Impact of Corruption on Consumer Markets: Evidence from the Allocation of 2G Wireless Spectrum in India," *Journal of Law and Economics* 58, no. 1 (February 2015): 75–108. Sukhtankar illustrates, with specific recourse to the 2G allocation, that this type of corruption involves illegitimate transfers from one group to another but doesn't lead to lower efficiency. This no justification for allowing unjustified appropriation, as the author concurs, but suggests that GDP is not affected.

²¹ 2015-fgPRIJ; Del-36; Del-77; Del-26

²² Biswa Swarup Misra, *Revisiting Regional Growth Dynamics in India in the Post Economic Reforms Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

²³ Ruchir Sharma, *The Rise and Fall of Nations: Forces of Change in the Post-Crisis World* (W. W. Norton and Company, 2016), 250.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 234

Indian workers had come to expect higher prices, they demanded higher wages, and the RBI began to issue open warnings about the threat of a wage-price spiral.²⁵ A sense of crisis gripped the nation. Worsening this climate, by early 2011, large-scale corruption scandals implicating senior government officials were brought to the public's attention. An erosion of support for the ruling UPA followed.

When the IAC movement first began, activist reformers used mass meetings, petitions, and fasts to further their anti-corruption cause and put the government under strain.²⁶ Central to the IAC demand from government was the institution of the anti-corruption ombudsman, to check the indiscretions of political actors at the Centre (Lokpal) and in the states (Lokayukta).²⁷ The IAC asserted that a Lokpal should have authority to investigate Parliamentary and Cabinet wrongdoings, from the lower bureaucracy all the way up to and including the Prime Minister. As the movement evolved, similar to the JPM, its aims expanded to garner public and institutional support to reform government accountability in the face of widespread corruption. This led to demonstrations against the allegedly corrupt Congress government as well as support for non-Congress candidates in state elections that were committed to "patriotism" and the "country's development."²⁸ Specifically in the aftermath of the coal allocations scam and the alleged involvement of the Prime Minister, Arvind Kejriwal rallied the cry: "We will uproot the current corrupt government. Till now we have been only requesting the government to implement the Jan Lokpal bill but now it is a larger movement. We have to throw them out of power."²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 251

²⁶ 2015-fgACTV; Del-31

²⁷ The anti-corruption ombudsman is the most widely established institution in the world designed to curb political corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi et al., "Contextual Choices for Results in Fighting Corruption"). The ombudsman is "a public sector office appointed by, but separate from the legislature, [that] is given the authority to supervise the general administrative conduct of the executive branch through investigation and assessment of that conduct" (Linda Reif, *The Ombudsman, Good Governance, and the International Human Rights System* (Leiden, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 2004), 2).

²⁸ *TOI*, 12 December 2011; 3 August 2012

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 August 2012

The IAC quickly became a national phenomenon for anti-corruption demonstrations in India.³⁰ Countless column inches, social media hits, television hours, and national magazines brought IAC's actions to broad exposure.³¹ Subsequent diffusion across India was swift.³² In this expansion, the movement came to include many students, citizens across classes especially the urban middle-class, business elites, politicians, and right-wing religious nationalist groups, with peak crowds over consecutive days consistently crossing 10,000.³³

A. IAC Support and Composition

The IAC, like the JPM, developed coalitions of support from within and outside the government while including a broad range of citizens mobilizing in its ranks.

As it gathered momentum, the IAC received support inside parliament and on the streets from non-Congress political parties.³⁴ Opposition leaders as well as the Left parties launched their own demonstrations against corruption in solidarity with the IAC.³⁵ IAC, in turn, often met with opposition ministers as varied as the BJP's L.K. Advani, CPI leader

³⁰ Ashutosh Varshney, "Has Urban India Arrived?," *Indian Express*, August 25, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1puByA1> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

³¹ Del-85; Del-79c. The use of technology as a mobilizational tool is obviously far more salient in the IAC than with the JPM. In turn, it can perhaps be argued that a government can more easily control and suppress newspapers and the radio (used to spread the JPM message) than the more modern technology of the internet and smartphones (used widely to mobilize the IAC). However, the rapid shutdown of specific social media mobilizational tools, such as Twitter, by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip during the anti-corruption movements of 2013 provides a counter-point to this claim. Overall, though both movements in this study took place in altogether different contexts, their politics remain eerily similar. That we can find movements across time that share such stark similarities, both facing Congress-led governments, provides a notable opportunity for a social scientist studying India to hold constant the stimulus of the movement and focus on government response – a lens that can also tell us much about the movements and their composition, too.

³² 2015-fgPRIJ; 2015-fgONLJ

³³ *TOI*, 28 December 2011

³⁴ *Ibid*, 18, 24 August 2011; 12, 27-28 December 2011. This was not simply a case of *disloyal opposition*. Like the JPM, the IAC was not denying the legitimacy of the democratic system. However, the parties that extended support to both movements displayed *semi-loyal behavior* as they were willing to encourage and justify the actions of the movements (Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 29–32).

³⁵ *Ibid*, 6 June 2011; 17 August 2011; 1 December 2011

A.B. Bardhan, and CPI(M) General Secretary Prakash Kant to garner support.³⁶ Substantively, the opposition, chiefly the BJP, and the IAC came together on a range of issues, most notably the inclusion of the Prime Minister under the purview of the Lokpal.³⁷ However, the movement was also critical of, and faced criticism from, opposition parties. For example, regional parties moved strongly against the Lokayukta provisions in the IAC's draft bill; and when the movement demonstrated outside the homes of Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi over corruption scandals in the UPA, they did so also outside BJP President Nitin Gadkari's house. Though IAC activist Kiran Bedi argued the movement should not target Gadkari, given the support they had received from the opposition party, Arvind Kejriwal disagreed, and insisted on displaying that the "BJP and Congress were hand-in-glove over the coal allocation [scam]."³⁸ Nevertheless, the narratives of the opposition and IAC began align in the aftermath of the CAG interim report on the coal allocations scandal, and continued to intertwine until the end of the agitation, wherein both the BJP and IAC called for the Prime Minister to resign.³⁹ Overall, the support by major non-Congress parties, as with the parties that supported the JPM, was driven by the recognition that IAC had struck a chord with citizens on the issue of corruption. In turn, this support could prove beneficial at the ballot which it duly did for the BJP in state, as well as the 2014 general, elections.

As well as external backing from opposition parties, mobilizational support arrived from a broad range of groups and activists within the IAC. There was, for example, a religious-nationalist presence throughout the IAC, with RSS chief (*Sarsangbhalak*) Mohanrao Bhagwat also claiming that his organization and IAC leader Hazare shared a

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25, 30 June 2011

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 July 2011

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 August 2012. Indeed, Kiran Bedi would later join the BJP in 2015 and was projected as the Chief Ministerial candidate for the Delhi Assembly elections against, ironically, Arvind Kejriwal and his party, Aam Aadmi Party (more on this, below).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15, 18, 24 March 2012. Though the CAG, Vinod Rai, himself said that it would be misleading and erroneous to infer concrete conclusions from the *interim* report. However, the IAC activists and opposition parties saw the report as definitive, just as JPM activists had observed the *conditional* decision on Indira Gandhi's corrupt campaign practices case as tantamount to the refusal of her appeal (*Ibid.*, 1 June 2012).

long-standing relationship.⁴⁰ This also included the saffron-clad spiritual and political guru, Baba Ramdev, who helped mobilize larger crowds and opposition support for the IAC and rallied citizens behind additional anti-corruption measures such as demonetization.⁴¹ Ramdev, today a staunch supporter of the ruling right-wing BJP government, was a part of the IAC from the start and then again as the movement grew.⁴² At the beginning, there was some apprehension within the IAC with regards to Ramdev's public appearance during anti-corruption demonstrations, especially on one occasion with the RSS activist, Sadhvi Ritambhara.⁴³ However, these soon dissipated with Ramdev's ability to rally large crowds, with IAC activist Kiran Bedi describing Ramdev and the IAC as two sides of the same coin: "What you are seeing is the coming together of civil society against corruption...If corrupt can come together, why can't the voices against corruption [sic]."⁴⁴ This followed from similar statements from Arvind Kejriwal, who left little room for doubt regarding the relationship between Ramdev and the IAC: "It is not a competition. Ultimately, we have to think about the country. We will have to think about the welfare of the people. [Baba] Ramdev is taking up some issues. Anna Hazare has taken up some issues, no one is outshining anyone."⁴⁵

Although Hindu nationalist symbols were on full show at the early IAC demonstrations there were more than only religious-nationalists in the crowds joining the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 November 2011; 2015-fgACTV

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4-8 June 2012; 28 July 2012; 12 August 2012. On the role of spiritual gurus in political life in India, see Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Political Guru: The Guru as Eminence Grise," in *The Guru in South Asia: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Jacob Copeman and Aya Ikegame (Routledge Press, 2012), 80-96.

⁴² Naqvi, *Capital Conquest*, 12

⁴³ *TOI*, 4 June 2011

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 April 2012; she repeated a similar statement in early June (*Ibid.*, 4 June 2012) and again in August during a series of tweets on Twitter (*Ibid.*, 10 August 2012). Anna Hazare also explicitly said that the IAC and Ramdev were working together in "fighting for the country" (*Ibid.*, 21 April 2012; also see 3 June 2012).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4 June 2011

IAC throughout its agitation.⁴⁶ This included the All-India Students' Association, the student wing of the left-wing CPI(M), ex-servicemen associations and resident welfare associations (RWAs), Bollywood celebrities, and many liberal bloggers and journalists among others.⁴⁷ The movement also received support from prominent CEOs and businesses, including the two main chambers of commerce, FICCI and CII, as well as industrialists such as Adi Godrej, Rahul Bajaj, Meher Pudumjee, and G.K. Gopinath. Such variegation of backgrounds, and the bandwagoning of mutually referencing groups, as we saw in the JPM, is a common occurrence in nationally mobilized social movements, especially in India. Next, I turn to how the IAC interacted with the government, with a specific focus on the institutional constraints placed on the UPA's actions.

Institutional Constraints

1. IAC First Wave

The first wave of the IAC stressed significant divisions within the UPA government between different institutions, namely the PMO and Cabinet on the one hand and the Congress Party President-backed NAC on the other. These factions not only diverged on their prescribed level of engagement with the IAC, preventing a unified initial response, but also gave a fillip to the movement to put further pressure on the government. This culminated in the establishment of a joint-committee of both IAC activists and Cabinet ministers to negotiate on a Lokpal bill, much to the chagrin of Congress Party politicians.

⁴⁶ Initial demonstrations at Jantar Mantar in Delhi took place on a stage under a big image of *Bharat Mata* (the national personification of India as a Hindu mother goddess) – notably, an emblem used for RSS activities – while banners of the Hindu nationalists, such as Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Veer, and Veerangana Dal and Arya Samaj were also prominent (*Ibid.*, 5 June 2011; Naqvi, *Capital Conquest*, 14). In the background, *deshbhakhti* (patriotic) songs resounded during the IAC fasts. However, this iconography shifted when the backdrop changed to a big image of Mahatma Gandhi (*Ibid.*, 15).

⁴⁷ 2015-fgONLJ; 2015-fgNGOW; fgACTV; Del-30; *TOI*, 3 August 2012; Naqvi, *Capital Conquest*, 14.

A. Government Divisions, IAC Pressure, and the Joint-Committee

By the end of 2010, corruption scandals implicating ministers and senior officials in the UPA government had begun to emerge and the government began conceptualizing policy prescriptions to combat rampant malfeasance. The UPA looked upon leader of the coalition, Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi, to bring indiscretions into check. At the 83rd Plenary Session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) that winter, Gandhi announced a four-point plan to battle corruption.⁴⁸ A Group of Ministers (GOM) committee was set up to investigate policy solutions to corruption, wherein the Lokpal bill re-emerged as a key reform.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, Gandhi instructed her own, de facto parallel Cabinet, the NAC, to investigate and conceptualize a basket of reforms pertaining to anti-corruption measures.⁵⁰

By the spring of 2011, sensing little progress toward anti-corruption reform within a scandal-mired government, the IAC began an agitation toward the establishment of a Lokpal. The IAC felt that the reforms being presided over by government officials would be weak and that the ombudsman would not be instituted given the long and drawn-out history of the proposed law.⁵¹ Despite the fact that the NAC and IAC were in close contact, the movement's leadership lost patience with slow progress on the bill within the Cabinet and GOM.⁵² Subsequently, the IAC made the call for their own, citizen-led ombudsman bill

⁴⁸ Del-26; Del-12; Del-34

⁴⁹ The idea of an anti-corruption ombudsman (Lokpal) first emerged in 1963 during a debate on the demands for grants by the Ministry of Law and Justice. Accordingly, a Lokpal bill was introduced in Parliament for the first time in 1968. However, it lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. During this time, the first Administrative Reforms Commission recommended that two independent authorities at both the central and state levels should be established to enquire into complaints against public functionaries including Members of Parliament. The bill was subsequently introduced in the Lok Sabha eight more times after 1968 – in 1971, 1977, 1985 (officially withdrawn), 1989, 1996, 1998, 1999, and 2001. It never became law (Rajani Ranjan Jha, *Lokayukta: The Indian Ombudsman* (Varanasi: Rishi Publications, 1990); John Monteiro, *Corruption: India's Painful Crawl to Lokpal* (Houston, TX: Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co., 2013 [1966]); Shashi Sahai, *Lokpal Bill: Anna's Movement That Shook the World* (New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2014))

⁵⁰ Del-14; Del-4; Del-36b

⁵¹ Del-2; Del-31

⁵² *Ibid.*

that covered all ministers, including the Prime Minister and his executive, and which would maintain similar independence to the Supreme Court and Election Commission. The movement's agitation began at Jantar Mantar in Delhi on 4 April 2011.

From the outset, the IAC did not trust the government's commitments toward a Lokpal, which in turn antagonized UPA officials, chiefly the Prime Minister.⁵³ Singh had met with the movement and assured them that the GOM working on the Lokpal would consult the activists separately on the bill. However, he felt antagonized by the activists' refusal to engage on the government's terms and instead press forward their stringent calls – both in terms of the substance of the law but also in terms of setting a hard deadline for its passage (15 August).⁵⁴ A key advisor in the PMO recounted to me one of the earliest meetings between Singh and the IAC that corroborates this assertion:

“What we failed to understand was that from day one Anna [Hazare] and his cronies [IAC] were seeking confrontation. I remember 4-5 weeks before the agitation started, they all came to Racecourse [official residence of the Prime Minister]: Anna Hazare, Kiran Bedi, Prashant Bhushan, Arvind Kejriwal, Shanti Bhushan, and a couple of others. The Prime Minister was there, as was [A.K.] Anthony, and myself. *The Prime Minister told them, ‘you want a Lokpal, as do we. I cannot get involved too much, but I will have some of my ministers consult you.’* Kiran Bedi asked that Anthony meet with them so that promises can be kept. *The Prime Minister looked at Anthony, and despite his internal reservations, said ‘yes, we’ll make that happen.’* But after they [IAC] left, they [IAC] immediately said they do not trust the government's intentions and thereafter their agitation began. *They [IAC] went out and distorted the whole story to the press and the PM [Prime Minister] was very irritated.*”⁵⁵

As the IAC's support grew, so did their capacity to face-off with the government. Meanwhile, the government was internally unable to act cohesively and interface with the

⁵³ Del-19; Del-21; Del-34

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Del-19

movement in a unified, coherent manner. The above-mentioned senior member of the PMO continues:

“The government wasn’t acting united or thinking united. They all had narrow personal considerations. By the time the Hazare movement [IAC] got into its stride, everyone in the government was in disarray, saying different things. Every Friday a core group would meet, but they couldn’t settle on what to do! So haphazard decisions were made. They eventually stopped having this meeting.”⁵⁶

The PMO and many in the Cabinet shared the Prime Minister’s nascent antagonism toward the IAC, but came up against the NAC and their supporters within government which activated internal divisions.⁵⁷ Different chambers of the government prescribed separate strategies to engage with the IAC. The NAC was sympathetic toward the IAC and remained very critical of the bill being drafted by the GOM.⁵⁸ The NAC sub-group on Transparency and Accountability, led by leading rights-based activist Aruna Roy, fully engaged with the IAC at this time, meeting with movement activists while also declaring that the government version of the Lokpal was weak. As such, NAC members Aruna Roy and Harsh Mander, among others, came out explicitly in defense of the civic agitation and claimed that larger consultations on the Lokpal were needed, which should include the IAC. Indeed, the de facto parallel cabinet, under Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi’s leadership, had made their function in government to act as the bridge to wider civil society consultations, which they were at this exact time attempting to formalize and which its members believed the PMO and Cabinet did not prioritize. A senior member of the NAC outlined to me:

“One of the things that happened as a result of the NAC was that the government had to consult civil society groups. It started with the NAC, as they couldn’t do anything without talking to us. So when IAC emerged,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Del-36; Del-34; Del-33; Del-12

⁵⁸ Del-36b; Del-14

they were caught out. *But, the Cabinet's only solution [to the IAC], and many other problems, was to set up committees. I don't even think the Prime Minister knew how many committees he was chairing.* His staff was setting this up. The number of commissions and committees they set up is incredible. *And these committees were there to appease everyone's views.*"⁵⁹

While the PMO and Cabinet began to coalesce around the claim that legislation drafting must remain within the ambit of an elected government and not be outsourced to civic activists, the NAC was pushing for the executive to further engage the movement.⁶⁰ The NAC's call couldn't be ignored given their support from the Congress President and wide-ranging role in public policy design. During this time the NAC was deeply involved with drafting key legislation pertaining to food security, land acquisition, and communal violence.⁶¹ And so the PMO and Cabinet were compelled to at least be seen to be engaging with the IAC, even though in truth they were in a stalemate with the movement.⁶² A senior Minister in the Cabinet articulated the roots of the divergence between the different institutional factions within the government, which served to constrain executive action at this time and beyond, to me in the following way:

"The Prime Minister didn't protest too much against them [NAC]. They were supported by Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi, our President, who has enormous influence. They [NAC] saw the PM as the person obstructing their brilliant ideas. She [Sonia Gandhi] was interested in the social sector very intensely, but she didn't take on the mantle [Prime Minister]. If she had, she would have had to find the money for all these [social] programs herself! But she wasn't the PM, Dr. Singh was. So she remained as the visionary. And he [Manmohan Singh] tried to comply with her aspirations as much as he could, but at the end of day he couldn't say to the Finance Minister, 'open up the bank vaults and let everything go!' So practical compulsions of running a day-to-day government, his own ideas, and dealing with the visionary [Sonia

⁵⁹ Del-14

⁶⁰ Del-26; Del-34; Del-36b; Del-2

⁶¹ After the first two years of the UPA, and certainly after the withdrawal of the Left Front in 2008, the party-government relationship often became non-cooperative on economic and social policy matters. The Congress Party and NAC, as led by Sonia Gandhi, was pushing harder for large social welfare schemes, while the PMO, large parts of the Cabinet, and senior bureaucracy continued to push for growth and, more specifically, further economic reforms. More on this below and in the next chapter.

⁶² Del-26; Del-10b

Gandhi] *came into play*. So, being a practical politician [Manmohan Singh] and a visionary are two different things. If you can get both great, but in India you cannot do this.”⁶³

He continued, arguing that though the NAC’s presence was harmful, it could not be circumvented:

“Fundamentally, they [NAC] harmed our ability to act. Suddenly when the government is in a crisis they are professionals for hire. They will say, ‘we are with the government or citizens not Congress. Whichever government comes in we will help them to improve the life of the common man.’ When you are an activist you can say and do anything you like. But when you are a politician it is different. If we could have acted as we wanted, then we could have dealt with them [IAC] far better. Instead, we had to settle with them [IAC] because we had to reconcile everyone’s demands.”⁶⁴

One of the effects of this impasse within the government upon the manner in which the IAC was dealt with, was a proliferation of committees and meetings to reach an actionable solution. One Congress politician, who had been part of the negotiations with the IAC leadership recounted:

“The Prime Minister kept those close to him in the loop on what was happening with them [IAC]. *But then as the crisis grew, he asked others ‘what shall I do?’* And so I took the initiative and went on my own to speak with them [IAC]. I quickly realized it could have been sorted easily. When I went to speak to them [IAC activists], they were ready to speak. It was no problem. But I am not the Prime Minister – that is who had to come out. *An experienced politician would have known what to do, but not a technocrat [the Prime Minister] who is isolated around a few people.* Many of us said at that time, ‘this [IAC] is going to take us down. *All he could do was create a committee to negotiate with them [IAC] and he put the most aloof, disconnected people on it.* I don’t think anyone knew how bad things were in our party. But they [IAC] saw it was a moment to capitalize [sic].”⁶⁵

⁶³ Del-26

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Del-7

After deliberations between the above-mentioned separate groupings within the UPA, another sub-committee was set up under Minister of Defense A.K. Anthony, a close ally of Sonia Gandhi, to examine various options for the Lokpal in consultation with the IAC.⁶⁶ But movement activists wanted to go further; they had seen the openings, the factions, within the government given the NAC-PMO stand-off. One of the founding members of the IAC explained what the movement began to observe in these early days of the agitation:

“From the start we were non-ideological and instead we became problem oriented. *Also, many leaders in the government were at odds with one another.* And so we didn’t appeal to the political elites. *We were able to harass them; we scared them.* We showed them that now you will be chased like dirty dogs. You cannot get away with this [corruption] now. From Ram Lila to Jantar Mantar, everyone shouted “*sarey neta chor hain* [all politicians are crooks]. *There was a conspiracy of silence from a divided government* and we started shouting: The king is naked!”⁶⁷

Within a few days, on 8 April 2011, a settlement emerged – after discussions between Minister of Human Resource Development Kapil Sibal and IAC activists Swami Agnivesh and Arvind Kejriwal – culminating in a 10-person joint-committee that would include an equal share of both IAC activists and Cabinet ministers to investigate and draft a national Lokpal bill.⁶⁸ For some members of the Congress Party, the joint drafting on a government bill with outside activists was an anathema. Per these elites, instead of engaging the IAC the government should have been engaging directly with citizens on the issue of corruption:

⁶⁶ Del-26; Del-10b

⁶⁷ Del-1

⁶⁸ The ten-member committee would have five Cabinet ministers from the government and five representatives chosen by the IAC. Representing the IAC were Anna Hazare, Santosh Hegde, Arvind Kejriwal, Shanti Bhushan, and Prashant Bhushan. And representing the government were Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister P. Chidambaram, Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal, Law Minister Veerappa Moily, and Water Resources Minister Salman Khurshid.

“Some unique things happened during those early days [the IAC agitation] – serious questions around the government and our credibility was questioned. And the PM didn’t know how to handle it. *It is tough to handle these things when the government has no credibility.* We completely stalled after the hot water of the 2G and CWG reports. Every policy decision we tried to take then was couched under corruption. *So we were stifled. We became disconnected with outside and so had no choice [to set up the 10-member joint-committee].* That’s where you need a proper statesman. We didn’t have one in Dr. Singh. *We should have weathered it [LAC] away, but our people had an ostrich attitude.* We thought ‘talk about the bill and it will go away.’ No. People wanted us to come out and talk to them – ‘if you are not dishonest then show you are not dishonest’ they cried. Politics is about drama and we didn’t show up on stage.”⁶⁹

With the establishment of the joint-committee, the first wave of the IAC agitation ended on 9 April at 10.30am.⁷⁰ Between April and 15 August 2011 (for when the IAC set a deadline for the Lokpal bill), however, the government faced further challenges from the movement, including the increasing support of non-Congress opposition parties to the IAC as well as failure to reach a broad-based resolution on the joint-committee. These developments were exacerbated by the relationship between UPA coalition allies beginning to show signs of fracture that would continue throughout the remaining period of the anti-corruption agitation.

2. IAC Second Wave

The second wave of the IAC continued to bring about fissures within the UPA, not only between separate institutions at the executive-level but also between coalition, specifically regional party, partners. Meanwhile, the continued exposure of corruption scandals together with failure of the joint-committee to reach a resolution, led to the

⁶⁹ Del-7

⁷⁰ Meetings between the activists and ministers on the joint-committee started well and frequently, but quickly devolved into antagonism as each side attacked the others credibility and record to draft an anti-corruption bill.

government being labeled as under “policy paralysis.” In an offensive move, some decision-makers decided to arrest IAC leader Anna Hazare. Subsequently, the movement’s mobilization grew as well as its support among some decision-makers, chiefly in the NAC. This agitation culminated in an in-principle Parliamentary agreement on the movement’s demands within days of Sonia Gandhi’s son, and Congress’ heir-apparent, Rahul Gandhi, speaking in Parliament in support of Hazare and the Lokpal bill.

A. Coalition Fracturing, Anna Hazare’s Arrest, and the “Sense of the House”

After the end of the first agitation, one narrative emerged from Cabinet ministers in the joint-committee that legislation was the ambit of Parliament, and should not be dictated by outside activists with the support of opposition parties. Finance Minister and Congress veteran Pranab Mukherjee commented, in direct echoes of his perspectives on the JPM:

“There is a general trend of undermining the democratic process and constitutional authorities in these movements [LAC]. Anna Hazare went on a stir for not preparing of Lokpal Bill [sic]. BJP supported it. We discussed it with Anna Hazare. Now a panel headed by me [joint-committee] is preparing a strong and sound Lokpal Bill that will be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament. But Anna Hazare is now threatening that if the Bill is not passed by August 15th, then he would start a fast-unto-death. How can someone from outside dictate the terms of Parliament? This is certainly an attempt to weaken the democracy [sic].”⁷¹

Fellow Cabinet Ministers, namely Kapil Sibal, Salman Khurshid, and P. Chidambaram, went further and argued that the powers under the Lokpal being advanced by the IAC undermined the Parliamentary process. Their objection was against one of the IAC’s key demands, chiefly the inclusion of investigating the Prime Minister under the ombudsman. In this regard, the IAC was joined by opposition parties who launched their own anti-

⁷¹ *TOI*, 13 June 2011

corruption demonstrations in solidarity with the IAC in June and July.⁷² UPA officials remained resolute, and in their subsequent draft of the Lokpal, rejected the inclusion of the Prime Minister under the Lokpal's investigatory powers. While the government found no resolution with the IAC on the Lokpal, and faced up to their political opposition supporting the movement, internal fractures between coalition partners began to surface.

The first coalition fracturing saw Congress' relationship with key ally, the DMK (third largest party in the UPA), plunge.⁷³ In July 2011, the regional party explicitly backed the IAC's demands at a time when the executive was standing firm against being bullied by the movement on the inclusion of the Prime Minister under the law. At this time the southern party was unhappy at the arrest of its ministers in the 2G scam, namely A. Raja and DMK President's daughter, Kanimozhi. Relations were further strained with the resignation of DMK politician and Cabinet Minister Dayanidhi Maran as part of the 2G debacle.⁷⁴ Senior leaders within the government had divergent positions on how severe A. Raja should have been treated and, therefore, the extent to which the coalition and relations with DMK should have been tested at a critical time.⁷⁵ One Cabinet Minister, and a close ally of both Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Singh, observed to me:

“The first sign of the situation [2G scandal] with [A.] Raja and we should have sacked him – and here I believe coalition politics played a role. Had we have sacked Raja there and then, the DMK would have withdrawn support which the Prime Minister couldn't afford. Had he disregarded these coalition dynamics and said, ‘we will remove Raja because I don't want to spoil the integrity of my administration’ the CAG reports and the subsequent ire of the people wouldn't have happened. Instead, the constant capitulation to coalition allies led to over compromise and delayed action. And Raja ultimately left and was arrested, and the partners went on to leave the government to face these problems on their own anyway!”⁷⁶

⁷² *Ibid.*, 25 and 30 June 2011

⁷³ See Appendix B.1

⁷⁴ Del-33; Del-34

⁷⁵ In February 2012 the Supreme Court laid blame for the 2G embezzlement squarely on A. Raja, effectively absolving the Prime Minister and other key Cabinet ministers questioned in the case.

⁷⁶ Del-12

This is in stark contrast to a Congress Party politician who was loyal to Gandhi and served as a negotiator between the Congress and IAC:

“He [Prime Minister] was never tested until IAC. Only time. He should have, when the 2G report began to gain momentum in 2011, come out and explained what happened and why. *Instead, why did he let [A.] Raja bang? Why didn't he talk about the auction? He should have defended it. Why didn't he come out and say what happened? The people cared about the amount apparently lost in the auctions – but they made prices lower for the people. He should have told them that. The people would have listened.*”⁷⁷

Competing interests within the coalition would go on to make it more difficult to formulate a coherent government response against the IAC, but also, as highlighted here, corruption in general. In this regard, many Cabinet ministers and PMO officials alleged that the intransigent and extractive role of regional parties within the coalition was a proximate cause.

The divergence between elites highlighted above is reflective of a wider discontent as to the role of coalition, specifically regional party, partners within policymaking at the Centre. After all, the presence of regional parties in the central government had more than doubled in the preceding twenty years (see table 5.1).⁷⁸ In an interview with a Cabinet Minister, these coalition dynamics, which would in large part go on to place institutional constraints on the UPA response to the IAC by preventing swift action toward the movement, came to the surface explicitly:

“Our [Indian government] coalitions are much worse [than other democratic countries]. *Here coalitions are different. We had one with CPM and it broke on the Nuclear Deal. Nobody is opposing the Deal now. The Prime Minister put his foot down, even against the preference*

⁷⁷ Del-7

⁷⁸ There is constant bargaining between coalition partners in anticipation of repeat interactions at both national and state levels given the high frequency of elections (see Chapter Two). Partners, therefore, expect positive spillover effects from cooperation elsewhere (Strom, Muller, and Smith, “Parliamentary Control of Coalition Governments,” 521). During the credibility crisis when facing the IAC, as this and the next chapter will show, coalition bargaining came undone for ideological as well as strategic reasons.

of the party leaders including Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi. But he said, ‘I will risk my government and put my reputation at stake because this needs to be done.’ We broke all the barriers, and today all the issues are our own – but we get no credit for it. But coalition issues mainly surface when there is a crisis, such as when the protests [LAC] kicked off. There isn’t a camaraderie with coalition partners, it is always antagonistic. There are some exceptions, but by-and-large it is a marriage of convenience, especially when there is no ideological convergence. They [coalition partners] are all mainly in their states, looking at the next election. That is their priority.’⁷⁹

Table 5.1: National and Regional Parties’ Representation Amongst Elected Members

Party	2009	2004	1999	1998	1984
National Parties	69.24%	67.03%	67.96%	71.27%	85.4%
Regional Parties	29.1%	32.04%	30.94%	27.62%	12.2%
Independents	1.66	0.92%	1.1%	1.1%	2.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistical Reports on General Elections, 1984-2009, Election Commission, India

A Congress Cabinet Minister was far more explicit about the testing role of regional allies as well as Congress ministers with mainly state-level interests, arguing that these parties and politicians sought to extract rents from the Centre in order to benefit their specific constituencies and therefore played an even more intractable role in governance.⁸⁰ However, despite this dominant perspective within the PMO and among Congress ministers in the Cabinet, the government had to ensure that coalition allies were not

⁷⁹ Del-26. The US-India Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement gave India a waiver from the rules of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The act ended a 34-year ban on nuclear trade with India and marked a significant change in U.S.-India relations from their previously adversarial phase. Prime Minister Singh led the negotiations, and was convinced that in order to sustain India’s growth, the country needed to improve energy, economic, technological, and political ties with the U.S. The Prime Minister’s approach linked his economic ideas with the government’s foreign policy priorities (“The Manmohan Singh Doctrine,” Sanjaya Baru, “India and the World: The Economics and Politics of the Manmohan Singh Doctrine in Foreign Policy” (National University of Singapore: Institute of South Asian Studies, November 2009)).

⁸⁰ After the resignations and arrest of DMK politicians at the Centre, the subsequent Cabinet reshuffle left two seats vacant specifically to accommodate DMK replacements.

sidelined or antagonized such that their withdrawal would cripple overall government functioning:

“Politicians in the Congress but especially our regional partners turned certain ministries into a pork barrel. Take for instance water resources. After I announced the accelerated irrigation program, some time in 2004, I was appalled to see the number of irrigation projects that were half completed or three-quarters complete. I had laid out a plan that a certain pot of money would be made available to complete the last mile of projects. That is, projects that have reached [the] last phase of implementation, but they lack an extra Rs. 75-100 crore [\$13-18 million]. But what happened? Successive water resources ministers lobbied the Prime Minister and Cabinet and everyone dipped into the money to implement small water supply schemes. It became so ridiculous, that the Minister of Water Resources, Harish Rawat, brought a paper to the Cabinet advanced by AIPP [Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact] that had found [that] individual boar wells should be implemented in his home state of Uttarakhand. It was shot down initially, but then the PM compromised. He [Prime Minister Manmohan Singh] had to compromise not only with regional partners but also politicians from his own party. He had to maintain support across the government. So when you talk about action [against IAC] you have to remember that our environment [coalition] was always one of forced compromise.”⁸¹

Echoing this reasoning, another Cabinet Minister argued that the extractive behavior of some coalition partners, without any commitment to identifying solutions to government challenges such as the IAC, was a symptom of the extensive discretionary powers enjoyed by the government within Indian politics:

“Politicians monopolize everything they can get a hold of – such politicians wouldn’t do anything of substance, but purely spread patronage. Regional partners for example come in, you put them on a railway advisory committee – they get to have three meetings a year and a pass to travel free on railway. That’s what they want. If we had real privatization the minister would have no control, except in large-scale lobbying like you have in the U.S. So, when things turned bad [IAC], people in regional parties, and even in our own party, started to say it

⁸¹ Del-33

is because of people like the Prime Minister instead of look at their own actions.”⁸²

Sensing these early fractures in the ruling coalition, the rhetoric of “policy paralysis” began to become common parlance when referring to the UPA among the IAC, opposition, citizens, and the media, as well as bureaucrats within the government who were severely hampered by the constant threat of corruption scandal hanging over them.⁸³ As one Cabinet Minister remarked to me: “The government was seen as not functioning cohesively – it was seen as mired in corruption. And this stemmed from an inability to communicate with people and [coalition] partners which made things worse.”⁸⁴ Coalition fissures, which from hereon would intensify, meant that the government could not act unilaterally in dealing with the IAC at the cost of further inviting outside pressure upon a precarious governing architecture. In this context, the second IAC agitation erupted.

In the lead up to the IAC’s second agitation in August 2011, the government was completely engulfed by a crisis of credibility. The CAG was actively seeking further UPA culprits pertaining to the 2G and CWG corruption scandals, leading to the arrest of Congress’ Suresh Kalmadi. To add to this, the notion of a government in “paralysis” continued to grow as economic conditions worsened through an inflation spike as no agreement between the IAC and government emerged. Hostility also grew from the opposition benches; not only the BJP but the Left parties, such as the CPM, CPI, Forward Bloc and Revolutionary Socialist Party, who continued their own agitations in support of the IAC. A senior minister in the government told me:

“The CAG reports on 2G spectrum allocation, CWG, as well as on coal blocks, that came out throughout that time [2011-2012], *provided ammunition for civil society protests*. If CAG reports hadn’t been in [the] public domain, the movement wouldn’t have picked up the way it did. Here was a constitutional body putting forward startling

⁸² Del-26

⁸³ 2015-fgPRIJ; 2015-fgBURC; Del-23

⁸⁴ Del-12

revelations on the extent of corruption in the central government, and doing it in a way that didn't keep it within the chambers of government but through leaks in the media. *The 'loss to the exchequer' part shocked people, and the numbers stuck. The [LAC] movement was given constant fuel by them and the political parties.*⁸⁵

A senior member of the PMO supported this position, wherein decision-makers mainly in the PMO and Cabinet believed that the CAG reports, which energized the IAC, failed to fully understand the government processes behind the alleged allocation scandals:

*"The LAC made use of these 2-3 reports of the CAG with regards to the coal scam, commonwealth [Games], and 2G scam. We tried to explain to people what our reasoning was, but they [LAC] and others [CAG] had no interest in knowing how government works. 2G and coal were picked up by the media and the country became even more hostile toward us. We were hamstrung, and there was a lot of hostility. We didn't have a problem with [A.] Raja in that he wanted the [allocation] process [for 2G] to be the same as that which BJP had followed [before us]."*⁸⁶

At this time, the shrinking credibility of the government, stressed daily by the IAC, even brought calls for the resignation of the Prime Minister. Most interestingly, an interview with a senior member of the NAC reveals that there was strong support even within the government to have Singh removed, thus further highlighting the divisions between decision-makers:

*"The Prime Minister should have been replaced then [during the IAC crisis]. He was not able to govern and everyone was going over him. Pranab Mukherjee [Finance Minister, 2009-2012] was very keen, and he should have got the job. He knew how to manage parties and talk to the public. The PM wasn't doing it and Mrs. Gandhi was unwell."*⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Del-34. I will go into more detail on this point in Chapter Six.

⁸⁷ Del-14. Sonia Gandhi was away at this time in the U.S. for medical treatment. The NAC, as well as Gandhi loyalists in the Congress, claim they lacked sufficient political clout to fully engage in government decision-making in her absence (detailed below).

A Congress minister in the Lok Sabha, for whom the perceived limitations of the Prime Minister's deliberate style and allegedly failed neo-liberal policies (detailed later) were evident for some time and a cause of the social conditions that gave rise to the IAC in the first place, reiterated this position to me:

“The highlights of UPA were the investments we made in the social sector, in rural economy, NREGA [National Rural Employment Guarantee Act]. All of it came from Congress – these are ideas from core Congress leaders. From Sonia Gandhi. Not from Manmohan Singh. From the enlightened leaders of Congress. This is what people wanted and we stopped doing it because those who are technocrats and don't understand people [Prime Minister] didn't provide support. I sat in government for 10-12 years. I know which system became better and who was responsible for it: And it was the Prime Minister and those around him who isolated themselves when the chips were down [during IAC agitation]. It would have been better if he would have left then and there – there were enough leaders, good leaders, people like Pranab Mukherjee, who would have taken his place and done a better job.”⁸⁸

Meanwhile, for decision-makers in the PMO and many in the Cabinet, the sense that members of government, in addition to coalition partners and the opposition, were turning against Singh was very clear. A senior official in the PMO saw a clear link between this loss of support for the Prime Minister and his close aides, and the slowdown in effectively responding to the IAC. He outlined to me:

“The processes of government [toward the IAC] slowed down pretty exceptionally because of these party problems and also Parliament tension on political matters, disputes, etc. And I had come to politics by accident. I was not used to wheeling and dealing within the Cabinet. And therefore I had limited amount of leverage to play with. And I had to exercise that in a manner that was the best should not become the enemy of progress. But when you are in a crisis, people are not interested in the collective. By that time [of the second IAC agitation] the mood in the country was against the government, and all the

⁸⁸ Del-7. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA), is a social security measure that aims to guarantee the right to work in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

opposition parties – left and right – as well as some of our own partners had all turned against me and our record.”⁸⁹

A close advisor of the Prime Minister and senior bureaucrat echoed: “While we were trying to keep the fiscal deficit down, the party [Congress] was only interested in implementing populist acts. *These are things where, on the political side, there were too many voices talking past one another.* The biggest problem is that I don’t think that Dr. [Manmohan] Singh ever sat down with Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi and educated her on what his ideas were and why they would work [to claw back credibility].”⁹⁰

As the IAC’s 15 August deadline approached, a standstill developed between the government and the IAC movement, while Manmohan Singh re-emphasized that the Prime Minister would not come under the Lokpal – a key demand from the IAC.⁹¹ Thereafter the government entered a schizophrenic interaction with the movement: Ministers knew about the public outrage at corruption and rising support for the IAC, but refused to be held at ransom by the IAC on a Parliamentary and constitutional matter. Some politicians began vicious attacks against IAC, to which then the NAC and some Congress ministers reacted with aversion as they were trying to engage the movement.

Anticipating further street agitation, the Cabinet decided to take a different approach to their NAC and coalition colleagues, and go on the offensive by arresting IAC leader Anna Hazare. The result was negative. On 15 August, in his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Singh said that the power to make laws rested only with Parliament. At this point some ministers in the Cabinet, together with Prime Minister Singh, agreed that Hazare – the symbol of the IAC – would be detained if he was unwilling to remain within a time-bound fast.⁹² On 16 August 2011, when negotiations on the Lokpal failed to achieve a

⁸⁹ Del-34

⁹⁰ Del-35

⁹¹ Singh was at first willing to let the PMO come under the Lokpal but was convinced to go against this initial perspective by his Cabinet and advisors.

⁹² Del-7; Del-9; Del-26; Del-33; Del-34

breakthrough, and as Hazare geared up to proceed to the fast venue, the Delhi police turned up at his residence in Mayur Vihar at the orders of the central government and arrested him. A Congress minister in the Lok Sabha, who was surprised to hear about Hazare's arrest, recounted his interactions on that day to me:

“Putting Anna [Hazare] in jail was the wrong move, and that was the catalyst. I went into Parliament and told my colleague who was part of the meeting the day before, ‘why did you guys arrest him?’ And she said, ‘No, we met this morning and decided he [Hazare] will not be arrested as such. He will just be picked up by the police and sent back to his home. Then he will come back and we will do the same again. Him being arrested and sent to prison was not part of the plan.’ But these things are not happenchance [sic]. *The Delhi police comes under the Centre’s control. The directive must have come ‘take strong action’ and the rest gets lost in translation. But why go there in the first place? By attacking Anna, we were seen as being on the side of the corrupt, and we lost further credibility. Something I later told Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi and she agreed. We didn’t even try to combat the movement cohesively.* If we would have tried, people would have noticed. The PM [Prime Minister] had one crisis on his hands – people wanted a Lokpal bill – and he didn’t know how to handle it. It was the only time Mrs. Gandhi wasn’t around – she was abroad and unwell – and this is key. Had she been around, they [PMO and Cabinet] wouldn’t have taken such missteps against them [IAC].”⁹³

Coalition partners claimed that they were not consulted on Hazare's arrest, while in the absence of Sonia Gandhi (who was away in the U.S. for medical treatment), her de facto parallel cabinet, the NAC, as well as Gandhi loyalists in the Congress, claim they lacked the political backing to counter the PMO and Cabinet.⁹⁴ A senior member of the NAC recounts:

“Throughout that time [IAC second agitation] we were continuing our engagement with the civil society activists and, of course, with the Left. You must remember that unlike UPA-1, by UPA-2, we [NAC] were much bigger *albeit by now many in the government had figured out how to sidestep us.* But really the tussle between the

⁹³ Del-7

⁹⁴ Del-12; Del-15; Del-36b; *TOI*, 21 August 2011

government and the forces that drove the IAC go back further. *They [Cabinet] sidelined the Common Minimum Programme in UPA-2 [designed to help cooperation between coalition parties and give a voice to the NAC] and the system began to fray.* Ultimately the buck stopped with Mrs. Gandhi. *She could have been stronger with him [Prime Minister], but her health began to deteriorate during that time [LAC agitation], and without her there the government didn't support us.*⁹⁵

A Congress Party politician further contextualized and corroborates the key role of Sonia Gandhi in providing influence and direction to the NAC and her allies, and therefore further underscoring the division of power within the government between Party and executive:

“Our [party] system doesn't allow debate. You have to be a mature, developed system to do that. *We don't have a party debating structure, we have a party instruction structure.* Which works quite well most of the time. It works because you find a leader that's popular, who wins elections and then that leader says – none of us is going to do this, or we are doing this. And if anyone questions it, that person will be isolated. *Without her [Sonia Gandhi], most of her followers would not know where to go or what to do.* It's a systemic issue.”⁹⁶

Before leaving for medical treatment, Sonia Gandhi had set up her own committee to look after the daily affairs of the Congress Party, including the issue of the IAC, which precipitated the emergence of another locus of influence during the crisis: Rahul Gandhi. The committee had veteran leaders A.K. Antony, Ahmed Patel, Janardhan Dwivedi along with Sonia Gandhi's son, Rahul Gandhi, as its members. Within this committee Rahul Gandhi held center stage and was not happy with the move by the government to defile the IAC and was particularly aggravated at the decision to arrest Hazare.⁹⁷ The NAC, namely

⁹⁵ Del-14. It is important to note here that the Left were no longer providing outside support to the UPA at this time, yet the NAC continued to engage them.

⁹⁶ Del-26

⁹⁷ Del-12; Del-7; Del-26; Del-10b. As well as arresting Hazare, Congress Spokesperson Manish Tewari accused the IAC leader of being corrupt. Former-Attorney General Soli Sorabjee's comments reflected the general mood pertaining to the arrest, which “showed a lack of sagacity and sobriety” (TOI, 17 August 2011).

Jean Dreze, Aruna Roy, and Harsh Mander, also came out to criticize the government's actions; U.S. State Department Spokesperson, Victoria Nuland, told reporters that India must exercise democratic "restraint" in dealing with the IAC; while the business association, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) also spoke against the arrest.⁹⁸ Demonstrations erupted across the country and opposition parties poured into the streets to support the IAC. Three days later, Hazare was released to jubilant crowds and taken to the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi where the IAC continued their agitation. In the weeks that followed the movement grew in its national prominence, supported by opposition parties as well as the NAC among others, as the government returned to being gripped by indecision. NAC decision-maker Aruna Roy had commented only a few days earlier: "Momentum [of the IAC] should be used to lobby with MPs and political parties."⁹⁹

Congress heir-apparent Rahul Gandhi spoke in favor of the Lokpal bill in a Parliamentary debate a week after Hazare's release on 26 August 2011, against the grain of how the Cabinet and PMO had at that point been framing the movement. Gandhi thanked Hazare for his agitation and called for the Lokpal to be given constitutional status in a cry similar to that of the IAC: "Madam Speaker, why not elevate the debate and fortify the Lokpal by making it a constitutional body accountable to Parliament like the Election Commission? I feel the time has come to seriously consider this idea."¹⁰⁰ The entry of Rahul Gandhi into the center of the government's face-off with the IAC added another layer of complexity to the decision-making matrix within the UPA. As a Congress Cabinet Minister and member of the joint-committee that negotiated with the IAC recounted to me regarding Gandhi's intervention on the Lokpal debate:

"Rahul Gandhi is an idealist – for example when he spoke up for the Lokpal in Parliament after Hazare's arrest. *He wasn't trying to*

⁹⁸ Del-46; Del-49; Del-36b; Del-14. Also see *TOI*, 5-6 August 2011

⁹⁹ *TOI*, 6 August 2011

¹⁰⁰ Rahul Gandhi, "Speaking on Lokpal in Parliament," *Indian National Congress*, August 26, 2011, <http://bit.ly/2o3MrAy> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

*insult the Prime Minister; he was acting on impulse and his passions. But, he [Rahul Gandhi] didn't have to worry about consequences for the government. If someone said, 'if you don't do X, the government goes [coalition allies leave] next week,' what would he [Rahul Gandhi] do? He didn't have that concern because his mother [Sonia Gandhi] would take care of things. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is left picking up the pieces. It [UPA] was a real mish-mash of directives at that point."*¹⁰¹

For yet others, especially those UPA elites that were close to Prime Minister Singh, the increasing involvement of Rahul Gandhi in government affairs at that time was further testament to the continued demotion of the Prime Minister and his decision-making, adding to the tensions between each government faction. A senior advisor to the Prime Minister provided me with the following viewpoint that reflected a common theme among those close to, or within, the PMO:

*"I would say that in my personal experience in the UPA government that we unleashed a lot of energies that we were not given credit for. Dr. Singh produced, over 10 years, an average growth rate of 7.9%. And yet the Congress party never campaigned on the performance of the Dr. Singh government. I think that's where Rahul [Gandhi] comes in. During that time [LAC agitation] those near them [the Gandhi family] said that given the importance of the Gandhi family to Congress, the best thing would be for Rahul to join the government, get a portfolio, and begin to focus with responsibility. And Dr. Singh was happy with Rahul to join the Cabinet. I think he may have even explicitly asked him to do so, but I don't recall. But he [Rahul Gandhi] didn't, and why would he? Why do you need to join in a junior position after you can come in as a Prime Minister! If you turn up and say 'my great, great grandfather was Motilal Nehru,' people will vote for you. This is the truth. He is not going to go in and say, 'my mother put in place a guy that gave you 9% growth, support him; back him.' It is peculiar that Dr. Singh's record was never sold."*¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Del-26

¹⁰² Del-35

He continued:

“Look, most Congress guys [party politicians] do not believe that they actually have a message to give to the electorate. *The ones in office, at least, have been brought up to believe that the Gandhis alone can get you into office and for that you better solidly be for them, the Party, and be sycophantic. And they dutifully are.* They have no loyalty beyond this, even if it concerns the Prime Minister. *But not all of us subscribe to this; not all of us are Congress ‘people.’*”¹⁰³

The impasse between the government and the IAC was temporarily resolved the day after Rahul Gandhi spoke in Parliament, on 27 August 2011. Many Congress politicians credited Rahul Gandhi with the breakthrough. While some Cabinet Ministers such as Kapil Sibal and the Prime Minister’s Principal Secretary T.K.A. Nair, together with some coalition partners, refused to back the bill.¹⁰⁴ Parliament passed a *Sense of the House* resolution on select matters demanded by the IAC, and supported by Aruna Roy and Harsh Mander of the NAC, pertaining to the citizens’ charter, lower bureaucracy (also to be under the Lokpal) and establishment of Lokayuktas (state-level anti-corruption ombudsman).¹⁰⁵ It was unprecedented because never before had the Parliament, out-of-session, gathered to discuss an issue raised by a non-political entity.

3. IAC Final Wave

Winter 2011 onwards for twelve months, inter- and intra-governmental fractures intensified as divergent policy prescriptions toward the IAC crisis concretized. By

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Del-10b; Del-19. A full bill did not pass as some members of the government and coalition partners such as the DMK, and several regional parties who had supported the UPA as non-coalition partners such as the BJD, BSP, and AIADMK, were against the inclusion of the full lower bureaucracy and the mandating of Lokayuktas which, for these parties, would undermine state autonomy.

¹⁰⁵ Del-36b; Del-14. This Sense of the House resolution was an in-principle agreement (due to opposition from within and outside the government to a full vote on the bill) with respect to the above three issues, which were forwarded to the Standing Committee rather than a firm commitment from Parliament.

November 2012, when the IAC movement came to an end, key coalition allies had all left the government. In the main, partners departed the coalition over the government's neo-liberal steps to ease the credibility crisis. Meanwhile, the CAG's preliminary report on the coal allocations scandal burst open vociferous calls from the IAC for the Prime Minister to be investigated and for him to resign. At this stage, the IAC's narrative shifted away from the Lokpal and intensified against the government specifically. As the movement began to wane by Autumn 2012, in a surprise move, the leaders of the IAC created a political party that brought the movement to an end.

A. Divergent Policy Prescriptions, Targeting Government, and Movement's End

During winter 2011, the UPA government faced renewed resistance from coalition allies. In December, the government's Core Committee – comprising of the Prime Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, P. Chidambaram, S.M. Krishna, Ahmed Patel, and, crucially, the returning Sonia Gandhi – met to discuss the IAC. At the same time, the Prime Minister held meetings with coalition allies after the refusal of coalition members, chiefly the leftist TMC, to back the Lokpal legislation. During the six months prior, the Indian economy had continued to wane, growing at its slowest for two years and the Prime Minister and his close aides' solution was to push for further liberal reforms, that would give a fillip to the macroeconomic environment that the PMO and sections of the bureaucracy and Cabinet strongly believed caused the anti-corruption agitation to emerge.¹⁰⁶ However, the TMC and DMK opposed the Prime Minister's push for further reforms.¹⁰⁷ The government backed-off. An opportunity to solve the crisis through one set of policy prescriptions, for the time being, was shelved due to coalition partners' obstinacy.

In addition to factional dissent from the coalition parties, the NAC ratcheted up its

¹⁰⁶ Misra, *Revisiting Regional Growth Dynamics in India in the Post Economic Reforms Period*.

¹⁰⁷ Del-33; Del-34. Key state-level elections were four months away that could potentially impact coalition numbers at the Centre.

criticism of the PMO and Cabinet during this period. This tension had been rising for several months prior with the NAC's outward denunciation of the government's land acquisition bill and criticism of the Lokpal bill adding to the more general feeling of having their recommendations diluted by the PMO, Cabinet, and Planning Commission.¹⁰⁸ And just when the government was on the back foot against the IAC, the NAC opposed the Cabinet's Citizen's Charter and Grievance Redressal bill as part of the proposed anti-corruption reforms to placate the movement. NAC senior member, Aruna Roy, said the bill was "seriously compromised" and would be ineffective in providing weaker sections of society with any relief.¹⁰⁹ IAC wanted grievance redressal to be under the Lokpal and joined the NAC in criticizing the bill. When the government tabled the Lokpal bill once again in Parliament in late December, the exclusion of the Prime Minister from the investigatory powers of the ombudsman, among other factors, aggravated the IAC who continued their agitation, which now drew crowds of up to 15,000 at peak hours.¹¹⁰ In sum, the government could not navigate a decisive way to deal with the IAC and their demands in-part due to its internal factions.

The failure of a breakthrough between the government and IAC proved an inflection point from which the movement became more closely aligned with opposition parties in their targeting of the Congress Party as the source of corruption. For instance, the IAC welcomed all major non-Congress parties to demonstrate with them in December, turning their message onto the coalition-leading party.¹¹¹ At this stage, IAC activists decided that they would campaign against Congress in the upcoming polls, through supporting non-corrupt candidates in a repeat of a similar decision by the JPM (as we saw in earlier chapters). Anna Hazare led the charge against the Congress, saying: "The Prime Minister holds the high office, but three or four others also think they are PMs. He is not able to

¹⁰⁸ Del-14; Del-36b; Del-75; Del-12

¹⁰⁹ *TOI*, 14 December 2011

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28 December 2011

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11 December 2011

take decisions and no one listens to him.”¹¹² Emboldened from the rising nationwide tide against the Congress, just as we saw in the previous chapters, non-Congress parties were coming together at the state-level. In Manipur, for example, Manipur People’s Party, Nationalist Congress Party, Janata Dal (U), Rashtriya Janata Dal, and CPI(M) formed the Peoples’ Democratic Front (PDF). Though the chief opposition party at the Centre, BJP, didn’t become a formal member of this alliance due to ideological differences with the CPI(M), the MPP and BJP reached a seat-sharing agreement resulting in an alliance within an alliance. This allowed the BJP of continuing its strategy of extending support to non-Congress candidates throughout the country.¹¹³ There was a clear trend toward opposition parties collectively looking to undercut the Congress. Overall, by the start of 2012 there were continued calls from the IAC and the opposition parties for the Prime Minister to resign and for fresh elections to take place amidst rising inflation and the exposure of high levels of corruption at the Centre.

The IAC fully intensely against the Congress-led government in the wake of the interim CAG report on the coal allocations investigation. The coal portfolio was under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the period when the alleged scam took shape. When the IAC returned to the protest stage in March 2012, they now explicitly targeted the Congress-led UPA government, by demonstrating outside the Prime Minister’s home and threatening to undermine institutions and general law and order by filling up jail cells and filing several cases against Cabinet ministers.¹¹⁴ IAC activist Arvind Kejriwal named P. Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal, Praful Patel, Vilasrao Deshmukh, among 14 allegedly malfeasant ministers. Increasingly taking on an anti-government tone, Hazare fired at the Congress

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 12 December 2011

¹¹³ The Congress would win a majority of the Manipur seats in March 2012.

¹¹⁴ 2015-fgACTV; 2015-fgPRIJ. Also in March 2012 Congress lost the key state election in U.P., a defeat that weakened the coalition’s sense of self, and the Party began to lose its grip on another crucial state, Andhra Pradesh, due to two main issues – the independence movement around a new state of Telangana and the rise of and opposition to Telangana from Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, whose father had been a key Congress ally until his sudden death in 2009 at the start of UPA-2.

leadership: “Bring Jan Lokpal or go out of power in the 2014 general elections.”¹¹⁵ Turning on the Prime Minister, specifically, IAC leaders called for a legal investigation into Singh who they claimed had abused his position to give significant pecuniary benefit to private entities.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, Congress veteran and Cabinet Minister, Ambika Soni, claimed that the IAC was trying to “demolish” a constitutional office through its aggressive call for a probe into the Prime Minister.¹¹⁷

Internally, decision-makers continued to provide divergent pathways to solve for the IAC crisis now fully aimed at the government.¹¹⁸ One part of the government, chiefly the PMO, Planning Commission, and many in the Cabinet wanted to attract investors in order to generate growth that they believed would act as an antidote to the anti-corruption wave and general discontent; while the other part, chiefly the Congress Party and the NAC, wanted to fuel immediate social services investment to deter political opposition and signal an effective governance structure to demonstrating citizens who had come to observe the government as lining its own pockets to the detriment of the common man.¹¹⁹ As one minister told me, “both in the country and in the party there was a clash of ideology between the statist and free-marketeers.”¹²⁰ Another minister, member of a regional party partner of the UPA coalition surmised to me: “The goal of the UPA was to help the laborers; social sector; and create an inclusive society. During that time [IAC agitation] it seemed they were torn about that goal.”¹²¹ Moreover, a non-Congress Parliamentarian observing the government at close quarters added:

¹¹⁵ *TOI*, 26 March 2012

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30-31 May; 1 June 2012; Del-1

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 June 2012

¹¹⁸ Del-75; Del-26; Del-34; Del-10b; 2015-fgBURC

¹¹⁹ In July, the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) among others had conceded that business sentiment and investor outlook had been negatively impacted during the IAC agitation. The PMEAC’s Economic Outlook 2011/12 said, “The spate of corruption-related controversies that has emerged over the past one year has consumed energies of government and has led to an unintended slowing down of initiatives to restore investment and economic confidence” (Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, “Economic Outlook 2011/12,” July 2011, <http://bit.ly/2oQhXIN> (Accessed 20 April 2017)).

¹²⁰ Del-8b

¹²¹ Del-5

“By the end of their time, the government was a fish market. The buck didn’t stop anywhere, least of all the Prime Minister. Everyone would contradict everyone else. And then our infrastructure slowed; our government expenditure increased; fiscal deficit went out of control; rising inflation. Then they [Congress] started harassing businesses by re-introducing the license permit raj [retroactive tax]. So investment dried up. Some of them tried to make calls for further FDI, but to no avail. We all thought they were falling over themselves.”¹²²

As the PMO and key members of the Cabinet sought to attract foreign investment to get the economy back up-and-running and re-ignite the government’s credibility and thus combat the IAC, Finance Minister and Gandhi loyalist Pranab Mukherjee introduced the General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR), an anti-tax avoidance regulation, in his March 2012 budget session. This retroactive tax, a populist measure, was considered controversial because it had provisions to seek taxes from past foreign investment deals involving local assets, thus further deterring international investors.¹²³ One senior Cabinet Minister, who was close to the Prime Minister, told me:

“He [Prime Minister] didn’t have the courage to over-rule Mr. Mukherjee. Look at the retrospective tax. We were trying to bring back investor sentiment right at the time when we needed to kick-start the economy against peoples’ anger [about corruption]. In fact Mr. Mukherjee was told explicitly by some of us not to implement a retrospective tax – yet the budget papers included it. Had the PM had his own privy to the budget papers he would have said ‘no, sorry, you can’t do this.’ Dr. Singh agreed with me it was a mess but how many factions can you handle?”¹²⁴

¹²² Del-29

¹²³ Del-28. Pranab Mukherjee’s retroactive tax in the budget was a contentious issue for the Prime Minister that was contributing toward the “general negative mood” in the nation (*TOI*, 28 June 2012). Global conditions did not help at this point with the European recession kicking into full gear. Over the next few months, returning Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, Planning Commission chief Montek Singh Ahluwalia, PMEAC chief C. Rangarajan, and newly appointed Chief Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance, Raghuram Rajan, all became more active in shaping the economy’s revival. They all backed the Prime Minister’s proposal for an increase in the price of diesel and cooking gas as well as easing rules in FDI in civil aviation and retail to manage the credibility crisis.

¹²⁴ Del-33

Meanwhile, key politicians in the Congress hierarchy as well as members of the NAC, were opposed to the solutions being targeted by the PMO and some Cabinet ministers. One Cabinet Minister reflected the contrasting sentiment to the abovementioned accounts to me:

“I recall [P.] Chidambaram [Finance Minister] shaking his head vigorously in Parliament when I said that the Bernanke boom had bust. He wanted to say that this was a Manmohan Singh-led growth and that we should trust him. But they can’t justify it. This is why I was on the opposite side! *Other countries manage growth and keeping away social conflict by complete control; but these guys [PMO and Cabinet] did not have complete control. LAC reflected these guys’ failed policies. To them [LAC] Congress was responsible for the change of policies that had disadvantaged them – so why would they support us?* You can’t go and tell one constituency that the common man is my priority; all the while you are telling foreign investors that you will make FDI a priority. *People on the street are not oblivious. So they [LAC] said, ‘the government is only interested in itself’ and then of course the scandals give them proof.*”¹²⁵

He continued:

“I am a socialist, in the true tradition of the Congress. *And those of us who had this persuasion understood that in an economy like India’s, state intervention is absolutely necessary for the country’s development and to temper social conflict.* We had to do something actively to arrest the decline in our credibility. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister and others didn’t understand this and so remained aloof.”¹²⁶

Reflecting on the alleged adversarial nature of the different factions within the UPA coalition, as briefly illustrated above, a senior advisor to the Prime Minister told me:

“The left occupies a tremendous amount of intellectual space in India, disproportionately so in my view. But the PM actually cared about their view. He was not oblivious to the ultimate goal of creating a social safety for the country’s poor. And so he didn’t

¹²⁵ Del-11

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

merely compromise with the left, but he also understood their perspective. But they wanted to hack him down. He would have liked it if the left had acknowledged what he was doing for India, thus intellectually validating him.”¹²⁷

A senior official in the PMO continued this reasoning:

“In my view, the left elements are thinking people, right or wrong, and they do their homework when they come to Parliament and are forceful speakers. *But they also made it very difficult to move fast on anything we wanted to do to solve our problems [during LAC].*”¹²⁸

Another senior minister in the UPA highlighted the specifically ideological underpinnings of the intra-government fissures discussed above, but underscored that the outcome and content of government action worked in favor of both ideological camps at different moments of policy formulation:

*“The Prime Minister and his close allies were not left-of-center. The key players in the executive were people who were disillusioned with left-of-center politics, and were in a government that was anchored in a leftist party that was dealing with even more leftist [coalition] partners. Celebrated example is the push for FDI in multi brand retail to get us going. [Congress] Party was opposed to it. PM and FM [Finance Minister] wanted it. Same with nuclear deal – party was deeply unhappy that we are opening ourselves up to Americans. But the PM ultimately got his way. Free trade agreement [FTA] is another example. PM went and signed them with everyone. Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi wrote a letter to him, I wrote a letter to him saying ‘don’t sign so many FTAs,’ but he did it anyway. These are high profile examples of negating that specific people in party prevented the PM from making decisions. He had some key wins too.”*¹²⁹

Beyond the concretization of growing intra-governmental factions along ideological lines between different key decision-makers, coalition allies also remained at odds with the divergent pathways being prescribed to stabilize the government in the face of the IAC

¹²⁷ Del-35

¹²⁸ Del-34

¹²⁹ Del-12

crisis as discussed above. Coalition allies were angered by steps taken by the government that led to steep oil price hikes and a continued push for FDI, while they remained resistant to the centrally mandated Lokayukta (state-level ombudsman) in the draft Lokpal bill.¹³⁰ As one Cabinet Minister reflected to me regarding the management of these coalition dynamics:

“There is no doubt that too many coalition parties was a problem. Despite there being less parties in the coalition during UPA-2 than UPA-1, the problem was that those that were there were in the coalition had key positions and were intractable at times. This came down to ideological incoherence. Look at the history of recent coalitions. Mr. Vajpayee [Prime Minister, National Democratic Alliance (NDA), 1998-2004] had 23 partners in his coalition; we had 20 in our coalition and 11 had key positions. With Vajpayee, regional parties attached to him were not happy with the Hindutva agenda, but on all other factors, chiefly the economy, they had no axe to grind. So the Vajpayee government took a lot of steps on disinvestment, and others followed. So they didn’t suffer from the same level of ideological incoherence that we had. We couldn’t change this because we couldn’t afford it on electoral mathematics. There were no other parties available. Nevertheless, some things done in UPA-1, with the blessing of all partners, cannot be type cast in ideological terms – rights-based policies such as RTI, RTE [Right to Education], NREGA. Right-of-center people in the government saw these as necessary ways to shore up political acceptability of the Centre; and left people saw it as purely ideological ends. And the result was non-confrontational and not problematic. But in things like FDI and disinvestment, that we had to pursue more aggressively at that time of crisis [LAC], that’s when ideological fissures opened up in UPA that wouldn’t have been present in other coalitions such as the NDA. No one could agree at that stage.”¹³¹

At the root of these simmering disagreements among coalition partners, as per several senior officials in government, was the separation between narrow state-level interests for coalition partner parties and broader national-level interests for decision-makers in the Cabinet, PMO, and other government institutions (as highlighted earlier). As one Cabinet

¹³⁰ Del-33; Del-10b. The NAC, meanwhile, was adamant that the Lokayukta’s must be a key part of the Lokpal bill – a position in contrast to coalition allies.

¹³¹ Del-8b

Minister outlined:

“Coalitions prevented us from acting in many situations, especially during the time of the protests [IAC]. Coalition parties are all state-level – they don’t look beyond their own state interest. They are not even regional interests, they are state interests – Mamata [Banerjee] is not eastern, she is Bengali; Mulayam [Singh Yadav] is not central, he is just in UP. And being state-level means they are dependent on caste and community. Lalu [Prasad Yadav] is heavily dependent on Yadav’s [in Bihar] for example. Kalyan Singh was dependent on Lodhi’s. These are all backwards – it is the upsurge of backwards. And they used to have strength in numbers, but not enough, until they entered into coalitions at the Centre, especially with us [Congress]. The real institutional, political, and money power is with the backwards [castes]. They started with nothing and now have all this power [reservations]. If you go to U.P. and go to colleges, businesses, and police stations, they are all filled by Yadav’s. District magistrates the same. They [regional parties] wield enormous power in the states and ensure they get their way at the Centre. State parties don’t want accountability and they block things that the Centre wants. If you are in coalition, you walk out.”¹³²

Inter-coalition factions led to threats from partners to leave the coalition at different moments, notably during the IAC agitation, thus elevating the intractable decision-making environment in the coalition. A senior Congress politician reflected to me:

“The Congress Party has always had a big tent, and we have wanted to accommodate all the views within it. If we didn’t have that, and became narrow, I think we would have been less effective. However, the number of parties we had to bring along with us [in UPA] proved prohibitive. Take Trinamool Congress, for instance, which is even left of CPM in many ways in West Bengal and very populist, they acted as a block. And we have many examples. The celebrated example which took place in the middle [of the IAC agitation], the FDI in retail case – they explicitly threatened to leave government [and eventually] did, right when the government wanted to attract investors to rally the economy against peoples’ anger.”¹³³

For one official in the PMO, continuing the theme from above, coalition partners’ (mainly

¹³² Del-26

¹³³ Del-8

the TMC and DMK) intransigence was fundamentally rooted in their conception of the Centre as a location of rent extraction (discussed earlier) as well as due to an absence of ideological coherence between partners:

“In the history of Indian executives, there are formal powers and then informal powers. In the coalition era, this is even more so the case. Power had to be shared in order to maximize power – this meant that the PM wouldn’t be so strong. The PM was very much hamstrung by coalition politics. Very much. Not because he didn’t understand how to deal with coalitions – remember he had been part of the Rao coalition – but because this time [UPA] there was no ideological convergence – if you just come together to share power without sharing ideology then you have a reduction of your ability to conduct business of the state. You cannot authoritatively distribute resources, assuage people’s discontent [IAC] or any other issues you face. Politicians joined the UPA thinking that they will get one or two ministries, which will lead to benefits. That’s a pre-condition. Then you have to keep their access going or turn a blind eye. So UPA had two coalitions – between parties, and then between the government and Congress which further complicated everything when it came to dealing with our problems as it made misunderstandings worse and everyone worked in silos.”¹³⁴

A senior official in the PMO continued this reasoning surrounding the institutional inflexibility of coalition politics at the Centre:

“Look at America. Republicans and Democrats are fighting bitterly; every two years they have to fight each other at the ballot. Then every four years. So on the one hand I don’t think you can wish away the effect of electoral dynamics on the government’s ability to act [in a crisis]. But in our country, we have a peculiar problem where regional parties that are at the Centre are primarily interested in what happens in their states. This in turn directly impacts and influences the Centre’s ability to govern and have sway. It cannot be helped; and it was very problematic then [during IAC]! But it’s a reality.”¹³⁵

In the summer months of 2012, as coalition management difficulties increased during the UPA-IAC stand-off, Rahul Gandhi took on a more vocal and visible role in the

¹³⁴ Del-19

¹³⁵ Del-34

Congress and on government matters.¹³⁶ Indeed, there were calls from senior members of the Party for him to lead them into the 2014 general elections – a call made almost two years in advance!¹³⁷ The increasing role of Rahul Gandhi in the daily affairs of the government, as discussed earlier, added further complexity to an already polycentric governing environment at a time when the UPA needed fewer disturbances. As one of the back-channel negotiators with the IAC, brought in from civil society, confirms:

“They [Congress party] called me in and said ‘let’s make a meeting between Rahul [Gandhi] and Anna [Hazare], and Rahul will get the benefit electorally.’ Whether the PM wanted me to meet Anna [Hazare] or not didn’t matter, it wasn’t up to him. Just like the BJP has RSS people, Congress has its own too. And Sonia [Gandhi] held me in high regard.”¹³⁸

A non-Congress minister in the Lok Sabha observed:

“By the end [of the IAC], it was tough for them [UPA] to deal with the IAC because Rahul Gandhi came out of left-field and he is not suited to be in politics. He [Rahul Gandhi] is a confused person – *at any point he had the ability and authority to overrule the Prime Minister*. To play the outsider when you are the crown prince is very odd.”¹³⁹

Further, a senior official in the PMO argued that the more salient role of Rahul Gandhi at the center of the government’s actions unintentionally but severely hampered the ability of the government to act:

¹³⁶ Del-10b; Del-12

¹³⁷ Congress General Secretary Digvijaya Singh, for example, consistently called for Rahul Gandhi to have a more active role in the Party (*TOI*, 16 July 2012). During this time, Gandhi joined the government’s Core Committee – a closed group of select ministers and senior officials that discussed pressing policy matters (Del-26; Del-34). As a contrast to Rahul Gandhi’s promotion at this stage as Prime Ministerial candidate for the Congress in 2014, Narendra Modi, who would sweep that general election, wasn’t revealed as the BJP’s candidate until September 2013.

¹³⁸ Del-15

¹³⁹ Del-29

“Many of the UPA-2 policies came from nature of mandate in 2009 – which gave Dr. [Manmohan] Singh far more power. But Dr. Singh’s ascension post-2009 was jarring for people in the Congress hierarchy, which created dissonance. The plan among the Gandhi loyalists was, ‘we’ll form a government and at some point Rahul will come in.’ They didn’t expect Dr. Singh’s mandate to propel him. This threatened many people in the government, and several ministers felt unease. So the way the government slits emerged during the LAC crisis is an example of this. Rahul’s entry was the final nail in the coffin. Encouraged by the party and many in the government who were opposed to Dr. Singh led to the narrative, ‘it’s only a matter of time before RG [Rahul Gandhi] takes over as PM.’ So instead of backing the PM during this crisis [LAC], people in the government and party began to place Rahul as the de facto leader of the nation! So every time Rahul displayed dissatisfaction at the government’s actions – which wasn’t necessarily aimed at the Prime Minister – everyone in the party and many in the government backed his viewpoint.”¹⁴⁰

From June 2012 onwards public and political pressure from the coal scam increased as the IAC agitation picked up again. Gathering pace from earlier months, the IAC’s narrative fully de-emphasized the Lokpal and ratcheted up demonstrations against the allegedly corrupt Congress-led government at the Centre. Meanwhile, the government placed more focus on trying to get coalition partners and government colleagues on board its policies to improve the economy.

The final push for neo-liberal reforms was born out of a compromise within the government as an exchange to release some larger, populist measures at a later date.¹⁴¹ These steps were fully in line with new Finance Minister Chidambaram’s recent ‘perform or perish’ chant. However, the leftist TMC, DMK, as well as outside supporters of the UPA coalition such as the SP, JD(U), and BJD all made public their position against allowing 51% foreign direct investment in multi-brand retail among other reforms. In turn, eight non-Congress parties decided to call for a nationwide *bandh* (strike) against these measures. By September, TMC quit the UPA while fellow coalition member DMK decided to join the opposition *bandh* and even rejected the Congress’ offer of further Cabinet posts.

¹⁴⁰ Del-19

¹⁴¹ Del-34; Del-33; Del-35; Del-54; Del-14

Nevertheless, even in the face of coalition partner opposition and withdrawal, the Prime Minister remained resolute and continued to push for a control on subsidies and efforts to revive investor confidence. He outlined in mid-August that his focus remained on increasing “the pace of the country’s growth, take steps to encourage new investment in the economy, improve management of government finances and work for the livelihood and security of the common man...”¹⁴² This was the clear pathway for Singh and those close to him to combat the IAC phenomena and its support.¹⁴³ Outside, however, the opposition parties and IAC continued to attack the government on corruption.

While the coalition was fracturing, the IAC focused their anti-corruption agitation squarely upon the Congress. In addition to Cabinet ministers, by the end of summer 2012 the IAC consistently undermined and demonstrated outside the homes of Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi.¹⁴⁴ Police detained demonstrators during these days for vandalism and damaging government property, while on one occasion officers used water cannons and 20 rounds of tear gas shells to quell 2000 protestors who stormed high-security administration offices in Delhi’s South Block.¹⁴⁵ In a reminder of the JPM, the IAC started encouraging fellow demonstrators to defy their colleges and places of work to turn up against corruption at Jantar Mantar.¹⁴⁶ By 2 August 2012, however, as the movement began to lose steam the IAC announced its plans to enter the electoral arena to provide a political alternative to the allegedly corrupt political class, thereby directly bringing itself as an opposition to the ruling regime. The BJP welcomed the move, with one politician saying: “Their [IAC] voice will only supplement our efforts to mobilize voters against the corruption in the Congress...Even if they do some damage to the BJP’s traditional middle

¹⁴² *TOI*, 15 August 2012

¹⁴³ Del-34; Del-33; Del-35

¹⁴⁴ Del-1; Del-2. Activists also targeted Sonia Gandhi’s son-in-law and businessman, Robert Vadra, over his allegedly corrupt dealings with commercial real-estate developer, DLF. Reportedly, concessions were made by the Congress government through land acquisition in Haryana to the realty developer, in echoes of the Sanjay Gandhi Maruti deal facilitated by Haryana Chief Minister Bansi Lal (see Chapter Three).

¹⁴⁵ *TOI*, 31 July; 27 August 2012. 15 policemen and 6 protestors were injured; 974 people were detained and all were released by the evening (*Ibid.*, 27 August 2012)

¹⁴⁶ Del-26; 2015-fg-BURC; 2015fgPRIJ; *TOI*, 30 July 2012

class vote bank, the damage to the Congress vote bank will favour the BJP.”¹⁴⁷ The IAC’s shift in goals were now explicit: “We will uproot the current corrupt government. Till now we have been only requesting the government to implement the Jan Lokpal bill but now it is a larger movement. We have to throw them out of power,” declared movement leader Arvind Kejriwal.¹⁴⁸ Fellow demonstrator, Baba Ramdev, later added: “This government should be socially and politically boycotted. People will show their anger in the Lok Sabha elections when the Congress does not get votes.”¹⁴⁹ The drive came from Kejriwal, not Hazare, who preferred to support anti-corruption candidates. But the dominant message had changed, with Kejriwal often roaring, in echoes of Jayaprakash Narayan: “The war should be for a revolution and not just for the Lokpal Bill.”¹⁵⁰

On 24 November 2012, Arvind Kejriwal and others from the IAC formed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) thus bringing to an effective end the anti-corruption agitation in its movement form. Hazare retreated to his village, Ralegan Siddhi, in Maharashtra to continue his social activism. In December 2013, the AAP formed a minority government in Delhi, with Arvind Kejriwal as Chief Minister. The Lokpal Bill was finally passed on 17 December 2013 six months before the general elections. Congress loyalists considered it a victory for Rahul Gandhi and his championing of the common man (*aam aadmi*) in the lead up to national polls.¹⁵¹ Despite the law’s passing, at the time of writing on 20 April 2017, there remains no anti-corruption ombudsman.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 August 2012; relatedly, also see 3 August 2012

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 August 2012

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13 August 2012

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 29 July 2012

¹⁵¹ Del-7; Del-31; Del-3. The Lokpal and Lokayukta’s bill that was made law in 2013 eventually incorporated the IAC’s chief concern – that the Prime Minister would be under the jurisdiction of the ombudsman. Unlike the unbound version of the Jan Lokpal, however, the inclusion of the Prime Minister in the government bill came with important caveats: exception on matters pertaining to international relations, external and internal security threats, public order, and atomic energy and space. This version of the bill was shaped by the NAC.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis provides robust evidence illustrating that coalition dynamics across parties in the UPA, as well as a separation of powers between decision-makers in different institutions of authority at the executive-level within the government, precipitated the conditions that made a unitary and arbitrary response to the IAC less likely. I detailed the origins, context, and rise of the IAC; and went on to describe the various institutions and their committees within government that crafted a response to the anti-corruption agitation (PMO, the Cabinet, the Congress Party, and the NAC), as well as the counterbalancing dialectic between elites therein more generally.

However, these institutional drivers of the causal narrative do not sufficiently explain the dynamics behind the government's tolerance. In other words, they do not provide us with sufficient analytical leverage to present a causal theory that has predictive power. A causal mechanism linking these coalition constraints to government behavior in the face of an anti-corruption movement remains underspecified. For this, we must study the role of decision-making elites' ideas – neo-liberal, reformist, and secular-nationalist perspectives – that interact with, but are also causally independent from, the institutional constraints evaluated above. In the next chapter, therefore, I will argue that divergent ideas in government interacting with institutional constraints highlighted here together produce an ideological checks and balance mechanism on government behavior.

CHAPTER SIX

IDEAS AS CAUSES II: ELITE CONCEPTIONS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENTS IN INDIA, 2011-2012

"I do not minimize the difficulties that lie ahead on the long and arduous journey on which we have embarked. But as Victor Hugo once said, "No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come." I suggest to this august House that the emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea. Let the whole world hear it loud and clear. India is now wide awake..."

(Manmohan Singh, Minister of Finance, Budget Speech in Lok Sabha, 24th July 1991)

"With industrialization and economic growth people had often forgotten old reverences. Men honored only money now. The great investment in development over three or four decades had led to this: to "corruption," to the "criminalization of politics." In seeking to rise, India had undone itself."

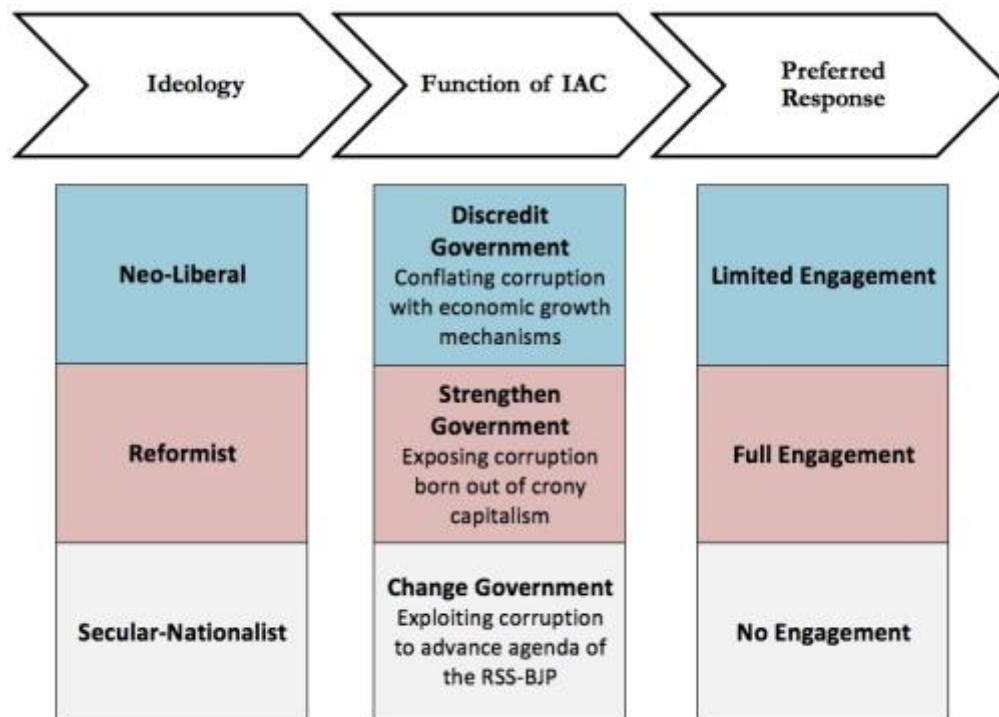
(V.S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, 1990: 4)

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present strong evidence for the autonomous, causal role of ideology. I pick up where the fifth chapter's analysis finished, by first examining the ideational lenses through which UPA decision-makers viewed the IAC. These perspectives illustrate a cognitive divergence among neo-liberal, reformist, and secular-nationalist elites in the same government, where on one end of the scale some were more sympathetic toward the IAC, their public action and their aims (reformist perspectives); and on the other end some were more hostile, viewing the movement as mobilized by right-wing groups and opposition parties (secular-nationalist perspectives); while yet others (neo-liberal perspective) wanted as little engagement as possible with the movement as they saw the causes of the anti-corruption ire lay in broader, urgent progress in the economy. This heterogeneous set of perspectives led to separate strategies for engagement with the IAC. Crucially, I then use process-tracing to show that these divergent perspectives, or ideas, are rooted in a source or intellectual lineage exogenous to the crisis of the IAC. Therein, I investigate proxy cases to my dependent variable where UPA decision-makers' ideas remain

robust in the face of material pressures. I finish by explicating the workings of the checks and balance mechanism among elite decision-makers in authoritative positions of power that emerges from the interaction between a heterogeneous set of ideas in government and institutional constraints within government (Chapter Five) that made a tolerant response toward the IAC more likely (see figures 6.1 and 6.2). This will lend credence to the causal independence of ideas in my argument.

Figure 6.1: Ideological Checks and Balances in UPA Government Shaping Tolerance of IAC



Elite Ideas

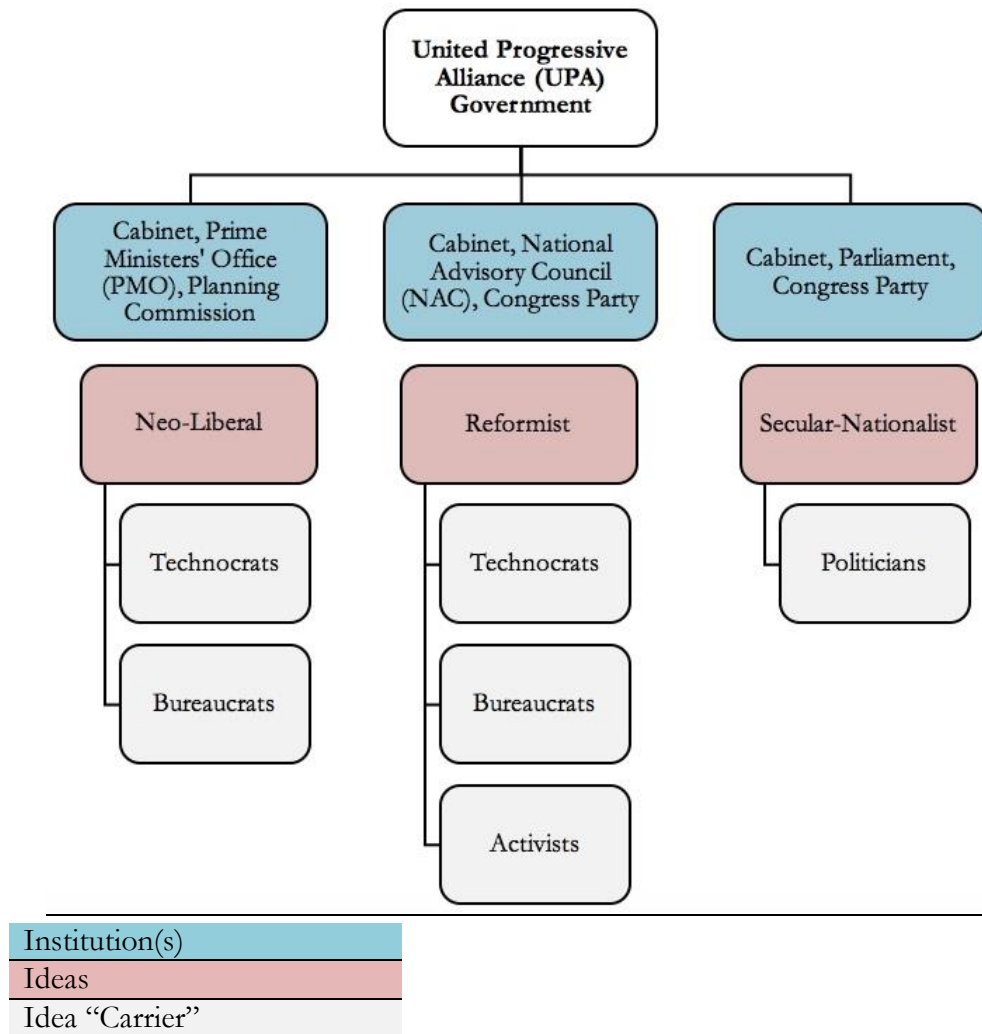
Decision-makers in the UPA government perceived the IAC differently. My data shows that specific ideational clusters existed among decision-makers in authoritative

positions of power that came together in institutions and committees within the UPA government, 2004-2014. These different sets of cognitive frames are closely linked to elites' professional and educational backgrounds (see Appendix D.2 and D.3). Once in government, these divergent idea carriers entered informal and formal networks of decision-making that reinforced a specific constellation of ideas that then served as the intellectual underpinning of institutions. Different elites with divergent ideas provided a check and balance across policy debates and government outputs in the UPA.

Three dominant perspectives permeated elite decision-making in UPA: neo-liberal, reformist, and secular-nationalist (see figure 6.1). These distinct cognitive frames provided the lenses through which elites assessed the functions of the IAC movement. Neo-liberals were found mostly in the Cabinet, PMO and Planning Commission; reformists meanwhile, dominated the de facto parallel cabinet, NAC, but found sympathizers in the Cabinet as well as in the Congress Party; and finally secular-nationalists encompassed Congress Party politicians, some of whom were in the Cabinet but mostly in the lower and upper houses of Parliament, and were similar in outlook to the party politicians we saw in Chapters Three and Four (see figure 6.2).¹ Decision-makers allied with these perspectives were among advisory and Parliamentary committees that counseled on and helped shape executive action toward the IAC.

Different government institutions and dialectic between, as we saw in the previous chapter, advocated separate strategies pertaining to the IAC making a unitary and arbitrary response less likely. Interacting with these institutional constraints, decision-makers' divergent perspectives, or cognitive frames, produced an ideological checks and balance mechanism in the UPA government that made tolerance toward the IAC more likely.

¹ As I discussed in my theory chapter with recourse to network effects and evident from the analysis in the previous chapter, this figure (6.2) represents an ideal type for classifying ideas and backgrounds. This figure should not imply, for example, that there were no politicians who held neo-liberal or reformist views or were sympathetic to them. But I am using this illustration to convey the associations of those who were primary idea carriers and their dominant institutional affiliation. What is important here is to focus on the three salient ideological clusters that emerged and concretized within the UPA government throughout its tenure.

Figure 6.2: Divergent Ideologies and Backgrounds in the UPA Government, 2004-2014

1. Divergent Backgrounds and Perspectives

Three dominant perspectives emerge that go on to provide a check and balance on government tolerance: i) *Neo-liberal*: mainly technocrats and senior bureaucrats who pursued limited engagement with the IAC, believing that the movement sought to discredit the government by conflating economic growth mechanisms with corruption; ii) *Reformist*: mainly technocrats and activists with a position in government who viewed the IAC in

sympathetic terms and sought full engagement with the movement. The IAC, for these elites, represented a set of citizens acting against widespread corruption that stemmed from the mechanisms of economic liberalization; and iii) *Secular-Nationalist*: mainly Congress Party politicians in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha who viewed the IAC in hostile terms as a movement that was backed by the main opposition party, the BJP, together with the religious-nationalist RSS. This perspective was almost identical to that which we observed in Chapters Three and Four. I will now explicate and evaluate each perspective in reverse order.

A. Secular-Nationalist

Secular nationalists in the UPA government denote party politicians that mainly spent their careers as elected or nominated members of Parliament.² Different generations of politicians existed within the UPA coalition during my period of study; and many of them belonged to the Congress Party while others did not. I am mainly interested in Congress Party Cabinet and other senior ministers, particularly those that were tasked with negotiating with the IAC, that held perspectives closely approximating the inclusive nationalists we saw in Chapters Three and Four.³

Secular nationalists in the UPA viewed the IAC as a movement brought about by political and social forces from within the Hindu nationalist right, namely the RSS and their

² As mentioned in Chapter Three, one of the two major “master narratives” of Indian nationalism since the turn of the 20th century and up until today has been *secular nationalism*. Indian secularism, which denotes religious equidistance not non-involvement by the state, has been principally represented by the Congress Party during and after the independence movement. The second narrative has been *religious nationalism*. This narrative views Hinduism not only as India’s majority community but what also gives the nation its distinctive national identity. With its application to politics, the aim of Hindu nationalists is to build Hindu unity. This nationalism, as mentioned earlier, is often referred to as Hindutva (Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, 56-57).

³ Ideas maintain continuity but also some change over time (as per my discussion of ideas through the Lakatosian prism in Chapter Two). As such, though Congress’ secular-nationalism (as the *hard core* per Lakatos) traces its intellectual lineage to the Congress as discussed in Chapter Four, there is an absence of the focus on socialism (as *auxiliary function* per Lakatos) in the framework as discussed here.

allies who formed the main opposition party, the BJP.⁴ The BJP has been the Congress' chief political opponent at the Centre for two decades and went on to defeat the incumbent UPA coalition in a landslide victory at the 2014 elections. At the time of the IAC, for mainly Congress Party politicians, the rise, appeal, symbols, and focus of the IAC all suggested that the movement was an extension of the BJP and RSS, and thus aimed at bringing down the government. Consequently, these decision-makers viewed the IAC antagonistically and sought no engagement with the movement.

As one Parliamentarian in the Lok Sabha who represented a party in coalition with the Congress at the Centre told me, "there is no question about the fact that they [IAC] were an extension of the BJP. Their [BJP] hands were all over the movement."⁵ A Congress minister in the Rajya Sabha, who was advising Party President Sonia Gandhi at the time of the IAC, said to me that, though corruption scams were worryingly increasing, "more importantly perhaps, the BJP was definitely propping up the IAC leadership. I knew this for a fact from my sources close to the movement."⁶ A Congress Party spokesperson elaborated even further, underscoring the hostility between Congress politicians and the purported RSS-BJP support for the IAC:

*"Years ago the fight against corruption used to be a neutral platform, but then it got captured by the RSS and BJP and took on this strong anti-Congress tone. The problem was, some of us saw the RSS influence but also saw the fact that corruption was a serious issue and we needed to communicate it to the public while there was no backlash. Others just saw the RSS influence and couldn't look beyond it."*⁷

For one Cabinet Minister, the rise, strength, and endurance of the IAC was a clear sign that the movement was backed by the BJP who were using the streets to undermine Parliamentary politics: "The problem of protests and opposition on the streets is systemic.

⁴ The BJP is heir to the Jana Sangh party that we came across in Chapters Three and Four.

⁵ Del-5

⁶ Del-8

⁷ Del-3

What I mean is impatience about being in opposition. *The BJP don't want to be in opposition no matter what. So, unless you go to the street, there is no opposition. And that's what they took advantage of with the IAC.* It is actually remarkable how much impact they [BJP] were able to have.”⁸ Thus for this Cabinet Minister, to understand the function of the IAC one must understand that the movement's leadership was “political from the start.” He continues:

“The guys at the top of IAC were very sharp; they were careerists – they were part of the agitation for the RTI, RTE [Right to Education] acts. There is a distinct difference between social service and social activism. The IAC types are the latter; they are activists, they are lobbyists. They don't run schools; they are people who tell you how schools should be run. *So they have a strong political agenda.*”⁹

Because the IAC was perceived as an extension of the RSS-BJP nexus, politicians harbored the view that the Congress leadership could easily manage the movement through aggressive communication campaigns to undercut the opposition. Their logic went that the UPA leadership, chiefly the Prime Minister, should have communicated more vociferously with citizens in order to explain that the slew of scams that were emerging from the government would be dealt with case-by-case but that, more gravely, it was important to shut down the RSS-BJP hold over the narrative against the government.¹⁰ As one senior Congress minister in the Rajya Sabha who worked closely with both the Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi comments, poor communicative action from the government to take on the political nature of the IAC allowed the RSS-BJP to ratchet up their support:

“Despite being an excellent mind and clean [not corrupt] man, *we can't forget that the PM was an atrocious communicator and he didn't communicate with the public. This made their [the RSS-BJP] influence even*

⁸ Del-26

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Del-11; Del-84; 2015-fgPRIJ

bigger. The PM was an atrocious communicator, Sonia Gandhi was not around, and Rahul [Gandhi] didn't have a clue."¹¹

A Congress politician in the Lok Sabha who conducted back-channel discussions with the IAC leadership continues this reasoning: "A technocrat [Prime Minister] doesn't understand the norms of the people. *The Prime Minister never understood what was happening outside. So the BJP stepped in.*"¹²

A senior spokesman for the Congress party told me that as well as the key role of the RSS in organizing the IAC, in his view the anti-corruption movement had set their eyes firmly on entering government after agitating on the streets. This, he argued, made it all the more likely that the BJP was backing IAC in order to discredit and bring down the UPA:

"These people [IAC] just wanted to gain access to power; they wouldn't be caught dead in a slum or with poor people. *They wanted to disrupt the system and shake up the institutional framework.* But they wanted to do it from the outside; not sacrifice and actually enter politics. The BJP gave them the support they needed for this. What angers me most is that our party's communication on this was terrible!"¹³

This perspective was prominent at the time of the movement too (and not simply retrospective considering the subsequent emergence of AAP), wherein UPA politicians consistently claimed that the IAC ultimately sought political office. AICC spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi, for example, commented in June 2011 at the height of the IAC demonstrations: "It is most unfortunate that this common crusade against corruption is allowed to be remote-controlled or hijacked by vested political interests."¹⁴ This was followed by Congress members at the June CWC meeting that year dismissing the IAC as a front for the RSS-BJP and therefore vowed not to bow before the movement.¹⁵ Home

¹¹ Del-8

¹² Del-7

¹³ Del-3

¹⁴ *TOI*, 5 June 2011; he repeated this statement later (*Ibid.*, 12 December 2011)

¹⁵ Del-10b; Del-15; Del-79c

Minister at the time, P. Chidambaram, went further after Baba Ramdev joined the anti-corruption demonstrations: “This is not an agitation by a yoga teacher or yoga guru, this is a political agitation which is fully backed by the RSS and its front organizations...we will allow peaceful protests but we will not allow anything that will trigger a conflagration.”¹⁶

Baba Ramdev’s role in the IAC and the suppressive response his demonstration received from the government provides a within-case data-point to underscore the secular nationalist perspective and its matching strategy to combat the anti-corruption movement. Yoga guru Baba Ramdev, who increasingly mobilized for the IAC, took up the issue of “black money” stashed away by corrupt officials in foreign banks.¹⁷ Bandwagoning off the “presumptive loss” logic of the CAG, Ramdev argued that if this black money were brought back from Europe to India, the economic outlook of the country, and prosperity of its people, would improve dramatically. Ramdev’s first demonstration ended abruptly, mainly because he and his supporters were bullied and beaten out of Delhi in the night by police.¹⁸ In the following days, leaders of the opposition and BJP senior politicians Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, started their own demonstrations in solidarity with the saffron-clad Ramdev at Rajghat in Delhi.¹⁹ Jaitley even likened Ramdev to Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). Ramdev’s agitations from here on continued solo as well as in conjunction with the IAC, and he would often invite high-ranking BJP leaders and their allies to join him, including Nitin Gadkari and Sharad Yadav. Ramdev’s slogans by the end of 2012 had turned from removing corruption alone, to “*Congress batao, desh bachao* (remove Congress, save the country).” On one occasion, and joined by BJP politician Ram Jethmalani on stage, Ramdev

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9 June 2011

¹⁷ Saba Naqvi, *Capital Conquest*, 13. This accusation of politicians and other elites having embezzled public funds and stashed them away in highly secure banks abroad is a particularly salient charge which, whether accurate or not, has consistently captured the imagination of citizens across South Asia. The recently released Panama papers may add more fuel to this fire.

¹⁸ It is important to note, as Indian historian Ramachandra Guha observes, that “the threat to India from Hindutva [Hindu nationalist] bigotry was at its most intense from about 1989 to about 2004” which saw large-scale riots and killings. So the specter of the Hindutva RSS backing the IAC was perhaps even greater to the UPA than it was to Indira Gandhi and her Congress government in the early 1970s (Ramachandra Guha, *Patriots and Partisans* (Penguin Books, 2013), 7–8).

¹⁹ Del-16; TOI, 6 June 2011

went further: “We have decided not to vote for Congress. You have to tell people that it is Congress which has pushed you to poverty and is responsible for price rise. Next time in the elections, we should ensure that not a single Congress leader gets elected to Parliament.”²⁰ The overt associations between Ramdev and the BJP gave some UPA decision-makers the signal to associate the entire IAC wave with the religious nationalist right. A senior Cabinet Minister, who was tasked as chief negotiator with the IAC as part of a five-person committee set up by the Prime Minister in 2011, echoed this perspective: “IAC was purely populist. They weren’t interested in corruption and governance and the common man, as they claimed. They simply said, whoever does anything wrong, we will put them in jail. That was their version of a Lokpal. It’s populist. *And so you can see the elements of RSS fascism to it.*”²¹

Overall, for some UPA decision-makers, chiefly secular-nationalists in the Congress Party, religious-nationalists in the form of the RSS and BJP supported and mobilized the IAC. These competing nationalisms led party politicians in the government to view the IAC in hostile terms, and hence key members of Parliament and the Cabinet advocated for no engagement with, and even at times suppressive steps toward, the movement as detailed in Chapter Five.

B. Reformist

Reformists in the UPA government existed among a range of decision-makers, and principally a group of technocrats and activists that entered the UPA government as part of the de facto parallel cabinet, the NAC, set up in 2004 by Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi to influence and shape policymaking through a pro-redistribution framework (more on this later).

²⁰ *TOI*, 15 August 2012; he also made a similar statement earlier (*Ibid.*, 13 August 2012)

²¹ Del-26

Decision-making elites with reformist perspectives viewed the function of the IAC as a movement exposing grand corruption that had not been sufficiently dealt with by multiple governments. This corruption, they believed, was linked to the very mechanisms of liberalization which had concretized a political-business alliance that had fueled corruption and undermined state mechanisms for social service delivery and accountability. Crucially, among those with a reformist perspective were activists brought into government in the NAC who had come to prominence as anti-corruption campaigners themselves as part of the rights-based reform movements in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Their entry into government fundamentally changed the vocabulary with which citizens made claims on public institutions and services. It led to the state becoming open to litigation in new ways through civic action. These elites were therefore even more likely to be sympathetic toward the IAC (more on this later).

For reformists, widespread corruption during the UPA tenure was part of the nature of growth process pursued by the government.²² For these decision-makers, the IAC movement was a direct agitation against the non-inclusive growth strategy pursued by neo-liberal technocrats in the UPA government, who had proactively provided benefits to large businesses in order to generate growth. This sequencing, for reformist decision-makers, sidelined effective redistribution. As one NAC member with this framework claimed, the neo-liberal growth strategy wasn't blind crony capitalism, but that this strategy diverted investment away from infrastructure development and social service delivery schemes whose inadequacy led people to rise up against corruption:

“The government had an explicit strategy to make land and other resources available to large capitalists for cheap. They reasoned that if we [the government] provide big businesses with large capital then they would help bring down prices for energy, telecommunications, and other inputs. And in some cases prices did come down. But none of these big business houses is going to spend on infrastructure on their own, or through the infrastructure fund. They expect the public sector to do all

²² Del-11; Del-36b; Del-57; Del-62

that and only then will they [businesses] spend. *Neither side followed through.* What's the result? Clogged ports, terrible transport infrastructure, inadequate power supply, etc. – all this affects the ease of doing business for the common man. *What did people think? The government is only set up for the big guy and fails to deliver.* Of course they [IAC] are going to protest.”²³

A senior Minister continued this rationale, arguing that the nature of liberalization reform pursued by neo-liberals had resulted in inadequate redistribution which created social inequalities that citizens attributed to a corrupt, unaccountable system of governance:

*“Ultimately, there was a contradiction in what was being tried during liberalization. We let the private sector take control of a variety of state functions that were inefficient. And the contracts were skewed to favor the private sector. If Reliance Industries gives tenders to its own subsidiaries, the government can't do anything. During my time I asked what are terms of agreement for PPPs [public-private partnerships], and no one knew. So if these business guys do something wrong they won't get caught; and if they get caught they won't get punished. In this way PPPs are very good for immediate corruption, you make quick money off of a deal. And lots of it.”*²⁴

These decision-makers' sympathies for the IAC not only related to their causal attribution to corruption, but also the collective action itself pressuring the government to institute anti-corruption reform. They fully-backed the IAC's momentum and their primary call for a Lokpal bill.²⁵ For example, despite differences among NAC members and the IAC on the scope of the Lokpal, the former strongly believed that the IAC was fighting against India's most paramount concern – grand corruption – and that their approach, through supra-level activism, was critical for social and economic development, given the penetration of corruption at the political Centre. Reformist elites firmly believed that the fight against corruption would be strengthened through bottom-up public action to

²³ Del-36b

²⁴ Del-12. I go into more detail on this later on in the chapter.

²⁵ Del-14; Del-36b; Del-31. Indeed, it is important to point out that there were also substantive differences between some NAC members, particularly Aruna Roy, and leaders of the IAC with regards to the content and scope of the Lokpal bill.

strengthen public institutions for accountability. Corruption, in their view, had resulted from the existing approach to economic and social governance that privileged business elites. In this way, the agency of public action could help reduce social inequalities through helping to empower the state to combat corruption.²⁶

Consequently, the NAC and IAC enjoyed a cooperative relationship. For example, the NAC-led Working Group on Transparency, Accountability, and Governance held consultations with IAC activists during the early months of the IAC agitation in 2011. This led to the establishment of a sub-committee on the Lokpal bill. Though these consultations collapsed due to the Cabinet's perceived intransigence on the bill (as detailed in Chapter Five) members of the NAC continued to implicitly support the IAC movement, and vice versa. In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 6 April 2011, Anna Hazare stated: "The NAC sub-committee has discussed Jan Lokpal Bill. But what does that actually mean? *Will the government accept the recommendations of NAC sub-committee? So far, UPA II has shown complete contempt for even the most innocuous issues raised by NAC [sic].*"²⁷ On another occasion, when allegations of bribery emerged against one of the key leaders of the IAC from the government, members of the NAC and other civic activists went as far as to put out a statement that claimed: "We stand with them [IAC] in their battle for cleaner and more accountable governance and for the strengthening of democratic institutions. *We will oppose all efforts that seek to sideline the central issue, of establishing strong and effective mechanisms to tackle endemic corruption in the country.*"²⁸ Moreover, when Anna Hazare was branded corrupt by some UPA legislators and also arrested for 24 hours (for allegedly violating prohibitory orders) some NAC decision-makers came out strongly against the government and protested against Hazare's arrest with the IAC. After all, some of these reformists were

²⁶ Del-75; Del-32

²⁷ Anna Hazare, "Anna Hazare's 5-Point Letter to PM," *NDTV*, 6 April 2011, <http://bit.ly/2oDb23s> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

²⁸ *TOI*, 20 April 2011

activists by profession, and did not consider themselves bound by their ties to the UPA government. As one senior member of the NAC recounts to me:

“When we protested in Jantar Mantar [Delhi] for the amendments to the RTI Act, or when some of us joined in with the IAC activism, we were attacking the government. *We didn't agree with the government and so we criticized them and said, 'what kind of a government is this!'* Sometimes we held a meeting on a policy issue with Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi and other people from government, and we had protested the day before saying this government was a sham and a scam. And she [Sonia Gandhi] never said anything to us.”²⁹

Reformist elites took on a very different perspective to their neo-liberal colleagues (detailed later) on the mechanisms that had exposed several of the central government corruption scandals in the UPA, namely the CAG reports, which fueled the IAC. For example, some members of the NAC shared a cooperative relationship with the CAG, Vinod Rai, whose reports – which detailed a “presumptive loss” to the exchequer resulting from alleged favor provided by the government to large business houses – caught the media and citizens’ attention in the lead up to the IAC. As one member of the NAC, who explicitly advised the CAG during this time, said to me:

“When the scams started hitting, they [the Cabinet] lost their way. I think the CAG himself was very active, and was a lot like [T.N.] Seshan [former-Chief of the Election Commission widely credited for clamping down on election fraud and violence]. *Vinod Rai completely transformed the CAG. And he had an advisory group, I was a member, and we gave him ideas on what was going on in government and what to do.* This notion of presumptive loss, that he came up with on coal and 2G, really caught the imagination of the people. *It was really very clever and exposed wrongful policies.*”³⁰

This admission by a leading member of the NAC is quite stark, especially when one considers the effects these reports had on the IAC, and many others in the government,

²⁹ Del-14

³⁰ *Ibid.*

chiefly the neo-liberal elites who felt that the presumptive loss logic of the CAG was misleading – a position directly opposite to the one taken on by reformists, such as the respondent quoted above.

Overall, the reformists' reasoning of public office being abused by ministers to enrich themselves and their vested interests, while simultaneously ceding state functions to the private sector (who failed to build infrastructure and provide adequate social services), is precisely the logic underscoring the CAG reports that caused furor among citizens in the IAC. This framework was alluded to broadly in my interviews with these elites and formed the cognitive foundation of the NAC and other decision-makers in the UPA, who sought to fully negotiate with the movement, as detailed in Chapter Five.

C. Neo-Liberal

Neo-liberals in the UPA government came to the forefront of decision-making during the 1991 balance-of-payments crisis. During this crisis, technocrats that would later take up key positions in the UPA, including the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Deputy Head of the Planning Commission, and other levers of central and financial planning such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), were key in the lobbying, design, and implementation of liberalization reforms (more on this later when I illustrate exogeneity of ideas).

Though all decision-makers with a neo-liberal perspective accepted that the IAC had brought the public's attention to the important issue of corruption these elites believed that the IAC's function was to essentially discredit the government by conflating economic growth mechanisms, pursued by them in an intransigent political environment, with corruption.³¹ This is seen clearly in the role that these actors attribute to the CAG's reports

³¹ Del-33; Del-34; Del-35; 2015-fgINTL. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's letter to Hazare during his August 2011 fast makes explicit recourse to the "scourge of corruption" that needed to be eradicated from everyday Indian civic life (*TOI*, 23 August 2011).

that served as the foundational logic of the anti-corruption movement (as detailed in Chapter Five).

As a reminder, between August 2010 and March 2012, the Office of the CAG released reports that underscored a “presumptive loss” to the exchequer resulting from alleged favor provided by the UPA government to large corporate houses for contracts pertaining to 2G telecommunications spectrum and extractive industries such as coal. Neo-liberal elites believed that though some ministers in the UPA pocketed illicit funds from the allocation process followed in distributing these contracts – who were subsequently sidelined by the government and arrested – the CAG’s logic, fully adopted by the IAC, was flawed in its understanding of the government’s push for economic growth in a politically intransigent Parliament. As a senior official, who was also a close advisor to the Prime Minister and headed a key institution in the UPA, told me:

“This movement [IAC] was a phenomenal upsurge and raised the issue of corruption in the popular press and among the public. But when you looked at it closely, their leaders were feeding off of the CAG reports which had over-extended their ambit and did not understand why we followed the processes that we did. Of course there were ministers from the coalition parties that skimmed and the authorities rightly looked at this. But this presumptive loss logic was bogus.”³²

Some decision-makers with this perspective went further, and claimed that the anti-corruption movement actively manipulated the CAG reports (discussed earlier), failing to recognize or even entertain the possibility that the mechanisms the government pursued for economic growth took place in an intransigent political environment where a more transparent system for contract procurement – a competitive bidding system – was tabled but held up in Parliament by the opposition. Indeed, as a senior official in the PMO recounted to me:

³² Del-35

“We always started [in 2004 when the UPA came to power] from the belief that competitive bidding was the best process to auction contracts, but it was so difficult to put this through Parliament and get the states on board. Meanwhile, people were saying ‘the economy has to grow at 9%!’ And so for that you need coal, you need power, and 2G was part of those inputs. In fact, because there were problems in the TRAI [Telecom Regulatory Authority of India], they themselves said that as far as 2G is concerned we cannot go the competitive bidding route because this would mean too high a price being paid, and that processes of big enrollment of Indian consumers would not run smoothly. But they said maybe with 3G there could be competitive bidding. The irony was that we had been trying to get competitive bidding through Parliament for some time.”³³

He continued:

“I spoke in Parliament on 2G and coal, but to no avail. We said again let’s move toward competitive bidding, but there was opposition from the state governments which produce coal, many of them are BJP-led, so we could not get this thing moved successfully through the political process of the standing committees. It took us 3-4 years. By 2012 we were able to put forward the law that made competitive bidding a possible route. but by then the entire government was painted with these scams. *It was not just face saving. It was the only way we wanted to get legislation approved by Parliament. BJP blocked us at every path in states where they had a majority. Their [LAC] feeling was that we had purposefully kept these things [procurement of government contracts] in the dark and taken money and pocketed it all to the detriment of the common man. No one understood that it took time for us to get competitive bidding legislation through, while we had to keep the country moving forward [through economic growth]. So my own feeling was that they [LAC] manipulated these CAG reports. They [LAC] wanted a cause to get hold of and they were able to acquire a degree of influence and importance in the country that we were not able to tackle. I had no reason to believe that anything good was a real motivation behind these reports and their [LAC] uproar.*”³⁴

³³ Del-34

³⁴ Del-34

Another senior member of the PMO corroborated this perspective on the role played by the CAG reports in the IAC and how the movement conflated the allocation process and corruption in order to discredit the government:

“All these so-called scams; these losses, notional losses, putative losses – they have no connection to reality or the complexity of government decision-making. I mean government is not a company that sits there and maximizes profit. It sits there and ensures sectors grow, for example in telecom, and that prices stay low. This is not corruption. That’s what we did. Look at subsequent low prices in the telecoms sector and the way the sector has boomed. He [the head of the CAG] grabbed a narrative without understanding the economic logic and the movement [LAC] ran with it. They wanted to discredit the entire government without understanding how the economy works.”³⁵

A senior Cabinet Minister continued this reasoning:

“The CAG reports were a personal attack on us. It wasn’t objective. The practice should have been for them to go through proper channels; but in this instance the CAG handed over the reports to the media to create a frenzy, and the Hazare, Kejriwal group [IAC] took a bite. Its [LAC] purpose was not corruption, but to discredit us and I believe they succeeded.”³⁶

Elites with a neo-liberal perspective in the UPA believed that the IAC, building off the CAG reports, actively manipulated the purpose of the mechanisms for economic growth that the UPA pursued to blanket the entire government as corrupt. For these decision-makers, the notion of “presumptive” losses made little economic sense as prices for telecommunications, coal, and other inputs, for example, were kept low for citizens due to the allocation processes followed; while for the IAC concessions to a select few businesses were naked crony capitalism and the chief cause of rampant government corruption.³⁷ This divergence led to increasing antagonism between these decision-makers and the IAC. As

³⁵ Del-21

³⁶ Del-33

³⁷ Del-1; Del-30; 2015-fgACTV; 2015-fgNGOW

one of the senior advisors in the PMO at this time, who sat in one of the earlier meetings between the Prime Minister and the IAC, elaborated to me:

“This [IAC movement] was essentially CAG reports spilling into street politics and so they rallied against what they saw as crony capitalism. *The PM wanted to accommodate but he wasn't prepared to sit and negotiate a Parliamentary matter [Lokpal bill] with a group of activists who wanted to handicap our progress.*”³⁸

Neo-liberals in the UPA strongly rejected the link between economic liberalization mechanisms and corruption. For example, at a speech at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Calcutta on 22 August 2011, during the IAC's pomp, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh argued:

“There are some [IAC] who argue that corruption is the consequence of economic liberalization and reforms. This is of course completely mistaken. *Many of the areas, which have actually seen systemic reforms, have also seen the disappearance of corruption. Industrial licensing, import licensing and rationing of foreign exchange are good examples. These areas were earlier associated with widespread corruption. The abolition of licensing has eliminated corruption in these areas.*”³⁹

Prime Minister Singh's defense here is instructive. In fact, three days after his speech in Calcutta, during one of his key address on the IAC movement in a Parliamentary debate on 25 August 2011, the Prime Minister asserted that the liberalization process and corruption had no direct link:

“Corruption sources are numerous. Until the early [19]90s, the biggest single source of corruption was the licensing system, the industrial licensing system, the import controls and the foreign exchange controls [key mechanisms of the state-controlled

³⁸ Del-19

³⁹ “Prime Minister's speech at IIM Calcutta,” *NDTV*, <http://bit.ly/2qdFUay> (Accessed 20 April 2017)

economy]. *The liberalisation that we brought about has ended that part of this corruption story.*⁴⁰

In this same speech, the Prime Minister references technical interventions as part of the liberalization reforms – such as regulation, increasing competition, and taxation among others – as mechanisms that have helped thwart corruption in India.⁴¹ Going further, some neo-liberal elites explicitly tied corruption to the pre-liberalization era, when an activist state permeated the entire government and state intervention in the daily lives of citizens was pervasive:

*“Some of these guys [IAC] prefer the pre-1991 days, when there was absolutely no transparency in bureaucratic decisions. When no questions were asked. The 1991 reforms cleansed the entire system and helped bring corruption down. That’s not to say one should ignore corruption today. But the system should be allowed to correct itself. For these guys [IAC] to go out and call everything we did a scam, without understanding why and to what effects, is absurd. All they ended up doing was creating an atmosphere of suspicion and fear that stifled the bureaucracy. This probably harmed the country more, yet they [IAC] couldn’t have cared less about this aspect.”*⁴²

By the end of the IAC agitation, when neo-liberals were attempting to revive the economy in order to combat the conditions that had in their view precipitated the movement, the Prime Minister vociferated that the anti-corruption demonstrations had created a “mindless atmosphere of negativity and pessimism” that could “do us [India] no good.”⁴³

For these decision-makers, as we saw briefly in Chapter Five, the key cause behind citizens’ anti-corruption collective action lay in deteriorating macroeconomic conditions, manifesting most prominently in the face of rising inflation. A precarious fiscal

⁴⁰ “PM’s Entire Speech on Anna, Corruption,” *NDTV*, <http://bit.ly/2ps9zfq> (Accessed 20 April 2017)

⁴¹ Manmohan Singh was not a purist, classical liberal, as he emphasized a strong commitment to the goals of poverty alleviation. However, for Singh, economic growth was an indisputable prior condition to wage a war on inequality and enhance social development. More on this, later.

⁴² Del-35

⁴³ Malavika Vyawahare, “From India Shining to India Whining?,” *New York Times: India Ink*, October 10, 2012, <http://nyti.ms/2oYmzdX> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

environment, as per these elites, gave mileage to the movement's logic that the government was lining its own pockets over ensuring more transparency and improved welfare for its citizens that resulted in high inflation and price hikes. A claim which, though containing little economic sense, helped the IAC capture the support of the wider citizenry in the view of neo-liberal decision-makers. In the movement's defence, however, the nature of corruption scandals suggested rampant discretionary, and likely abusive, powers were enjoyed by the political class.⁴⁴

On balance, the IAC's growing appeal led to limited engagement by the neo-liberal elites toward the movement, leading them to focus more urgently on kick-starting the economy which, it was hoped, would placate the mainly middle-class citizens that supported the IAC. A senior technocrat, who had risen to prominence during the liberalization reforms and has been viewed as the chief driver of India's liberal-capitalist policies over the past two decades, surmised to me: "The problem in the end was inflation. It is the chief economic indicator that rules people's minds [in India]. There was an impression that inflation goes up because of the rapacious *baniya* [merchants] looting the public."⁴⁵ A senior advisor in the PMO goes on to corroborate this view:

*"They [IAC] developed mass support because the economy slowed down. We survived 2008/09 [global financial crisis] quite OK by pumping money into the system, but then the deficit grew. The economy slowed down, we tried to increase tax collection. The world economy was shutting down and after experiencing 7-8% growth for a decade, 4-5% just didn't work for people [see table 6.3]. So they [IAC] got angry."*⁴⁶

⁴⁴ These powers, as we know, were widely referenced by the CAG to be used for extraction and favoring large private players in procurement contracts from mining rights to the sale of telecom spectrum. This much, as we saw above, was assumed by neo-liberals such as the Prime Minister, who felt he then had to ensure that pathways to inevitable corruption, though undesirable, didn't impede economic growth for broader social and economic welfare (Del-34). Beyond the CAG reports, the government gave incentives to the corporate sector through tax concessions and a significant reduction in the corporate income tax rate in line with its economic growth push (Hasan, *Congress after Indira*, 129).

⁴⁵ Del-35

⁴⁶ Del-21

Table 6.3: Growth Rate of India's GDP at Constant Prices, 1980-2011

Years	GDP	Per Capita GDP
1980/81 – 1990/91	5.2	3.0
1990/91 – 2000/01	5.9	4.0
2000/01 – 2010/11	7.6	6.0

Source: Government of India, Economic Survey 2011-12, Ministry of Finance

Most noteworthy in the link between high inflation and the IAC is that, for neo-liberal elites, internal government wrangling led to the mismanagement of the economy which further fueled the movement. The Indian economy had been experiencing rapid growth since 2003-4. Between 2005-2008 India was among the fastest growing economies in the world and providing the government with an exponential increase in revenue. In addition, the total tax revenue had increased by 31% per year since 2003, so that by 2009 the government had four times more money to spend than in 2003.⁴⁷ Thanks to these windfalls, the UPA was able to unveil the largest ever post-independence expansion of government expenditure to address social welfare.⁴⁸ However, the momentum was interrupted by the global financial crisis in 2008, after which, despite an uptick of growth in 2010 (10.3%), during 2011-2012, at the height of the IAC, GDP growth fell to 6.6% and then 4.7% respectively.⁴⁹ The simultaneous rise and exposure of large-scale corruption scandals alongside falling economic growth drove fears that India's growth trajectory went hand-in-glove with crony capitalism. Against this backdrop, where neo-liberal elites wanted to push forward mechanisms and reforms for kick-starting economic growth, as we saw in

⁴⁷ Manor, "The Congress Party and The Great Transformation."

⁴⁸ Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, "How Did the UPA Spend Our Money? An Assessment of Expenditure Priorities of Resource Mobilisation Efforts of the UPA Government," 2009.

⁴⁹ Internationally, during this time, leading investors were increasingly becoming fearful that India along with other rising emerging market nations (namely, Turkey, Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia), were too dependent on volatile foreign investment to finance their growth ambitions. This trend eventually led to the aforementioned countries' "Fragile Five" designation in a Morgan Stanley report in 2013, what became another tipping point for macroeconomic insecurity in India (Morgan Stanley Research, "Global EM Investor: The Fragile Five," August 5, 2013, <http://nyti.ms/2qdW0kK> (Accessed 20 April 2017)).

the previous chapter, they believed decision-makers in the NAC and Congress Party hampered their efforts.⁵⁰ A senior minister in the Finance Ministry highlights one particular case:

“We got overwhelmed by the backlash of wrong fiscal policies. We allowed the fiscal deficit to go bust, and started enormous borrowing. A fiscal deficit that had been brought down to 2.5 per cent of GDP by us had been allowed to go up to 5.7 per cent by others. I had another portfolio at the time and was asked to return [to the Finance Ministry] in order to manage this out-of-control economy. I said to the PM on my return, ‘How did you let this happen? You know how all this works.’ He nodded. *Fact is he couldn’t over rule Pranab Mukherjee [the incumbent Finance Minister] who was much senior to him in the Party and close to Mrs. Gandhi.* And what happened with this kind of indecision? Indiscriminate borrowing following a monetary stimulus. The fiscal deficit crossed limits, inflation crossed limits, oil prices had gone up and the rupee depreciated. *When people are hurting in their stomach, anything goes. So the fact that they [LAC] erupted like that is not surprising.*”⁵¹

Certainly, the fiscal deficit and inflation rate did spiral out of control during UPA-2. Fiscal deficit, which was on a correction path until 2007-08, shot up to 6% in 2008-09 and then up to 6.4% in 2009-10. This was in part due to a stimulus package in 2008-09, in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, in the form of tax cuts, investment in infrastructure and increased expenditure on government consumption to support aggregate demand.⁵² For the senior minister in the Finance Ministry, quoted above, this spending should have been controlled instead of the “haphazard” approach, particularly through maintaining and instituting new populist welfare schemes.⁵³ However, by the time the IAC emerged in 2011, inflation had spiked. For neo-liberal elites, there were few options at this point but to engage the IAC to a certain degree as the movement had subsumed nationwide discontent

⁵⁰ In one example, the Prime Minister wanted to install neo-liberal technocrat, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, as Finance Minister during the crisis but was over-ruled by Sonia Gandhi (Del-34; Del-54).

⁵¹ Del-33

⁵² Misra, *Revisiting Regional Growth Dynamics in India*, 8.

⁵³ Del-33

related to the government's perceived poor economic management. As a senior Cabinet Minister reflected to me:

“I worried a great deal about this [backlash against the government's economic management]. But there was nothing we could do. *In the end inflation became an issue for the movement's followers that we were not able to handle effectively.*”⁵⁴

Overall, neo-liberal elites assessed the IAC as a movement that sought to discredit the UPA by conflating the mechanisms through which economic growth was pursued with corruption. The movement played a proximate role in creating suspicion of the government's liberalization reforms; simultaneously, an unstable macroeconomic environment, which for neo-liberals resulted from their colleagues' mismanagement of fiscal policy, then exacerbated these conditions. On balance, though these decision-makers conceded that corruption was endemic to India and presented a major challenge, they did not agree with the IAC's stance that this corruption was intimately linked to the growth process. Thus, they were not sympathetic to the movement. This resulted in them seeking limited engagement with the IAC, and instead focusing on tackling mechanisms to improve the economic conditions that they believed caused the collective action to emerge, as detailed in Chapter Five.

Exogeneity

In the preceding section, I have outlined the three dominant perspectives – or ideologies – among decision-making elites in authoritative positions of power in the UPA government when it faced the IAC. Together with the previous chapter, these perspectives help us understand why divergent strategies were mooted and attempted during the IAC

⁵⁴ Del-34

agitation. Overall, negotiation with the IAC was most likely within the UPA government as elites' divergent ideas, interacting with the coalition dynamics from Chapter Five, created a checks and balance on government behavior. To illustrate the causal strength of decision-makers' ideas within such a mechanism, it is crucial to exemplify that these ideas have a source exogenous to the case of the IAC.

Below, I show that the sources for ideas held by UPA decision-makers are both external and antecedent to their conceptions of IAC. The evidence is illustrated through the entry of proponents of new issue understandings or ideological frameworks in the Indian government – such as neo-liberal technocrats that entered government in the 1980s and 1990s and then took up authoritative positions of power during the UPA; and the reformist technocrats and activists that entered government in the early 2000s who also took up authoritative positions of power in government. These decision-makers are idea carriers – individuals reliably known to hold a given set of ideas who move into decision-making institutions.

I have already laid out evidence from my interviews with several of these idea carriers, above, who took up positions of sufficient influence within the UPA government – ranging from the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, and Head of Planning Commission, to senior advisors to the Prime Minister and Congress Party President, members of the NAC, RBI, and other key institutions in the Indian government. Next I will demonstrate their perspectives' intellectual ancestry.

1. Neo-Liberal Idea Carriers

A. The 1991 Financial Crisis and Economic Liberalization

The 1991 balance-of-payments crisis provided the entry point for neo-liberal idea carriers to enter government decision-making. By Indian standards, the crisis produced a

substantial revision of the relations between state and market in economic and social development.⁵⁵ These elites sought to reduce the ambition of the state, which they believed was riddled with corruption and inefficiencies, by re-embedding large areas of social and economic life into new, limited regulatory institutions that functioned in tandem with the private sector.⁵⁶ Overall, the aim of these decision-makers was to *first* increase economic growth (through export promotion among other measures) which would *then* permit the reduction of social strife, from wage inequality to corruption. These actors would later take on such positions as Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Deputy Head of Planning Commission, and Home Minister, among other crucial Cabinet positions that comprised the main levers of decision-making in India during the UPA government (2004-2014).

Pre-liberalization India was wracked with state-driven corruption through government quotas, licenses, and permits, leading to the country's political economy being widely referenced as the "license-permit-quota raj."⁵⁷ This meant that the state sectors were enormous, and that citizens were at the behest of bureaucrats and government officials that used everyday state practices – from filling out forms to the supply of telephone lines – to perpetuate corruption.⁵⁸ The process of economic liberalization, at the dialectic and ideational level, had been mooted in the upper echelons of the Indian government at least

⁵⁵ James Manor, "Did the Central Government's Poverty Initiatives Help to Re-Elect It?," in *New Dimensions of Politics in India: The United Progressive Alliance in Power*, ed. Lawrence Saez and Gurharpal Singh (London: Routledge Press, 2011), 201; Isher Judge Ahluwalia and I.M.D. Little, *India's Economic Reforms and Development: Essays for Manmohan Singh* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5. At the global level, the Soviet Union and East European socialist regimes had collapsed, pouring scorn over the feasibility of socialist models; while China was well underway to opening up its economy.

⁵⁶ The *Time of India* noted: "A change of considerable significance is taking place in India...the emphasis has shifted from distributive justice to growth" (*TOI*, Editorial, 22 February 1991).

⁵⁷ Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya, *Why Growth Matters: How Economic Growth in India Reduced Poverty and the Lessons for Other Developing Countries* (Public Affairs, 2013).

⁵⁸ Akhil Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* (Orient Blackswan, 2012). Though this dichotomy (between pre- and post-liberalization) is rather simplistic when one looks at the longer arc of reforms the 1991 program does reflect the point of shift in India's political economy from "a reluctant pro-capitalist state with a socialist ideology to an enthusiastic pro-capitalist state with a neo-liberal ideology" (Kohli, *Democracy and Development in India: From Socialism to Pro-Business*, 195; Mihir Sharma, *Restart: The Last Chance for the Indian Economy* (Random House India, 2015)).

since 1980 and arguably much earlier in the mid-1970s.⁵⁹ However, the economic ideas behind capitalist reforms did not take hold until the Indian economy faced the 1991 balance-of-payments crisis.⁶⁰ This crisis, in the words of the Prime Minister's special advisor on the economy at the time, was a "necessary shock that allowed us to bring in the correct changes. There were no socialist answers to what we needed to do."⁶¹

Narasimha Rao was sworn in as Prime Minister of India on 20 June 1991 in the malaise of a national balance-of-payments crisis, which fully opened the gates to neo-liberal idea carriers to enter positions of authority in government. Two days later, Rao had informed Manmohan Singh that he would be Finance Minister and lead the monumental changes in India's political economy architecture. Though Prime Minister Rao provided the political capital for, and defense of, the reforms without which the Congress' minority government would not have been able to respond sufficiently to the crisis it faced; the vision and content of the reforms can be squarely placed in the network of a group of disparate technocrats and some select politicians whose liberal-capitalist economic ideas came to the fore as the financial crisis burst open the doors of a historically uncompromising executive. Chief among them was future Prime Minister of the UPA government, Manmohan Singh.⁶² As one neo-liberal elite, who was then Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce, and who would go on to be Finance Minister under Singh, told me in my conversation with him:

⁵⁹ Frankel, *India's Political Economy*; Barbara Harris White and Anushree Sinha, eds., *Trade Liberalization and India's Informal Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Kunal Sen, "Why Did the Elephant Start to Trot? India's Growth Acceleration Re-Examined," *Economic and Political Weekly* 42, no. 43 (2007): 37–47; Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation*.

⁶⁰ In the spring of 1991 the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), with the country holding only enough reserves of foreign exchange to pay for two weeks of imports, secretly pledged 47 tons of gold to the Bank of England to borrow \$400 million to pay its creditors (for a compelling re-telling of this episode, see: Shankkar Aiyar, *Accidental India: A History of the Nation's Passage Through Crisis and Change* (New Delhi: Aleph Books, 2012).

⁶¹ Del-27

⁶² P.C. Alexander, *Through the Corridors of Power: An Insider's Story* (Harper Collins India, 2004); Ramaswamy Venkataraman, *My Presidential Years* (South Asia Books, 1994); Del-35; Del-54; Del-82

“If any other person would have been Finance Minister, I don’t know what he would have tried. *But given it was Dr. Singh, who had just come back from the South Commission [where he was Secretary General], his instincts were to open up the economy.* I think the solution offered by him and his advisors was the best one. *Some of us were instinctively in favor, but that was a handful of people.* He had some advisors that disagreed with his ideas, but they left shortly thereafter. In fact his chief economic advisor at the time who disagreed with the content of the reforms left.”⁶³

This recourse to the influence of, and professional networks among, international institutions such as the South Commission in Manmohan Singh’s ideas extends also to the Bretton Woods twins, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as international graduate programs. As Secretary General of the South Commission just prior to his call from Rao, Singh had interacted closely with Bank officials and IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus.⁶⁴ Also elevated to Cabinet meetings and steering committees to implement reforms were bureaucrats who had drafted white papers between 1985-1991 on the possible pathways to liberalization (in conversation with the IMF and World Bank) including S. Venkataraman, A.N. Verma, Gopi Arora, Jairam Ramesh, Raja Chelliah, and Montek Singh Ahluwalia who had spent several years amongst the Washington economists’ circles while with the World Bank. In addition, pro-liberalization economists such as Arvind Virmani, Rakesh Mohan, C. Rangarajan, Jagdish Bhagwati, and Ashok Desai joined the team as advisors; as did a few elected officials, chief among them, P. Chidambaram – the lawyer and Harvard Business School graduate who was known for his no-nonsense dealing with the bureaucracy – would spearhead the opening of India’s trade policies. Beyond their professional exposure, most of these policymakers had been

⁶³ Del-33

⁶⁴ Del-33; Del-24b; Del-27

educated, many for graduate work, internationally (see Appendix D.2).⁶⁵ Indeed, the intellectual lineage of Manmohan Singh's ideas, who led this group and would be Prime Minister in the UPA government, is worth detailing here in order to accentuate the neo-liberals' approach to diagnosing the IAC crisis.

From his time as an undergraduate at Cambridge University to his doctoral work at the University of Oxford, Manmohan Singh became skeptical and then critical of India's prevailing dirigiste political economy.⁶⁶ At Oxford, Singh was supervised by I.M.D Little whose landmark book, *Critique of Welfare Economics* used logical positivism to counter the prevailing claim that welfare economics could provide an objective criteria of justice.⁶⁷ Little helped make Nuffield College, where Singh studied, a distinguished center for development economics. Indeed, at Nuffield during this time was the pro-trade, anti-dirigiste Jagdish Bhagwati, a fellow economist who Singh knew well from his time as an undergraduate at St. Johns College, Cambridge. Bhagwati and Singh would find this second academic spell together the ideal space for intellectual exchange, and Bhagwati would significantly

⁶⁵ This becomes salient when comparing the backgrounds of elites in positions of authority in the Congress (1971-1975) and UPA (2004-2014) governments at the time of the anti-corruption movements (Appendix D.1-D.-3). We can see that in the UPA government 14% of elites in the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance, Home, Law and Justice Minister among others, studied internationally (not including those officials with similar backgrounds in the RBI and Planning Commission); and 50% of the secondary de facto cabinet, NAC, members were educated abroad. In total at this level, 25% of decision-makers came from technocrat, bureaucrat, or activist backgrounds. In contrast, within the far smaller Cabinet in the Congress government under Indira Gandhi, 8% of elites in positions of authority had been educated internationally of whom the Prime Minister and Steel Minister Mohan Kumaramangalam were the most prominent in decision-making; while 6% of decision-makers came from technocratic backgrounds. Overall, the point here is not to make a qualitative assertion about studying in India versus studying internationally, but that those that studied abroad were embedded in different and distinct training methods and ideational networks that plausibly influenced their worldview (as I detail below).

⁶⁶ At Cambridge, Singh deeply admired the monetarist, Dennis Robertson (Daman Singh, *Strictly Personal: Manmohan and Gursbaran* (Harper Collins India, 2014), 116-117). Singh graduated with the prestigious Adam Smith prize for the best tripos result related to his essay on international investment and development in which he argued that developing nations such as India had to build a domestic market and therefore generate capital at home in order to grow (*Ibid.*, 122, 146). In his own words, he gained "a better idea of how the economy works, and what can be done to kick-start an economy" (quoted in *Ibid.*, 141).

⁶⁷ I.M.D Little, *A Critique of Welfare Economics* (Oxford University Press, 2003 [1950]).

influence and help with Singh's dissertation.⁶⁸ They would remain very close for many years, with the former a member of special steering committees and advisory groups set up by Singh during his time as Finance and then also as Prime Minister in the UPA.⁶⁹

Manmohan Singh's dissertation and subsequently well-reviewed book, *India's Export Trends and the Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth*, built off the fresh work of Ragnar Nurkse and other classical development economists, to examine the role of foreign trade in India's quest for self-reliance.⁷⁰ Singh's study was the first scholarly treatment to address that India's poor performance in exports was due to indigenous factors and not a lack of world demand. He wrote it at a time of salient export pessimism (and the primacy of import-substitution) among the technocracy of Indian policymaking.⁷¹ In contrast, his findings laid

⁶⁸ Singh, *Strictly Personal*, 158, 167. Economists such as T.N. Srinivasan and Jagdish Bhagwati were some of the earliest to link the policy of state-controls to low growth. Indeed, the first intellectual treatment on India's economic policies came from Jagdish Bhagwati and his co-author Padma Desai. Manmohan Singh reviewed this book in 1972 in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* when he was Chief Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Finance. It is interesting to note his concluding remarks: "It would be tragic if we were to become prisoners of instruments which, howsoever suitable at one stage of development, turn out later to be fetters on further development." He goes on to state that, fundamentally, he does not believe that "more controls are better than less controls" (Manmohan Singh, "Book Review: Jagdish Bhagwati and Padma Desai, *India: Planning for Industrialization; Industrialization and Trade Policies since 1951* (OUP, 1970)," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 9, no. 4 (December 1972): 417).

⁶⁹ Del-34

⁷⁰ Manmohan Singh, *India's Export Trends and the Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). Singh, from very early on, wanted to write his dissertation around challenging the dominant hypothesis at the time which suggested that India should continue with an anti-trade, autarkic policy (Singh, *Strictly Personal*, 163). His project developed as he became heavily influenced by the work of Ragnar Nurkse and other classical development economists, who argued, contrary to established trends at that time, that financing for development should come to a large extent from the developing country itself ("capital is made at home"), and that key areas to be financed need to exhibit increasing returns in order to trigger dynamics of development or, virtuous circles of growth. In short, for a poor country, as India was then, to be sustainable in the long term it must come up with a more balanced way of financing its development (Ragnar Nurkse, "Equilibrium and Growth in the World Economy," in *Harvard Economic Studies*, ed. Gottfried Haberler and Robert M. Stern, vol. CXVIII (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 141).

⁷¹ The policy of import substitution, especially emboldened since the Indira Gandhi years as we saw in Chapters Three and Four, was a corollary to state-driven intervention in economic and social life. India's massive import bills in subsequent years would lead to foreign exchange or deficit crises in 1956, 1966, and beyond, notably in 1991. Exports simply did not feature in India's political economy matrix. Proponents of export "pessimism" believed that the world would not offer a growing market to products from developing nations. Manmohan Singh sought to challenge this fundamental assumption. Also see Mukherji, *Globalization and Deregulation*.

out the potential benefits of export orientation for the Indian economy.⁷² In line with Nurkse's thinking, Singh argued that there were important factors emanating from industrialized countries which prevented the rapid growth of exports from developing contexts. International trade could no longer be an effective engine for economic growth, so developing nations would have to focus on balanced growth. This meant the expansion of several sectors on a significant scale, in a way that one industry served as a domestic market for others. In the long-run, the country would have no choice but to finance much of its imports with a strong export drive. Import-substitution, though viable for the very short-term, would be exhausted quickly. During his early years in government, however, Singh and others found that those who spoke out against the existing hegemonic dirigiste political economy framework were sidelined.⁷³ His time as Finance and then Prime Minister allowed Singh the prospect to implement the market mechanisms that he had come to believe in so deeply.

In sum, internationally influenced and trained leaders entered government during the liberalization process who would then go on to take up authoritative positions of policymaking power in the UPA. The introduction of these elites in the Indian government resulted from an accumulation of anomalies in India's planned economy that led to the crisis of 1991. This Kuhnian shift in India's political economy architecture would cement the place of neo-liberal decision-makers in future Indian governments, notably the UPA. However, it is important to note that these actors were waiting in the periphery of the state apparatus for some time before they rose to the top in 1991. This is important to highlight, in addition to the power of their frameworks years later during the UPA, as it illustrates the

⁷² That is, the solution to India's precarious financial architecture did not lay in multiple IMF loans or domestic borrowing (which would simply continue without addressing the fundamentals and ramp up the fiscal deficit) but in India opening and stepping up its exports (Del-34; Del-82b).

⁷³ Singh, *Strictly Personal*, 173. After defending his dissertation, Singh joined the Ministry of Foreign Trade in Indira Gandhi's newly installed government in 1971. After serving as Governor of the Reserve bank of India (RBI) (1982-1985), Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission (1985-1987), Singh joined the UN-backed South Commission as Secretary General in Geneva. He would return, as crisis came calling, in 1991 to take up the post of Finance Minister.

causal independence of their cognitions and that they did not simply adopt neo-liberal ideas instrumentally.

B. Stability of Neo-Liberal Ideas

Neo-liberal technocrats had circled around the periphery of the Indian government, as academics, experts, bankers, and other professionals, quietly whispering to as many political elites as they could regarding the expediencies of liberal-capitalist reforms that India required. In short, their perspectives were long-held before their proximity to power.

The early consultations around a liberalization reform package began in earnest 5-10 years prior to the 1991 crisis during the Rajiv Gandhi administration (1984-1989) which shows that neo-liberal ideas were a constant among some elites. The Prime Minister spoke with finance heavyweight S. Venkitaramanan and economist Vijay Kelkar (who would later advise a series of Finance Ministers in the UPA government) about mechanisms to remove the license regime that was slowing down growth.⁷⁴ Simultaneously, Gandhi turned to younger bureaucrats such as Jairam Ramesh (who would become Minister of Environment including other senior posts in the UPA) and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, an economist who would later become the Deputy Chairman (and de facto head) of the Planning Commission under the UPA government and was then in the PMO. By the time V.P. Singh had replaced Rajiv Gandhi, Ahluwalia and other economists such as Rakesh Mohan (who would take up senior positions such as Chief Economic Adviser to the Finance Minister in the UPA) began working on the broad framework for a possible reform program.⁷⁵ They were later joined by C. Rangarajan (who would go on to become Chairman of Prime Minister Singh's Economic Council under UPA). These papers, as well as the final policies, touched upon

⁷⁴ Del-80b; Del-35; Del-27

⁷⁵ Del-28; Del-62; Del-35

five key areas of reform.⁷⁶ The underlying framework encouraged a move from public investment to private sector driven growth; from heavy industry and agriculture to services and technology. Emphasis thus shifted from state-led distributive justice to encouraging private initiative to accelerate high growth. This was intended to, and would successfully in years to come, contribute to a transferal in the distribution of income in favor of the middle classes.⁷⁷ In this way, technocrats who would take up influential posts in the UPA government carried forward a clear blueprint for India's turn toward market interventions for social and economic development throughout their time in office and beyond.

Moreover, these policymakers' ideas did not waiver even when under pressure from external, material interests. When the Rao administration came in in May 1991, Congress had a precarious minority government which had come to power at the back of some of the shortest-lived coalition governments in India's history to date and, to add to this, Rao had been selected Prime Minister after Rajiv Gandhi's sudden demise when his widow, Sonia Gandhi, refused to take the mantle. The fact that pro-liberalization ideas that were anathema to the political class were gathering steam and becoming a reality during this period is an indicator that not all government decision-making was based on external, material interests. For example, the decision by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh to devalue the currency horrified the Prime Minister, his Cabinet, allies, and parts of the business community. Though markets reacted positively to the devaluation, the Parliament, and even members of the Congress party, were in a furor.⁷⁸ Not just this, but the IMF-driven transfer of gold to the British government the following day agitated the Parliament even further, illustrating the perilous political environment under which ideas were edging

⁷⁶ The causal independence of ideas here is enhanced as the neo-liberal elites' elaborate package of economic restructuring went beyond the crisis of liquidity they faced (Arjun Sengupta, "Financial Sector and Economic Reforms in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 1 (January 1995): 39–44). This was an opportunity, as we would come to understand, for these actors to relegate state intervention from the lives of citizens. Indeed, Manmohan Singh called for "bold measures" to "convert the crisis into an opportunity to build a new India, to do things which many people before us have thought and said should be done, but somehow were never done [sic]" (Manmohan Singh interview with Zoya Hasan; quoted in Hasan, *Congress after Indira*, 54).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 124

⁷⁸ Kohli, *Democracy and Development in India*, 140–164.

material factors out of decision-making during the crisis. As one of the key decision-makers in the liberalization process recounts to me:

“Since we [decision-makers that advanced neo-liberal policies] came into government, opposition to anything we have tried to do has been ideological. Take for instance the 1991 reforms. Within the party there were these old retainers from Indira Gandhi’s time, they were in the Cabinet of Mr. Rao and they opposed it. And outside the party the communists were there in significant numbers, and the regional parties had been weaned on a diet of socialism – but they didn’t have an ideology. There was opposition, from within the party and outside. Remember, we had a weak coalition. But no one had an alternative answer. No one had an answer to what we were doing. The opposition was – this will negatively impact the poor; and that we were departing from the path laid down by Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi. We just went ahead and said: ‘this is the way the world is moving, this is the way smaller countries like India, poor countries like us – Korea, Malaysia – that were actually poorer than us are making themselves richer.’ The record was clear – only open economies flourished, not closed economies. And so we pushed ahead.”⁷⁹

One of Prime Minister Rao’s principal secretaries in the PMO at the time confirmed this perspective to me, that electoral and material pressures were stiff, but that neo-liberals had to push forward their prescriptions toward the crisis despite these strategic pressures.

“When Rao came to power in 1991, Congress did not have a full majority in the lower house, and yet during that period we implemented more reforms than any other administration. My job, as his Principal Secretary, was to work with all our partners. But we had to push through, through Cabinet level orders and through back-channel meetings. We had no choice but to do it by stealth. We put out more orders to ensure that while we were fixing the economy in 1991 that no minister acted without any approval from the Cabinet. These ministers used to make money by giving a petrol pump permit or a phone line or allotment for railways, and we put a stop to that by centralizing the ability to get permission to the Cabinet. Outside, the opposition and others were creating a fuss about the inflation rate and then the Air India staff leaked the story of the gold transfer to the UK. Then people like myself, Montek, and others [with neo-liberal perspectives] held continuous meetings with the media to say:

⁷⁹ Del-33

*'look we are in peril, and we have to go for structural reforms and follow what the IMF has advised us and get some proper fiscal management going in the country.' It was off the record and they played ball. This is what we had to do to fight against the outside pressures. We did it [liberalization] in the night so that politicians didn't derail us.'*⁸⁰

Finally, the landmark budget was announced on 24 July 1991 where Manmohan Singh referred to India's path to liberalization, borrowing from Victor Hugo, as "an idea whose time has come."

I have shown above that the ideas held by neo-liberals in the UPA government have sources exogenous to the government's response to the IAC, namely through their international training and education, and that these ideas have over time sometimes proven resistant to material pressures. The ideas through which these decision-makers assessed the functions of the IAC were long held by these elites. They were shared through policy networks or processes of political socialization, and carried into specific state institutions during the 1991 liberalization reforms. These reforms elevated market mechanisms for economic and social development. Neo-liberal elites then went on to maintain positions of authority in the UPA government, through institutions such as the PMO, Planning Commission, and Cabinet. We can thus begin to see the intellectual coherence between neo-liberal perspectives and their idea carriers' diagnosis of the IAC discussed earlier. However, the post-1991 retrenchment of the state would create a vacuum for civic action to swell, wherein rights-based activists that would also rise to government office, most notably with the NAC, flourished. I will now turn to these elites with reformist perspectives that performed a counter-balancing function to the above-discussed neo-liberals in the UPA government, especially when faced with anti-corruption collective action.

⁸⁰ Del-27

2. Reformist Idea Carriers

A. The 2004 Failure of “India Shining” and Rights-Based Movements

Failure of the incumbent BJP-led National Democratic Alliance’s (NDA) “India Shining” campaign in the lead up to the 2004 elections provided the broader political context under which reformist idea carriers came into positions of authority in the UPA.⁸¹ On 9 August 1997, as Sonia Gandhi was looking to take back her family’s dynastic place as leaders of the Congress party, she spoke to party members for the first time:

“What has become of our great organization? Instead of a party that fired the imagination of the masses throughout the length and breadth of India, we have shrunk, losing touch with the toiling millions. It is not a question of victories and defeats in elections. For a democratic party, victories and defeats are part of its continuing political existence. *But what does matter is whether or not we work among the masses, whether or not we are in tune with their struggles, their hopes and their aspirations.*”⁸²

When the general election of 2004 came around, Sonia Gandhi’s Congress stitched together a left-of-center coalition government, appealing to the common man (*aam aadmi*), to defeat the right-wing NDA.⁸³ The establishment of this coalition would not only need the support from the Left parties to remain in power, which thus gave it a distinct ideological

⁸¹ “India Shining” was a slogan used by the incumbent BJP-led NDA alliance during the 2004 general election campaign to build a narrative around economic and social optimism and globalization in India.

⁸² Sonia Gandhi, “Meeting of All India Congress Committee (AICC); Opening Remarks by the Congress President,” New Delhi, April 6, 1998, <http://bit.ly/2qeb8Pb> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

⁸³ It is worth noting the irony that an explicitly *aam aadmi* (common man) movement against corruption, the IAC, would be the start of the UPA government’s undoing which rose to office on a campaign of “*Congress ka haath aam aadmi ke saath* (Congress’ hand is with the common man).

dimension, but decided to formalize the role of reformist technocrats, senior bureaucrats, and activists in government through the establishment of the NAC set up on 4 June 2004.⁸⁴

The NAC was a high-profile advisory body of reformist elites, set-up and chaired by Congress President, Sonia Gandhi. This directly pitted the PMO and Cabinet up against a new institution, a de facto parallel cabinet, for policy design.⁸⁵ For the purposes of my current analysis, the NAC would actualize the reformists' ideas within UPA policy-making thereby counter-balancing neo-liberal prescriptions. The NAC sought to enforce the coalition's Common Minimum Program (CMP), which made explicit commitment to an activist state to bring about social and economic equity through redistribution.⁸⁶ Specifically, the CMP prioritized the urgency for provision of some immediate economic relief to citizens rather than the earlier reliance on trickle-down effects of higher growth under the BJP-led NDA. Primarily, the state was articulated as responsible for this relief.

Most of the NAC members rose to positions of authority in the UPA government through their role in the rights-based movements of the 1990s and early 2000s. This included Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, Harsh Mander, A.K. Shiva Kumar, N.C. Saxena, Jean Dreze, among others. The most prominent rights-based movement during this time was the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), which spread anti-corruption advocacy efforts aimed at creating greater transparency at the lower levels of bureaucracy throughout the country. This led to the establishment of the right to information (RTI) bill as part of the Congress' campaign pledge in 2004 which subsequently

⁸⁴ Despite her party and its key decision-makers, including her chosen Prime Minister (!), being the chief architects of the liberalization reforms of the early 1990s, Sonia Gandhi saw her party and coalition's fundamental mandate as a bulwark against the BJP's "India Shining" campaign and its focus on further liberalization.

⁸⁵ Del-26; Del-8b; Del-14. After the syndicate of the sixties, this was the first time that power in a Congress government was in-part vested outside the office of the Prime Minister. As detailed in Chapter Five, the establishment of the NAC created a secondary center of power and influence in government that resulted in a coalition between followers and supporters of Mrs. Gandhi's center of power under the NAC, on the one hand, and that of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, under the PMO and parts of the Cabinet, on the other.

⁸⁶ The CMP committed itself to furthering of the "welfare of farmers, agricultural labor...and the weaker sections of society [and] to the well-being of the common man across the country" (quoted in Hasan, *Congress after Indira*, 87). Even though the CMP became obsolete after UPA-1, the NAC continued to press their reformist print on central policymaking.

became law in 2005.⁸⁷ Once they became members of the NAC, these activists and technocrats denoted the source of the UPA government's state-led, rights-based social security schemes over their ten years in office and acted as the bridge to civil society.⁸⁸

One intellectual lineage behind the focus on the above mechanisms is captured by the ideas of Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze who deeply influenced members of the NAC regarding the primacy of the state and public action through social movements in bringing about participatory growth and social development. For these thinkers, liberalization has been severely impaired by India's "backwardness" in basic education, elementary healthcare, gender inequality, and limitations on land reforms.⁸⁹ This means that the expansion of social opportunities through development of human capital necessarily precedes economic growth. Only prior development of human capacities through the supply of basic services, otherwise impaired by corruption and crony capitalism, may create participatory growth.⁹⁰ This rapid expansion of human capabilities can occur through state intervention and public action.

⁸⁷ The RTI bill first found its way to the floor of Parliament in 2002. The then ruling BJP-led coalition government passed the bill in January 2003 that was deemed by the future NAC elites as a diluted version of the act, especially against the backdrop of a series of corruption scams and the pogrom of Muslims during ethnic riots in Gujarat in 2002. Politicians of all stripes, and in both houses, feared that the law, in its original form, would offer retrospective review and could be used to blackmail state officials thus stifling the everyday workings of the bureaucracy (Del-25; Del-25b; Del-33). However, activists refused to back down and continued to lobby the government in order to over-turn what they considered a weak bill into a stronger RTI act in its original form.

⁸⁸ Including: Bharat Nirman (a cluster of six infrastructure programs), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meals Scheme, NREGA, Total Sanitation Campaign, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Integrated Child Development Services, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), and polio eradication among others.

⁸⁹ Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze, *India Economic Development and Social Opportunity* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 180.

⁹⁰ Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *India: Development and Participation* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 322–323. From the 1980s and early 1990s, in particular, also see: By the same authors together (Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *Hunger and Public Action* (Oxford University Press, 1989); Sen and Dreze, *India Economic Development and Social Opportunity*); Amartya Sen (Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1981); Amartya Sen, *Choice, Welfare, and Measurement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982); Amartya Sen, *Resources, Values, and Development* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); Amartya Sen, "Public Action for Social Security," in *Social Security in Developing Countries*, ed. E. Ahmad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Jean Dreze (Jean Dreze, "Economic Development, Public Action, and Social Progress," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 15, no. 3 (December 1994); Jean Dreze, "Distribution Matters in Cost-Benefit Analysis," *Journal of Public Economics* 70, no. 3 (1998)).

For Dreze and Sen, since the 1991 economic reforms, the constructive role of the state for development has not been harnessed. Writing their book, *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions*, during the time of the IAC, Dreze and Sen argue that the discontent against corruption did not stem from growth slowing down (as several neo-liberals, especially in government, argued), but because of how biased the growth process had been “making the country look like islands of California in a sea of sub-Saharan Africa.”⁹¹ Heightened inequality and corporate capture, leading to the anti-corruption agitation, went hand-in-glove for these thinkers.⁹² Throughout their writings, Dreze and Sen acknowledge that prior to economic reforms the role of state was certainly negative through its restrictions on trade and general citizen exchange, but it is also true that this role has been left unimagined post-1991 due to the apparent apathy toward the public sector among neo-liberals.⁹³ For Dreze and Sen social incentives according to which citizens and politicians alike must behave “can hardly be reduced to the narrow – though often important – role of markets and profits” that the private sector prioritizes. This has weakened the state’s capacity to enhance social development.

Unlike the neo-liberals discussed earlier, Dreze and Sen and their intellectual supporters, actively view social movements as a positive force for economic and social development through pressuring government action.⁹⁴ The outcome of social movements, including anti-corruption collective action, has a crucial bearing on the prospects for a more constructive influence of – and help from – the state in the lives of citizens.⁹⁵ The vigilance and involvement of the public in this way can be quite crucial not only in ensuring an

⁹¹ Dreze and Sen, *An Uncertain Glory*, ix.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Sen and Dreze, *India Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, 19-22, 184-190

⁹⁴ In 2013, the duel between neo-liberal and reformist ideas came to international attention with the writings of Dreze and Sen on the one hand and Bhagwati and Panagariya on the other. See: Gardiner Harris, “Rival Economists in Public Battle Over Cure for India’s Poverty,” *The New York Times*, August 21, 2013, <http://nyti.ms/2qdPXcO>; Pankaj Mishra, “Which India Matters?,” *The New York Review of Books*, November 21, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2pt7dwQ>; David Rieff, “A Battle for the Soul of India,” *The National Interest*, September 4, 2013, <http://bit.ly/2qmbrUq> (All accessed 20 April 2017).

⁹⁵ Dreze and Sen, *An Uncertain Glory*, 103

adequate expansion of essential welfare maximizing services, but also in monitoring their functioning. These positive state functions can include provision of basic social security, protections, building infrastructure, and combating corruption. Citizens' collective action takes two forms: *collaborative* (in public health campaigns, literacy drives, land reforms, and other endeavors) but also *adversarial* (that is, for the government to act appropriately to civic activism and pressure from the public demanding action being crucial to social development, such as battling corruption).⁹⁶ The NAC members' own roots, as well as their sympathy for the IAC, stems from this push for civil society to shape and improve state capacity.

The aforementioned and related ideas were transmitted to NAC members through ideational carriers therein, particularly the two main economists in the institution, A.K. Shiva Kumar (who was Sen's student) and Jean Dreze (who cultivated many of the ideas, above, and has co-authored several pioneering books and articles with Sen over the past 20 years on development in India, referenced here).⁹⁷ Congress Party President, Sonia Gandhi was committed to many of them, specifically NCPRI activists Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey, and Harsh Mander who had influenced the Congress manifesto in the lead up to the 2004 elections.⁹⁸ They, together with academics such as Dreze and Shiva Kumar and technocrats such as N.C. Saxsena, M.S. Swaminathan, and Jayaprakash Narayan, among others, provided the intellectual and ideological basis for the NAC.⁹⁹ Next, I will explore the stability of these elites' reformist ideas against material pressures before and after entering the UPA government, as well as their contestation with neo-liberal frames, to further underscore their causal independence.

⁹⁶ Dreze and Sen, *Hunger and Public Action*

⁹⁷ Jean Dreze, as one of his colleagues in the NAC told me, "led many of our meetings. The food security bill, for example, was presented to us all by Jean [Dreze] and Harsh Mander, who put in a lot of time and effort into the bill and many of our discussions in shaping the large UPA schemes" (Del-14).

⁹⁸ Del-36b; Del-75; Del-12

⁹⁹ No relation of the Jayaprakash Narayan we saw in Chapters Three and Four.

B. Stability of Reformist Ideas

i. Prior to Government

The National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI) precipitated the formation and spread of right-to-information movements across states in the 1990s that became a model for national anti-corruption reform organizations and would later heavily influence, and cultivate the leaders of, the NAC as well as the IAC.¹⁰⁰ The right to information activism, specifically, focused on a large systemic problem within the government bureaucracy that was causing corruption – the highly centralized system of public documents and the asymmetry of power that left citizens uninformed on important matters ranging from social quotas to wheat yield percentages in their state. The chief cause for this deep-seated corruption, the activists reasoned, was the degradation of the Indian state. Many of the movement leaders had observed this first hand as part of the Indian bureaucracy.

Despite considerable economic progress the quality of India's public-sector institutions, chiefly its administrative services, have struggled to keep pace. For most of India's post-independence history, the country's bureaucracy, inherited from the Colonial framework, was regarded as the nation's most efficient and disciplined institution, devoted to, as well as adequate for, India's future development. The top echelon of this bureaucracy was India's famed Indian Civil Service, later named the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Yet increasingly over the past two decades there has emerged a prevalent view that

¹⁰⁰ The anti-corruption fervor of this period became emboldened in several NGOs. Chief among them are the *Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)* that seeks to bring about transparency throughout party politics, focusing particularly on bringing political parties under the RTI act and reforming campaign funding; and *Janaagraha* (approximating in meaning: force of the people) that aims to strengthen democracy in India by working for citizen participation in urban local government (2015-fgNGOW).

corruption and politicization of the administrative services has become more entrenched.¹⁰¹ This is a consequence of a confluence of factors: the services are no longer the most prestigious and lucrative jobs in the country; increasingly arbitrary management of bureaucrats by political leaders including ad hoc transfers between posts and even sackings by Chief Ministers who have a low bar for insubordination; the increasing parsing out of state functions to the private sector; and generally low investment in human capital development within the services.¹⁰² Over time, the resultant decline in the trust of, and general disinvestment in, the bureaucracy by the political Centre provided the backdrop against which a portion of civil servants began to move toward civic activism in the 1990s.

In 1987, former-bureaucrat-turned activist, Aruna Roy (who would later be a key advisor to Sonia Gandhi in the NAC), brought together a team of activists and former bureaucrats as part of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS).¹⁰³ Their aim began modestly, to understand the issues that led to the denial of state benefits to the poor. These activists then came up with the idea to create an informal information system. Nothing could happen in the district without the people knowing about it. A public information exchange would be set up in the center of the village square to enable the sharing of information and the auditing of the alleged official claims by the government bureaucracy.

¹⁰¹ Anirudh Krishna, "Continuity and Change: The Indian Administrative Service 30 Years Ago and Today," *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 48, no. 4 (2010): 433–44; Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Data from a 2006 World Bank study of India's administrative services shows a steady decline over time in the bureaucracy's effectiveness in policy formulation and implementation (World Bank, "Reforming Public Services in India: Drawing Lessons From Success" (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2006).

¹⁰² Bussell, *Corruption and Reform in India*; Lakshmi Iyer and Anand Mani, "Traveling Agents: Political Change and Bureaucratic Turnover in India," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 94, no. 3 (2012): 723–39. For a thorough review of these factors, see Milan Vaishnav and Saksham Khosla, "The Indian Administrative Service Meets Big Data" (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2016).

¹⁰³ An entire generation of technocrats- and bureaucrats-turned-activists from the mid-1990s onwards rallied against corruption at all levels, and in different forms, through NGOs and other grass-roots organizations chiefly the rights-based movements (2015-fgNGOW; 2015-fgBURC). This is substantiated by the many primary accounts by former-bureaucrats-turned-activists on government corruption at the Centre that have burst into the public sphere over the last 15 years. Among these works are, inter alia: Promila Shankar, *Gods of Corruption* (Manas Publications, 2015); P.C. Parakh, *Crusader or Conspirator: Coalgate and Other Truths* (Manas Publications, 2014); Shashi Sahai, *Lokpal Bill: Anna's Movement That Shook the World* (New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2014); Kejriwal, *Swaraj*; C.P. Srivastava, *Corruption: India's Enemy Within* (Macmillan Press, 2001). For all of these reformists, corruption has been the single biggest ailment hampering the development of India (2015-fgBURC).

Thus was born the *jansunwadi* (social audit) and the subsequent demonstrations under the NCPRI banner.¹⁰⁴ Despite many of the elite activists campaigning for the right to information act coming from professional careers in the Indian bureaucracy, a large number of existing bureaucrats benefitted from the prevailing system either in terms of rents or in order to maneuver the policies of their political bosses and gain political capital.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, while governments and many state agencies resisted the NCPRI movement, other former-bureaucrats, intellectuals, journalists, and especially the business community, some of whom would join the NAC and some even the IAC, grew in its support.¹⁰⁶

Foundationally, the rights-based movements' logic was driven by the need to strengthen the state through civic activism, which influenced members of the NAC as well as the IAC activists.¹⁰⁷ As one of the leaders in the NCPRI told me: “We essentially have a *systemic problem of corruption which needed us to empower people before we could create change in government practices*. This is why ours was a citizen empowerment movement.”¹⁰⁸ Former-bureaucrat Arvind Kejriwal, who would be one of the key activists in the IAC movement, became acutely interested in the RTI and its potential to expose corruption in Delhi with his NGO, *Parivartan* (change) in the early 2000s.¹⁰⁹ There was, however, an analytical divergence between Kejriwal and the IAC's approach to anti-corruption reform and that of the NCPRI activists: For the latter there was an understanding of political corruption as originating in complex organizational structures that had to be targeted and reformed piecemeal; as opposed to the IAC's essential focus on the moral degradation of politicians

¹⁰⁴ At the Centre, existing Indian legislation on government records and information was a direct vestige of the Colonial era, for example the Official Secrets Act 1923 – This was enacted to prevent spying and to punish anyone who disclosed government information; and designed to enable imperial masters to deny natives power. This act created information asymmetries that kept citizen complaints into government matters to a minimum and thus widened the scope for the abuse of public office for private gain. Hence, when faced with the quickly rising RTI agitation, the central government continued to drag its feet. Interestingly, so did many parts of the bureaucracy

¹⁰⁵ Del-13; Del-72b; 2015-fgBURC

¹⁰⁶ Del-44; Del-74; Del-55; 2015-fgBUSN

¹⁰⁷ Del-14; Del-53; Del-1; 2015-fgACTV

¹⁰⁸ Del-32

¹⁰⁹ Rashmi Bansal, *I Have a Dream: The Inspiring Stories of 20 Social Entrepreneurs Who Found New Ways to Solve Old Problems* (Westland Ltd., 2011), 269.

and the failing credibility of government officials.¹¹⁰ But there was certainly a common genealogy to both the NAC and IAC. One technocrat, who had been a key member of the NCPRI and then took up a senior bureaucratic position during the UPA government, outlined these shared roots to me precisely in this way:

“They [IAC] knew nothing would change with the Lokpal; they knew there are already several anti-corruption laws and mechanisms which have been useless without real political backing and public support. *But why I admired them, and what they succeeded in doing was creating an aura of not tolerating corruption – they really stood up to the government, just like we [NCPRI] had before them. They convinced everyone that their movement would remove corruption.* And the politicians knew this too and feared the movement. Watching them [IAC] was like observing the pumpkin turn into a chariot. They brought the government face-to-face with corruption and the sentiment of the people. This is how anti-corruption efforts must work.”¹¹¹

Overall, we can observe an intellectual symbiosis with some of the ideas outlined earlier with recourse to the work of Sen and Dreze, and the activism and action of the rights-based movements that led to the formation of the NAC in the UPA government.

ii. *During Government*

For several activists as part of the rights-based movements, my interviews coalesce around the perspective that though Congress Party governments had historically been associated with grand corruption, the issue became entrenched with putative crony

¹¹⁰ Del-14; Del-36b. This difference also provides a window into assessing how the rise of the IAC is synonymous with a larger schism that had been widening between the bureaucracy (from where many anti-corruption activists emerged) and political establishment for two decades starting in the early 1990s. The IAC’s Jan Lokpal was a far more stringent bill that wanted the ombudsman to have full jurisdiction over the Prime Minister, without concessions, and wanted to exclude NGOs from any punishment.

¹¹¹ Del-32

capitalism in the UPA government.¹¹² As one academic, who supported and then joined these movements during the early part of the 2000s described to me:

“First it was Congress, the mother of corruption, and people thought there is a DNA problem with Congress. They cannot be cured. Then the Left witnessed corruption in Bengal. They all became millionaires. In Kerala, also the same. So, regional parties started becoming embroiled too: Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu, Lalu Yadav with the Fodor Scam, Mulayam Singh with disproportional assets, so gradually the entire political class became corrupt. It was no longer the Congress. *Over the last 7-8 years, everything has had a price.* The politicians created an illusion of equality. Mandel [Commission] created a safety wall, and led to the emergence of the lower middle class. But by the end of the BJP [2004] the charm of liberalization had begun to fade. *And what we see today is disenchantment with liberalization – it has caused the rich to get richer and the political class to fill their pockets. Liberalization doesn’t talk the language of development; it talks only about growth.*”¹¹³

The type of non-inclusive liberalization pursued by consecutive governments since 1991, per these activists, brought with it larger opportunities for kickbacks which have become more extractive in a globalized political economy. The above-quoted reformist continues:

“For several years there was an enchantment with liberalization and globalization. But then people began to see what is the impact of this? *All they saw was crony capitalism. Global levels of corruption, as the players were now global.* I mean, the amount of money Rajiv Gandhi got embroiled in Bofors [c. 1987] for is mere change today. It’s a tip. Liberalization gave an open field for grazing and looting, and the top was indifferent. It became a virus across all parties, and popular concern went out.”¹¹⁴

Throughout their time in the UPA, NAC members and those in their network, such

¹¹² In an innovative piece, Aditi Gandhi and Michael Walton argue that 43% of the total number of billionaires, accounting for 60% of billionaire wealth in India, had their primary sources of wealth from rent-thick sectors (real estate, construction, infrastructure or ports, media, cement, and mining). In other words, where government has discretion (Aditi Gandhi and Michael Walton, “Where Do India’s Billionaire’s Get Their Wealth?”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 47, no. 40 (October 6, 2012): 10–14).

¹¹³ Del-1

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

as the Left parties, were explicit that the existing nature of liberalization reforms were not inclusive and had entrenched a political-business nexus that was not only preventing effective state-led redistributive functions but perpetuating corruption.¹¹⁵ The chief concern of the reformists was the dilution of public sector capacity, especially in service delivery and in creating transparency and accountability to combat corruption that adversely affected the livelihood of the poor, especially the rural poor. One advisor to the NAC told me that the “roll back” of effective state mechanisms, which the government should have primed, were sidelined to promote private mechanisms in developmental activities through public-private partnerships (PPPs) which promoted inefficiencies rooted in corruption (as briefly mentioned earlier).¹¹⁶ A senior reformist who also sat in NAC meetings took this claim further, expanding on the reality he observed between the neo-liberal push for public-private partnerships and tempering of public sector functions on the one hand, and the resultant corruption scams throughout the UPA administration that led to the rise of the IAC, on the other:

“PPPs created avenues for corruption not efficiency. Businesses that were selected as partners created both a certain degree of uncertainty accompanied by a certain fight for turf. The uncertainty was in the ownership. It wasn’t as clear-cut as the government saying, ‘you [private contractor] build the road, you maintain it for 10 years, and you take tolls. And we just own it and it comes back to us after a certain period of time.’ No, this is not how it was. What happened is that PPPs allowed for different ministries to do it [extract rents] as they did in the past. That is, ministers saw something up for grabs. Why not take the booty? Because in the previous system booty had been collected. Contractor would give the minister a payoff. So with PPPs corruption became explicit and the amounts went up. And another thing happened. When these guys [private contractors] realized they couldn’t build infrastructure on the low amounts they promised government,

¹¹⁵ As one member of the NAC outlined to me: “The entire thinking on social policy during UPA was outsourced to the NAC. And it was a brilliant move by Mrs. [Sonia] Gandhi. The other side [Cabinet and Planning Commission] had no appetite, no interest, and no understanding for what we were working on. *Without us you would have had a runaway neo-liberal government, and Mrs. Gandhi knows the political fallout of that*” (Del-14).

¹¹⁶ Del-54

especially after the downturn [2008 financial crisis], they did what they do best, which is go up to the government and say ‘we can’t possibly build this the way we said we would, so change the contract. Give us a higher amount to finance this. Or allow us to increase the tolls.’ *Sometimes there were extra funds, more often there were not. So to make matters worse, the infrastructure remains half-built! And this is where the corruption scams came along: coal, 2G, and others, all of them were related to this story, though with different successes. Spending of government went up and, ironically, leakages not in service delivery, as they [neo-liberal elites] argued, but in PPPs goes up! So citizens [demonstrating with the IAC] rightly think they are not getting what they were promised while everyone appears to be lining their pockets.*¹¹⁷

Supporting these assertions, one Cabinet Minister speculated to me that “the PM thought that ‘if I take money away from corrupt bureaucracies through PPPs, ultimately then there will be less corruption.’”

It is notable to compare here the above-mentioned perspective of PPPs as perpetuating corruption, and the reduced role of the state in economic and social development therein, with that of the neo-liberals who had an altogether divergent view while also accepting limitations to the scheme. As one senior Cabinet Minister said to me:

*“I believed corruption takes place because of poor public administration in this country [India]. This was the major motivation for why we pushed the PPPs. The public sector doesn’t have the management skills. I thought it would be a better process of development. It was a clear equation. Public sector needs management skills, and private sector needs resources to get the job done. But it proved far more complicated and has been a mixed experience.”*¹¹⁸

Another neo-liberal elite, who led one of the key economic and social policy institutions in the UPA, goes into further detail on reducing the ambition of the state:

“Our overall aim was to make the state more productive, for which investment in the public sector simply wouldn’t cut it, and so we turned to the private

¹¹⁷ Del-10

¹¹⁸ Del-34

entities. For example, with the NREGA program we were able in the Planning Commission to insist on guidelines that gave both the states more flexibility and direct resources for productive use – namely water which is the key resource constraint. *Huge resistance! People like Jean Dreze [member of the NAC] and his ilk would say we are trying to hijack what is meant to be an employment guarantee program into a productivity enhancement program.* Their view was, ‘you want to do productivity enhancement, do it, we are not against it, but don’t do it with NREGA.’ The problem with these guys [reformist elites] is that they don’t think about budget constraints. So if a guy comes and asks for a day’s work, he should get it – never mind if he is 5 kilometers from his house or that there is no project worked out (and that there is a project 8 kilometers away that actually needs him!). No, he should be given the job there by us [the government]. *None of these people [in the NAC] had been given a reorientation that the economy had changed.’*¹¹⁹

A Congress politician, laying out the effects of the abovementioned ideological divisions on the rise of the IAC, said to me:

“We grew up in a country where we found ever present government; and development and growth is not everything. Security and safety is also important. After 1991 [liberalization reforms], my roads and schools were going away. Cities are no longer recognizable. When I was told “India Shining” what were the examples I was given? Mrs. Gandhi and Congress showed that we were there [development] through schemes like NREGA. *We lost the people to these movements [LAC] because we didn’t sufficiently continue these things. The technocrats like the Prime Minister just didn’t get this.*”¹²⁰

The debate around PPPs represents a corruption-related proxy issue that illustrates the ideological divisions in government during the UPA tenure that were in full potency during the IAC. As one NAC member, who during his career had worked closely with both Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, reflected to me: “There was always a debate between

¹¹⁹ Del-35

¹²⁰ Del-7

pro-growth and pro-redistribution. The PM and FM [Finance Minister] were not left-of-center.”¹²¹

Overall, for reformists, the UPA should have gone further to strengthen state mechanisms for social service delivery and public welfare. That the government did not, or had to be strongly pushed to do so, is directly linked to the nature of economic liberalization pursued by neo-liberals in positions of authority in the government. As one reformist in the UPA summed up to me:

“The UPA did not do enough to support social welfare policies and push them through earlier. Corruption doesn’t become an issue for people in India so long as governments are delivering and own their delivery systems. Look at Tamil Nadu, look at Andhra Pradesh under YSR Reddy. *Here, the blame goes to Manmohan Singh who never wanted these schemes and was complicit in destroying them by chasing growth.* Had he understood what we were trying to do from the start, corruption would not have troubled the Indian citizen in the way it did.”¹²²

Together, the force of their ideas and political elevation from Sonia Gandhi, meant that decision-makers in the NAC could not be disregarded or overlooked by the Cabinet and PMO.¹²³ The NAC lasted the entire tenure of the UPA government (2004-20014), even when the support of the Left parties (for whom the CMP was in large part established) was no longer needed in UPA-2. These decision-makers became increasingly agitated about rising inequality and the slow investment in, and development of, state intervention in fundamental social and economic policy issues such as corruption.

Next, I will map out the precise workings of the ideological checks and balance mechanism undergirding the UPA decision-making environment, discussed at length above, when it faced the IAC.

¹²¹ Del-12

¹²² Del-53

¹²³ Ian MacAuslan, “India’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A Case Study of How Change Happens,” From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States Can Change the World (Oxfam International: Oxfam, 2008).

Ideological Checks and Balance Mechanism

The ideological checks and balance mechanism results from the interaction between two independent variables: the institutional constraints within a coalition government (as detailed in Chapter Five) and the divergent cognitive frames among decision-making elites in authoritative positions of power (as discussed in the present chapter). It has been evidently at work throughout the analysis within both these empirical chapters, and I will outline it explicitly below.

In a coalition government, no one party can exercise unitary action unlike in a single-party majority government as we saw with the Congress under Prime Minister Gandhi in Chapter Three. In the previous chapter, I showed that in the UPA coalition not only was policymaking power diffused across the legislature among different partner parties, that in turn were accountable to different ideologies and societal constituencies, but at the intra-governmental level, policymaking was bifurcated among elites that functioned under two key centers of power: Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. This resulted in a polycentric institutional structure within the coalition. These two policymaking loci had an institutional basis, such that we observed the establishment of the NAC under the chairpersonship of coalition leader Gandhi, alongside the traditional Cabinet and executive offices under Singh. The separation of powers between different parties and institutions across and within the UPA government created institutional constraints that a made unitary and arbitrary government response to the IAC less likely. This manifested at both the dialectic and institutional level: Public statements and actions such as protests by, as well as negotiating committees and sub-committees that cut across, decision-makers in the NAC, PMO, Cabinet, Parliament, and the Congress Party

Despite several corruption scandals coming to light, the sheer magnitude of the IAC movement and the credibility crisis it generated caught the UPA by surprise. In this environment of uncertainty, the crisis had to be diagnosed before it could be resolved.

Thus, after thickly tracing the actions taken by the government, we observed a mix of strategies at the granular-level that included limited engagement, full negotiation, and a few short-lived cases of clampdown. To understand this causal narrative more fully, we needed to look at the ideational frames that led to these various steps which culminated in an overall tolerant response. As my theoretical discussion in Chapter Two outlined, multi-party coalitions are more likely to allow for divergent idea carriers to enter government and take up authoritative positions of power. These decision-making elites enter formal and informal networks within, and sometimes across, institutions. Elites then use their specific ideas as “weapons” to de-legitimize alternative ideologies within government. This ideological struggle for power over government output necessarily shapes institutional contestation.

As the present chapter has illustrated, different decision-making elites accepted, appropriated, deployed, and contested different combinations of ideas around social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist) and concepts of the nation (secular-nationalist) both to explain and resolve the crisis of the nationwide IAC.

Technocrats, bureaucrats, and activists brought into the NAC by Sonia Gandhi immediately after the left-of-center coalition was struck by the Congress in 2004 held reformist ideas; while technocrats, bureaucrats, and some elected officials led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the executive and Cabinet level, who came to prominence in government in the lead up to, and during, the 1991 dismantling of India’s dirigiste political economy, held neo-liberal ideas. While mainly party politicians in the Congress held secular-nationalist frames that were in concert with the Party’s historical discourse against religious-nationalists (as detailed and traced in Chapter Four). These decision-making elites understood the rise and roots of the IAC divergently and therefore sought alternative and contrasting strategies to respond to the movement. Each set of decision-making elites were empowered to prevent actions by the other set. Subsequently, and overall, a weighted average of decision-makers’ strategies emerged within a constrained institutional environment, producing a tolerant response toward the IAC.

Thus, the fragmented, segmented, and stratified structure of the UPA coalition prevented a system of unitary and arbitrary action thus promoting negotiations and bargaining. This institutional environment causally interacted with elites' independent and divergent cognitive frames to produce an ideological check and balance on government behavior in the face of anti-corruption collective action.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis provides robust evidence that divergent ideologies existed within the UPA government. Crucially, I have illustrated that decision-making elites' ideas were not instrumentally derived or situational, but are rather long-held cognitive frameworks that shaped how UPA elites viewed causal relationships in the world – namely pertaining to frames around social and economic development as well as concepts of the nation – throughout their time in government. These ideas, interacting with the institutional constraints within a coalition government setting (Chapter Five), placed an ideological check and balance mechanism on decision-making elites' behavior, producing a tolerant response when the UPA government faced the IAC.

In the next, concluding chapter, I will discuss the study's findings and detail the policy and theoretical implications of my argument, which includes a comparative assessment with other plausible cases where my argument resonates.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

One of the key goals of my project has been to show that elite ideas need to be taken seriously. This much may seem obvious when we discuss and write about government behavior in the developed world, but once we interrogate the leading monographs and theories on government decision-making in India, ideas are given little to no independent causal sway. I believe that my project provides a useful balancing to the literature's current focus and assumptions.

I have argued in this dissertation that government response to a credibility crisis as evidenced by a nationwide anti-corruption movement is conditioned by the absence or presence of an ideologically plural central government. If the ruling government has an electoral majority and decision-makers therein possess a dominant, homogenous ideology then decision-making elites are more likely to behave intolerantly toward the movement. If, on the other hand, the ruling government functions within a multi-party coalition and decision-makers therein possesses diverse, often conflictual, ideas, or cognitive frameworks about how the world works, then we are more likely to observe an ideological checks and balance on executive behavior and therefore a more tolerant response to the movement.

This conclusion chapter is divided into three sections. I first present a summary of the argument and key aspects of my findings. I then turn to the policy implications of my research which includes a comparative assessment with other plausible cases where my argument resonates. I finish with the theoretical implications of my argument, namely with recourse to executive control mechanisms in the coalition politics literature, and outline areas for future research.

Summary of Findings

The contrasting government responses to anti-corruption movements between 2011-2015 around the world provided this project with the impetus to analyze the intersection of two related issues for scholars of democratic politics. Firstly, I sought to understand why some democracies behave intolerantly (or illiberally) in the face of nationwide collective action. Secondly, I wanted to understand which factors determine, or rather constrain, government decision-making in India during a credibility crisis, denoted by a nationwide anti-corruption movement.

The central puzzle motivating this work has therefore been: *why do some democratic governments suppress anti-corruption movements while others do not?* These divergent responses shatter hegemonic assumptions in political science scholarship that demarcate intolerant government behavior through an authoritarian-democratic analytic bifurcation, which, as I argued in Chapter Two, prove to be over-determined and fail to identify precise causal mechanisms linking regime type to government response. To develop my argument, I compare two historical cases from India, wherein I build a narrative causal theory through thick description and comprehensive qualitative fieldwork using under-utilized archives from three separate countries (India, U.S., and UK) and over 110 original interviews with state elites.

India was the most compelling state for analysis because, beyond being the largest democracy in the world and therefore ripe for social scientific variations, I could identify a cross-historical set of cases that would allow me to control for several spurious factors within the complex area of government decision-making. One of these is of course partisanship: I studied two Congress Party-led governments, one from the 1970s under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the other, more recently in the 2000s, under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Each government faced comparable credibility crises brought on by similar nationwide anti-corruption movements. In the lead-up to and

during this collective action, grand corruption at the Centre was exposed in both governments which mired Cabinet ministers and even the respective Prime Ministers. Each government faced this crisis of credibility that was in turn exacerbated within weakening macroeconomic conditions.

Chapter Two details my argument. In the main, extant theories advance electoral incentives and rent-seeking logics to explain the determinants of government behavior in India. Such accounts do tell us a lot about decision-making around elections and the long-term predictable politics of budgets and policy formulations. But I show they are not useful for helping us understand government tolerance under credibility crisis conditions, such as facing nationwide anti-corruption movements, where interests such as votes and rents are not objectively given. International pressure arguments, meanwhile, prove insufficient as they assume that governments' domestic actions correspond to the demands of the international community – in fact I show that the case can often be the opposite. Missing from these alternative arguments, is a sufficient accounting of elites' ideas and an examination of internal constraints on action within government.

One of the salient features of the empirical chapters which follow (Three-Six) was establishing the exogeneity of elite ideas as well as establishing their causal independence against objective, material interests. I did this by expanding the empirical scope of study in terms of both temporal range and level of analysis. I thus took seriously decision-making elites' statements and behavior not only at key moments related directly to my dependent variable – their response at the time of the anti-corruption movement – but also through several sequences of indirectly related events and the movement of decision-makers, or idea carriers, across institutional settings over an extended period including prior to entering authoritative positions in government.

The core argument built from substantial empirical research has been that an interaction between two (inter-related but causally independent) variables proximately explains the divergent outcomes of government response toward anti-corruption

movements in India. These are i) government type (single-party majority or multi-party coalition) and ii) decision-makers' ideas (divergent and dispersed in authoritative positions in government or not). The specific ideas highlighted in my study pertain mainly to frameworks around social and economic development (neo-liberal/reformist) and concepts of the nation (inclusive/exclusive). The interaction between these variables, specifically a multi-party coalition with divergent and dispersed ideas in positions of authority, produces an ideological checks and balance mechanism that makes a tolerant government response more likely.

Chapters Three and Five focus on the distinct institutional arrangements that shaped the environment for ideational struggle among decision-makers of each government. I start chronologically by examining the historical case first. As I show in Chapter Three, the Congress Party won a landslide election in 1971 which gave it a two-thirds majority in the national assembly and complete control of the Cabinet and executive. While the UPA government, led by the Congress since coming to power in 2004 and then again in 2009, was comprised of a coalition of parties – a system firmly entrenched since the fragmentation of Indian politics since 1989. Both dominant and subordinate decision-makers shared a set of *rules of the game* that specified, often tacitly, the specific forms of struggle that were legitimate within each type of government. In Chapter Three I showed that in the Congress government led by Indira Gandhi, contestation among decision-makers was low and cooperation high, and that this government often displayed autonomous and arbitrary policy action. In contrast, Chapter Five illustrates that in the UPA, led by Manmohan Singh, there were significantly more veto players across parties and within the Congress tent in government. This resulted in high contestation among decision-makers and often low cooperation on public policy action, thus resulting in constrained executive action. This intensified fissures between parties as well as between decision-makers, meaning that the government could not act unilaterally in dealing with the IAC movement at the cost of inviting further pressure upon a precarious coalition. Additionally,

unlike the Congress government in the lead up to the 1975 suppression of the JPM, the UPA coalition in 2012 included decision-making elites, chiefly technocrats, with divergent ideas dispersed in authoritative positions of power.

Chapters Four and Six examine the causal role of ideas in each case. In the majority Congress government, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi held de facto presidential powers and was the main custodian of the national interest, which it was incumbent upon her to define. The government's perspectives, led mainly by Gandhi, were enshrined within her left-of-center Congress (R) faction's populism that had been concretizing in the lead up to, and after, the unified Congress' split in 1969. This populism was undergirded by the Congress' *inclusive* nationalism – anchored in secularism with a preference for socialism and focus on minority rights. The Prime Minister, along with her close advisers, viewed the JPM as mobilized through right-wing *exclusivist* nationalist groups such as RSS and backed by opposition parties. The Party's unchecked, homogenous ideology served as the rationale for the executive to build solidarity within the government, especially in a crisis environment where government credibility was low and had to therefore be re-established, and suppress ideological “others” within the JPM and among its sympathizers. Hence, Prime Minister Gandhi could take unitary action to suppress the anti-corruption movement, wherein 110,806 citizens were detained.

In contrast, as illustrated in Chapter Six, no such uniformity of ideas existed in the UPA government. Here, not only party politicians as in the historical case, but bureaucrats, activists, and technocrats also occupied authoritative positions of power and between them held different cognitive frameworks that led them to view the IAC anti-corruption collective action, and the sources of government corruption, divergently. Indeed, technocrats, bureaucrats, and party politicians possess separate incentive structures and preferences based on their distinct professional and personal backgrounds. I centralize and assess these differences in Chapter Six. The evidence is illustrated through thickly tracing the entry of proponents of new issue understandings or ideological frameworks in the

Indian government – such as the pro-liberalization technocrats (neo-liberals) that entered government in the 1980s and 1990s and then took up authoritative positions of power during the UPA government as part of the PMO, Cabinet, and Planning Commission; and the pro-redistribution technocrats and activists (reformists) of the rights-based movements of the 1990s and early 2000s who also took up authoritative positions of power during the UPA government principally as part of the de facto parallel cabinet, NAC.

I then illustrate the precise workings of the ideological checks and balance causal mechanism. I showed how a struggle over the very definition of the most legitimate forms of ideas in government existed throughout the UPA's tenure. In the main, neo-liberal and reformist elites contested for influence within the government, as well as competing to define the state, and in particular the state's role in Indian social and economic life. These perspectives shaped the government's diagnosis of, and strategy toward, the IAC: on one end of the scale some were more sympathetic toward the IAC and on the other end some were more hostile. The interaction between the non-cooperative coalition government and divergent ideologies among decision-making elites produced an ideas-based check and balance mechanism upon the arbitrary power of the UPA in the face of the IAC, which made the subsequent negotiated response more likely.

In sum, the simple claim of my study is the following: Democratic governments such as India, where heterogeneous ideas are diffused among decision-makers in a coalition government, are better suited to produce to a tolerant response to nationwide anti-corruption movements. This is less likely in majoritarian governments in which homogenous ideas dominate decision-making and governments are thus more likely to behave unilaterally and arbitrarily.¹

¹ The recent (May 2014) return to power of a single-party majority government (BJP) in India dominated by a homogenous ideology (religious-nationalist) is in part a consequence of perceptions that a series of coalition governments at the Centre for 25 years held back the country's development and progress, along social, political, and economic lines. As my theory shows, this not the case with regards to tolerance in the face of anti-corruption civic activism. Furthermore, my theory would predict that recent and future instances of intolerance from the BJP government would be born out from the causal interactions I detail here.

Comparative Perspective and Policy Implications

1. Ideological Checks and Balances: A Comparative Perspective

While this dissertation has been a comparative study of two governments in one country, its central argument resonates with accounts of government response to anti-corruption movements in other parts of the world.² Here, I specifically look at contexts like India, namely stable multi-party developing democracies that have faced nationwide anti-corruption movements. Importantly, these cases are from low- and middle-income countries where rent-seeking and other material external pressures would be plausibly considered tougher constraints on government behavior over and above ideology.

The *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) government's intolerant response under Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan toward two anti-corruption movements in 2013, for example, closely resembles my account. The AKP came to power in 2002 and increased its vote share in every subsequent election until 2011.³ Simultaneously, during this time the AKP undercut the Judiciary, Parliament, Military, and other state institutions through constitutional amendments and other means to weaken challenges to the government and a threat to its core Islamist ideology, undergirded by the ultra-rightist *Milli Görüş* ("National

² No explanatory account is complete without close attention to local dynamics of meaning making; yet no practice is so unique as to foreclose some degree of generality (Vincent Pouliot, "Practice Tracing," in *Process Tracing*, ed. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, 258). This type of partial generalizability enters the realm of middle-range theory (as discussed in Chapter Two). Middle-range theories deal with delimited aspects of social phenomena. Contemporary scholars have argued that this is the way forward for political science, as it is particularly well-suited to building theories based on causal mechanisms through process-tracing – such as my study, here (Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in World Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); David Lake, "Why 'Isms' Are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academics Sects as Impediments for the Iraq War," *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (2011): 7–52).

³ Pelin A. Musil, "Emergence of a Dominant Party System After Multipartyism: Theoretical Implications from the Case of the AKP in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015): 71–92.

View”) movement.⁴ However, after 2012 the AKP government and Erdogan’s populist star began to fall as the economy slowed down and his government faced a series of political and corruption crises. Inter-elite ideological competition, which has been the hallmark of Turkish politics throughout the rise of the AKP – between Islamists, Gulenists (*Hizmet*), Kemalists, and others – ruptured and came to a crescendo in the lead up to, and during, the anti-corruption wave.⁵ Like Indira Gandhi in 1975, Erdogan believes himself to be the custodian of the national interest, specifically the state’s official Islam.⁶ Thus the AKP majority government viewed the function of the anti-corruption movement, mobilizing several disparate social and political groups, in hostile terms, by focusing on movement supporters and sympathizers such as secular-national Kemalists and erstwhile allies, the Gulenists, who in the eyes of the AKP attempted to defile and discredit the government and undermine the AKP’s version of Islamism.⁷ Suppression, therefore, became a likely course of action.

Around this time, in Brazil, an anti-corruption movement, which began innocuously against an increase in transportation costs but quickly transformed, was tolerated by the federal government, led since 2002 by the Workers’ Party coalition (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or PT).⁸ A hybrid of consensual and majoritarian rule has come to signify governance at the Centre in Brazil, where coalitions have become dominant and larger since Fernando

⁴ A movement that is kin to the Muslim Brotherhood network. See, Svante E. Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015); Ersin Kalaycioglu, “Justice and Development Party at the Helm: Resurgence of Islam or Restitution of the Right-of-Center Predominant Party,” *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 1 (2010): 29–44; Mustafa Akyol, “How Morsi Matters in Turkish Politics,” *Al-Monitor*, May 17, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2pGv3q1> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

⁵ Ergun Ozbudun, “AKP at the Crossroads: Erdogan’s Majoritarian Drift,” *South European Society and Politics* 19, no. 2 (2014): 155–67, 138. Indeed, the Turkish political system has become two-dimensional in recent years, encompassed by a left (secularist)-right (pro-Islamist) cleavage (Ali Carkoglu and Melvin Hinich, “A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences,” *Electoral Studies* 25 (2006): 369–92).

⁶ Cornell and Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order.”

⁷ On the ideological distinctions between the Gulenists and AKP, see: Sebnem Gumuscu, “The Clash of Islamists: The Crisis of the Turkish State and Democracy” (Contemporary Turkish Politics Workshop: Baker Institute, Rice University, 2016).

⁸ Riordan Roett, *Brazil: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 127; M. Melo and C. Pereira, *Making Brazil Work: Checking the President in a Multiparty System* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 167.

Henrique Cardoso's term in the late 1990s.⁹ Since the PT's rise to power, ideological balancing within coalitions has been a critical factor in policy-making and governance.¹⁰ Over time, this has meant that coalitions and Cabinets have become more ideologically diverse, larger, and often conflictual. This was clearly evident in the Dilma Rousseff government that faced the 2013 anti-corruption movement.¹¹ President Rousseff built a heterogeneous, oversized, and over concentrated governing coalition, denoting internal factions within the PT.¹² The ideological spectrum of this coalition stretched from left to right wing parties, including a variety of technocrats, not least Rousseff herself.¹³ After meeting with leaders of states as well as representatives of the anti-corruption agitation at the end of June 2013, President Rousseff announced a "national pact" of reforms pertaining to, inter alia, social services reforms and anti-corruption measures.¹⁴ It is plausible to assert that the tolerant and quick turnaround in government response (within a month of the demonstrations starting) was in part born out of an ideologically plural Cabinet environment that placed a check and balance on arbitrary executive action in response to the anti-corruption movement.¹⁵

Like the Brazil case, the Indonesian political structure encourages a strong presidency together with a fragmented multi-party Parliament. Against the exposure of corruption scandals, chiefly the Century Bank outrage, which implicated senior officials in

⁹ Timothy Power and Matthew Taylor, eds., *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil: The Struggle for Accountability* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 51.

¹⁰ Power and Taylor, *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil*; Melo and Pereira, *Making Brazil Work*, 55.

¹¹ Tom Lansford, ed., *Political Handbook of the World 2014* (CQ Press, 2014), 179.

¹² Timothy Power, "Continuity in a Changing Brazil: The Transition from Lula to Dilma," in *Brazil Under Lula: A Country in Transition*, ed. Fabio de Castro, Kees Koonings, and Marianne Wiesebron (Palgrave, 2014), 10.

¹³ Power and Taylor, *Corruption and Democracy in Brazil*, 46.

¹⁴ The Economist, "The Cries Are Answered," 13 June 2013, <http://econ.st/2qnzDFS> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

¹⁵ Another illustration of the non-cooperative nature of the coalition is found in the politics surrounding Dilma Rousseff's impeachment amidst corruption and economic scandals in 2016. Among other factors, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB) party – which anchored the governing coalition – broke from the PT and, after taking over office on an interim basis until the end of 2018, shifted the government to the ideological right. For more, see: Simon Romero, "Dilma Rousseff Is Ousted as Brazil's President in Impeachment Vote," *The New York Times*, 31 August 2016, <http://nyti.ms/2qnzYbC> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

government, anti-corruption demonstrations spread across Indonesia from November 2009 onwards. The President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY)-led coalition government responded largely tolerantly. The Indonesian Parliament, People's Representative Council (DPR), has in recent years become a hallmark for coalitions from across an ideological spectrum within the country's 16 political parties, ranging from rising conservative Islamic to secular parties among others.¹⁶ Cabinet positions during this time were spread equally between technocrats, including economist Boediono as Vice President, and political parties.¹⁷ Hence SBY termed the 34-member Cabinet *Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu* (the United Indonesia Cabinet). But this did not ensure harmony within the government, as expected by the President, and parties within the same coalition often disagreed and even vociferously criticized the government's initiatives, thus underscoring their divergent ideological anchoring.¹⁸ Indeed, it was coalition partner parties Golkar and Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) who began a Parliamentary investigation into the alleged irregularities in the bailout fund for Century Bank led by Boediono and Finance Minister Sri Mulyani.¹⁹ This internal ideological balancing within government most plausibly ensured the absence of arbitrary, intolerant action against the anti-corruption demonstrations.

In contrast to the Indonesian case, another study from Southeast Asia, namely Malaysia, shows an intolerant government response to the anti-corruption *Bersih* (clean) movement. *Bersih's* demonstrations began after the controversial 2008 election and against the backdrop of deteriorating economic conditions, and have continued since. The

¹⁶ Rodd McGibbon, "Indonesian Politics in 2006: Stability, Compromise, and Shifting Contests Over Ideology," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 321–40; Anies Baswedan, "Indonesian Politics in 2007: The Presidency, Local Elections, and the Future of Democracy," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 43, no. 3 (2007): 323–40; Rizal Sukma, "Indonesian Politics in 2009: Defective Elections, Resilient Democracy," *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 45, no. 3 (2009): 317–36.

¹⁷ Baswedan, "Indonesian Politics in 2007," 32; Hanta Yuda, "Portrait of the Institutionalization of the Presidential System," *Indonesia 2006* (Jakarta: Indonesian Institute, 2007).

¹⁸ Stephen Sherlock, "The Parliament in Indonesia's Decade of Democracy: People's Forum or Chamber of Cronies," in *Problems of Democratization in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society*, Singapore (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 174; Edward Aspinall, "Indonesia in 2009: Democratic Triumphs and Trials" (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), 110.

¹⁹ Dirk Tomsa, "A Storm in a Bank Vault," *Inside Indonesia*, 1 May 2010, <http://bit.ly/2qnmRr0> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

demonstrations are against government corruption, chiefly targeting the alleged embezzlement of hundreds of million dollars by Prime Minister Najib Razak from a suffering state-development fund. Populist Razak is, today, the undisputed leader of the Barisan Nasional (BN) government, a conservative coalition run by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). It is a coalition in name-only (registered as a single-party) with the UMNO the historically dominant player and particularly powerful since 2013.²⁰ The UMNO's right-wing, ultra-Malay nationalism has concretized during the Razak administration, witnessing the government become a fiercer vehicle for majoritarian, or *bumiputra* (indigenous Malay), interests.²¹ This is reflected not only in the roster of government ministers and its chief decision-makers, but also in the co-optation of the judiciary.²² As the traditionally ethno-nationalist cleavages have hardened since the emergence of a two-party bloc in 2008, the BN government, averring its rising nationalist suspicions, has become more suppressive against the *Bersih*.²³ Throughout the movement's demonstrations the government has intensified their crackdown, detaining movement leaders and sympathizers under draconian anti-terrorism and anti-sedition legislation as well as shutting down websites.²⁴

Lastly, and to illustrate a study from Europe, the case of recent anti-corruption demonstrations in Romania and the nature of government response therein closely

²⁰ Meredith Weiss, "Malaysia's 13th General Elections: Same Result, Different Outcome," *Asian Survey* 53, no. 6 (2013): 1148; William Case, "Malaysia in 2013: A Benighted Election Day (and Other Events)," *Asian Survey* 54, no. 1 (2014): 56. One author goes as far to say that UMNO "owns" Barisan (Ajay Raina, "Why There Are No Partisan Turnovers in Malaysia: A Perspective," *Asian Survey* 56, no. 5 (2016): 849). UMNO performed better than ever, rising by 88 seats – just one seat shy of the opposition coalition, Pakatan's, entire total. The party's hegemony was restored.

²¹ Weiss, "Malaysia's 13th General Elections," 1139; Case, "Malaysia in 2013," 62; Raina, "Why There Are No Partisan Turnovers in Malaysia," 850; Clive Kessler, "Malaysia's GE13: What Happened, What Now?," *Aliran Monthly* 33, no. 4 (2013): 9–14.

²² Weiss, "Malaysia's 13th General Elections," 1156; Poh Ping Lee, "Malaysia in 2015: A Denouement of Sorts for the Prime Minister," *Asian Survey* 56, no. 1 (2016): 195.

²³ Case, "Malaysia in 2013," 57; Bridget Welsh, "Malaysia's Elections: A Step Backward," *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4 (October 2013): 138, 144; "Malaysia Intensifies Crackdown on Anti-Corruption Protesters," *Financial Times*, 19 November 2016, <http://on.ft.com/2fe8cvt> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

²⁴ "Creating a Culture of Fear: The Criminalization of Peaceful Expression in Malaysia," *Human Rights Watch*, <http://bit.ly/2oFEqG4> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

approximates the arguments made in this dissertation. In early February 2017, the Romanian government unveiled an executive order to decriminalize public officials' graft offences under \$47,500. A draft bill, that would free prisoners serving sentences of up to five years for non-violent crimes including corruption, was also sent to Parliament. This triggered massive anti-corruption demonstrations around Romania, notably in front of government headquarters, in *Piata Victoriei* square.²⁵ Within a few days, the government repealed the decree with no confrontation between the movement and security forces, signaling a tolerant response. The ruling coalition government comprises the left-wing Social Democrat Party (PSD) and the center-right Liberal-Democrat Alliance (ALDE), with outside support from the minority-oriented Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). Though UDMR has pledged to cooperate with the ruling coalition, their behavior has suggested otherwise, and they have been vocal in their criticism against the amnesty to corrupt officials, while others have resigned from government as a stand against the decree.²⁶ The coalition government's Cabinet has 26 ministers – the largest in 17 years – with a mix of center-right and left politicians as well as technocrats, controlling only 53% of seats in Parliament. Indeed, Romania's recent national politics has been filled with unstable coalitions often with mixed ideological factions along both ethnic nationalism and left-right scales.²⁷ There have also been semi- and full-technocratic governments during this time.²⁸ To add to governance instability, the government-President fraught relationship is an

²⁵ "Protests Rock Romania after Government Weakens Corruption Law," *New York Times*, <http://nyti.ms/2l2DDZL> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

²⁶ "Romanian Justice Minister Quits After Graft Decree Debacle," *Reuters*, <http://reut.rs/2qnf8cj> (Accessed 20 April 2017).

²⁷ Victoria Stoiciu, "Austerity and Structural Reforms in Romania: Severe Measures, Questionable Economic Results, and Negative Social Consequences," *International Policy Analysis* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012); Toma Burean and Raluca Popp, "The Ideological Mapping of Political Parties in Romania," *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, no. 1 (2015): 118–36; C. Marian and R.F. King, "Perceiving the Line: The Relevance of the Left-Right Ideological Dimension for Voter Preferences in Romania," *Expert Electoral*, no. 2 (2014): 3–18.

²⁸ McDonnell and Valbruzzi, "Defining and Classifying Technocrat-Led and Technocrat Governments"; Stoiciu, "Austerity and Structural Reforms in Romania: Severe Measures, Questionable Economic Results, and Negative Social Consequences." The consideration and subsequent implementation of austerity measures in the last few years has brought in more conservative quorum of public intellectuals into government beside the more traditional socialist technocrats.

idiosyncrasy of the Romanian political system.²⁹ During the current crisis, the President is fully supporting the anti-corruption demonstrations. It is plausible to assert that these political and ideological conditions have prevented a suppressive and arbitrary response to the movement.

There are distinct features to each context discussed above, but the mechanisms that inhere in my theory are clearly at work in cases beyond India.

2. Policy Implications: Parliamentary Democracy and Pathways to Civic Activism

My dissertation investigates the conditions under which democratic governments in the developing world, namely India, respond to anti-corruption demonstrations with suppression or a more tolerant response with negotiations. In doing so, this research provides relevant insights to policy makers who can use this study to conceptualize democratic government design in the future, especially in large, diverse societies such as India. With the last 25 years being witness to an unprecedented establishment of revamped political systems in new and old states alike, the present study may prove useful.³⁰

For example, in recent cases of internationally-led state building in post-conflict contexts such as Afghanistan, my theory would predict that suppressive government behavior is less likely to emerge from multi-party, ideologically heterogeneous executives. Contra this policy suggestion, in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent constitutional design, a presidential system with centralized powers was given primacy. In such multi-ethnic, deeply regional, and often highly stratified contexts, different ideological factions over the past decade have not been effectively incorporated or

²⁹ C. Marian and R.F. King, "A War of Two Palaces: Semi-Presidential Government and Strategic Conflict," in *Romania Under Basescu: Aspirations, Achievements, and Frustrations During His First Presidential Term*, ed. R.F. King and Paul Sum (Lexington Books, 2011).

³⁰ South Sudan (2011), Kosovo (2008), Serbia (2006), Montenegro (2006), East Timor (2002), to name a few cases that have witnessed new government designs in the past decade.

encouraged in policy and governance. Subsequently, in a recent innovation, after the 2014 run-off election, a settlement was reached by rival political factions together with the U.S. to roadmap constitutional amendments that would shift the government to a power-sharing, parliamentary democracy. At the time of writing on 20 April 2017, this proposal has not been reified but, I would argue, represents the start of a more effective direction for creating ideas-based checks and balances within the executive.

Another policy implication of my theory is that encouraging ideological plurality at the central government level is more likely to provide favorable conditions for civil society participation in governance. Civic involvement in governance is key to maximizing social and economic welfare through, for example, combating corruption. With a government more tolerant toward anti-corruption demonstrations, civic activists are more likely to influence future reform processes. The absence of this input can be detrimental to democratic deepening. In Turkey, for example, civil society is not seen as a major stakeholder. Activists have historically played a limited role in policy-making and there is currently no mechanism enabling citizens to monitor government commitments. My theory would predict that the entrenchment of a dominant ideology within a majoritarian government has played a proximate role in preventing pathways for civil society to engage in governance in Turkey and plausibly elsewhere. As we know from the earlier discussion in Chapter Two, institutional sympathizers are crucial to reform movements' capacity to negotiate with state elites and this is more likely in a coalition setting with ideologically distinct stakeholders providing more openings in government.

Theoretical Implications and Looking Ahead

1. Delegation and Committees in Coalition Governments

One of the theoretical implications of my argument can be situated within developing work on executive control mechanisms in the coalition politics literature. Parliamentary democracies are dependent on parliament for control of the political executive to ensure stable governance.³¹ But in India, as plausibly elsewhere, the executive is often able to bypass parliament, or even the Cabinet, to debate and action policy.³² This presents a monitoring and control challenge that is heightened in coalitions, which face more informational asymmetries and veto threats, than single-party majority governments.³³ Furthermore, credibility crisis environments, such as when governments face nationwide anti-corruption movements, increase uncertainty faced by coalitions as parties are not aware of the political outcomes they seek or the instruments at their disposal (see Chapter Two). Ideological checks and balances, as conceptualized in my project, may illustrate one mechanism for ensuring more effective delegation control for stable governance during crises through employing mixed-member coalition committees.³⁴

³¹ Royce Carroll and Gary Cox, "Shadowing Ministers: Monitoring Partners in Coalition Governments," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, no. 2 (2012): 221.

³² Strom, Muller, and Smith, "Parliamentary Control," 518

³³ L.W. Martin and G. Vanberg, "Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005): 93–106.

³⁴ One way to consider this implication, is to think about developments in behavioral economics that have come to popular light in the past 5-10 years. For example, nudge politics involves using choice architecture—the ways decisions are framed or presented—to modify choosers', or in my case elites decision-makers', behavior (Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (Penguin Books, 2008)). As such, designing Cabinets and executives that are ideologically heterogeneous may provide an environment where one decision-maker's framework for a given policy diagnosis is "nudged" toward an alternate, perhaps more welfare maximizing, direction given a fellow decision-maker's contrasting ideological make-up. Another way to think about ideologically heterogeneous Cabinets, is through the lens of a recent book combining insights from anthropology and business from Gillian Tett, who argues that organizations fail because individuals and groups can become stuck in their ways, with fatal results. These silos, she continues, can be broken down by, inter alia, designing offices to encourage social "collisions" to avoid divided thinking which is likely to encourage innovation (*The Silo Effect: The Peril of Expertise and the Promise of Breaking Down Barriers* (Simon and Schuster, 2016)).

Executive monitoring and control did not exist in the Indira Gandhi-led Congress government; or, as I argue, the ideological coherence between decision-makers meant that the Prime Minister could side-step her council of ministers in instituting the suppressive emergency when faced with the JPM crisis. In the UPA, however, executive control did exist. This was not through the striking of a coalition agreement, but, I illustrate, through ideological heterogeneity among divergent elites which ensured a counter-balancing to arbitrary decision-making during the IAC crisis producing a tolerant government response.

In India, and elsewhere, a common mechanism to overcome executive accountability challenges pertains to coalition agreements such as the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) during the Congress-led UPA coalition.³⁵ Despite starting off smoothly, the agreement soon unraveled and by UPA-2 existed in name only. Studies of coalition agreements concur that, although sometimes relevant guides for governance and policy, these pacts often break at the seams during a crisis which triggers an unstable environment around which there are no rules and one party's gain is seen as another party's loss.³⁶

Coalition parties also proliferate various types of committees to overcome delegation challenges.³⁷ In these committees, given the high costs linked to constant monitoring and general distrust among partners, the Prime Minister often ends up favoring their own party.³⁸ Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter Five, coalition parties that have a sub-national or regional base, retrench during moments of crisis, adding further difficulty to delegation.³⁹ However, this limitation is linked to the literature's current focus on parties as

³⁵ Monitoring mechanisms such as a CMP provides a set of terms on which the Cabinet is allowed to take office in order to create incentive compatibility between parties.

³⁶ T. Saalfeld, "Institutions, Chance, and Choices: The Dynamics of Cabinet Survival," in *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*, ed. K. Strom, W.C. Muller, and T. Bergman (Oxford University Press, 2008); L. De Winter, A. Timmermans, and P. Dumont, "Belgium: On Government Agreements, Evangelists, Followers and Heretics," in *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, ed. W.C. Muller and K. Strom (Oxford University Press, 2000), 322.

³⁷ D. Kim and G. Loewenberg, "The Role of Parliamentary Committees in Coalition Governments: Keeping Tabs on Coalition Partners in the German Bundestag," *Comparative Political Studies* 38, no. 1 (2005): 104–29.

³⁸ R.B. Andeweg, "Ministers as Double Agents? The Delegation Process Between Cabinet and Ministers," *European Journal of Political Research*, no. 37 (2000): 377–95.

³⁹ Strom, Muller, and Smith, "Parliamentary Control."

unitary actors. As my theory illustrates, governments, and parties therein, are not monoliths. In the UPA, for example, the NAC, Cabinet ministers, coalition partners, party dynasts, senior bureaucrats, technocrats, activists, and others – all grouped, crucially, around a specific constellation of divergent cognitive frames – sat on a host of important committees. Their frames acted to counterbalance the executive's arbitrary decisions. Though this often led to stalemate, during a crisis environment, when conflict resolution was demanded, a welfare maximizing outcome such as toleration of the IAC and negotiation with the movement was produced.

My theory therefore implies that we need to go beyond preference divergence as denoted through parties as unitary actors, and instead change emphasis to a variety of decision-making elites – party politicians, technocrats, activists, and others – with distinct and divergent ideational frames.⁴⁰ Ideological differences act as nudges, or behave as “fire alarms,” on behavior and prove less costly as a delegation mechanism than reviewing all ministerial actions and proposals.⁴¹ This proposition ties in with the very nascent literature on the subject of coalition committees which hypothesizes that mixed committees, with both cabinet and non-cabinet members (i.e. outside experts and other elites with policymaking influence and political clout such as party dynasts), are better suited for crisis and conflict resolution.⁴²

⁴⁰ The diversity of backgrounds and ideas also allows to increase the government's legitimacy among a wider set of stakeholders during the crisis.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 522; Martin and Vanberg, “Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review.”

⁴² R.B. Andeweg and A. Timmermans, “Conflict Management in Coalition Government,” in *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining*, 278.

2. Future Research

A. Sources of Collective Action

While conducting research for this project, I was struck by the mosaics of collective action in developing countries. The issue of corruption, specifically, draws a wide array of perspectives regarding the contours and meaning of corruption and of course a wide palette of people which is especially intriguing in a society such as India where there are several ethnic, class, religious, and nationalist cleavages that usually do not coalesce around one issue (such as corruption). Though my dissertation is primarily concerned with internal government politics and ideas and cognitive frames at the elite-level of government – why decision-makers do one thing over another – as I move forward I would like to uncover the “bottom-up” perspectives related to my argument and the roots of anti-corruption collective action more comprehensively. To that end, I would like to explore the dynamics behind the *timing* of and *demographics* behind anti-corruption collective action. In simple terms, I want to understand why some citizens, and not others, across developing democracies have mobilized against corruption in recent years especially when information regarding corruption is open and constant. I would particularly like to examine these questions within the context of the post-2008 global financial crisis.

B. Expansion of Cases

I hope to expand the case studies in this dissertation comparatively to Emerging Market (EM) nations post-2008 financial crisis. Economic crises are widely theorized to entail social dislocation and political contention. Just as the economic turmoil in countries such as inter alia India, Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa after the 2008 crisis has been similar (as one would expect in a globalized financial environment) so the political

contention that has followed the crisis has also been comparable across these nations.⁴³ As such, one interpretation of the anti-corruption waves across EM countries can be understood as a symptom of the global “crisis of capitalism” and its effects post-2008. These movements, furthermore, share some distinctive features in terms of mobilization and organizational tools – namely the rampantly spreading use of social media and other communication tools such as the smart phone – which presents a point from where to operationalize further study in this regard. I believe there are very exciting pathways for future research in exploring anti-corruption collective action in these contexts.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have illustrated precisely how elite ideas and the structure of government interact to produce an ideological check and balance on government behavior in India. This argument departs from dominant accounts in the same field, which conceptualize preferences as fixed and exogenous.

Existing explanatory logics of government behavior in India have tended to underscore the role of exogenous drivers, chiefly special interests and votes, in shaping government behavior. These works dovetail with conceptions of India as a *patronage democracy* where government behavior is purely strategic, and thus conditioned by the ability of elected officials to distribute vast state resources to citizens on a targeted basis using their discretionary powers in the implementation of state policy. In turn, the dominant argument goes, Indian government tolerance should be shaped by threats to rents and votes. However, given the broad umbrella of anti-corruption movements and their infrequency, the traditional Indian electoral and special interest cleavages of ethnicity, class, caste, and geography, among others become murky. Who to punish and who to tolerate is overcast. In

⁴³ A related pathway for extending one part of my argument is through a large-n OLS regression of coalition and majority governments and their response to anti-corruption movements (or a proxy arena where tolerance would be one important outcome).

situations of a nationwide anti-corruption movement, agents are unsure about how to maximize utility, or interests, given that the uncertainties are too great, the moment unique, and prediction obscured.

As much as the above-mentioned explanations are widely referenced with regards to government response to anti-corruption agitations, the factors that are endogenous to governance and crises – such as how elite decision-makers view causal relationships in the world and how they function in an environment where political power is fought over to shape public policy – are surprisingly scarce. The purpose of the evidence detailed in this project has not simply been to illustrate that ideas act as *road maps* for individual actors to clarify their goals or limit the range of strategies to be taken when interests are obscured; but I have attempted to go further by detailing the mechanisms by which specific sets of ideas in government get embedded and co-exist as well as their exogenous sources in order to underscore causal independence. In doing so, I depart from prevailing rational-choice paradigms in the study of Indian government behavior, for which I take counsel from celebrated American economist, Albert Hirschman.⁴⁴

In 1970, Hirschman presciently illuminated that social science research is becoming far too paradigm-oriented and focused on building large-scale models to explain political phenomena. Paradigms, he argues, lay down excessive constraints on the conceivable changes among and within individuals and societies, especially in studies on developing contexts such as India. For Hirschman, and the approach taken to the present study, the *cognitive style* of research need not follow a stringent, paradigmatic approach.⁴⁵ This does not mean that with respect to actual analysis ideal types and paradigms are not important to begin thinking about or framing research questions and concepts. Indeed, I have rested on several such devices throughout this study. But our claims and the extent to which they act

⁴⁴ Alberto O. Hirschman, “The Search for Paradigms of a Hindrance to Understanding,” *World Politics* 22, no. 3 (1970): 329–43.

⁴⁵ Paul Feyerabend, one of the 20th century’s leading philosophers of science, makes it clear that he prefers stories to arguments, and that rival stories are to be assessed in terms of how interesting, appealing, or revealing they are (Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (Verso, 2010)).

as covering laws must remain cautious and limited in ambition. In his own words, drawing on an analogy between a social scientist and an architect, Hirschman writes:

“The architect of social change can never have a reliable blueprint. Not only is each house he builds different from any other that was built before, but it also necessarily uses new construction materials and even experiments with untested principles of stress and structure. Therefore, what can be most usefully conveyed by the builders of one house is an understanding of the experience that made it at all possible to build under these trying circumstances.”⁴⁶

None of this is to say that prevailing paradigms in the study of government behavior in India are ineffective. Such an assertion would be implausible given the range and depth of empirical evidence in our best theories. Factors such as rent-seeking, bribe-taking, electoral determinants, and even ethnic exclusion and expulsion are drivers of elite action in India and other developing countries. But this does not mean that decision-making elites have the same motivations or are led by the same cognitive functions in all situations and at all times. It is perfectly plausible that a corrupt politician who accepts bribes, or abuses public office for private gain in some other way, also has sophisticated and deeply held ideas on how, for example, a social service delivery system should function, or, more broadly, the penetration of markets in human development. Moreover, as unsavory as this claim may be, in recent years it proves to be far closer to the actual functioning and complexity of so many of our leaders in developed as well as developing countries. Therefore, if we take the rent-seeking and bribe-taking motivations of such leaders seriously, we must equally explore the ideologies decision-makers possess – warts and all – and, crucially, the independent role and exogenous roots of these ideas to ascribe causal leverage to them.

In conclusion, the call of my project is to foreground the complexity of decision-making in India. The cognitive style of this dissertation and its conclusion may seem outside

⁴⁶ Hirschman, “The Search for Paradigms of a Hindrance to Understanding,” 343.

the confines of how many political scientists are currently conducting their research on India and developing democracies. There are no paradigms to be found here. But the measure of the theory, I hope, will be judged on an innovative interpretation of government behavior in India and the extent to which it seeks to understand a multifarious reality.

APPENDICES

Table A: Arrests and Affiliations During the Internal Emergency, 1975-1977

State/Union Territory	Arrests	MISA Arrests	Opposition Parties (% of MISA Arrests)	Banned Organizations (% of MISA Arrests)	Primary Banned Organization
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	129	41	0	28 (68%)	Anand Marg
Andhra Pradesh	1586	1135	210 (19%)	512 (45%)	CPIML
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	0	0	0
Assam	2921	533	203 (38%)	143 (27%)	RSS
Bihar	10,107	2360	530 (22%)	269 (11%)	Unknown
Chandigarh	101	27	15 (56%)	6 (22%)	RSS
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3	0	0	0	0
Delhi	3863	1012	180 (18%)	146 (14%)	RSS
Goa	113	113	9 (8%)	9 (8%)	RSS
Gujarat	4405	1762	404 (23%)	135 (8%)	RSS
Haryana	1279	200	172 (86%)	24 (12%)	Unknown
Himanchal Pradesh	688	34	17 (50%)	8 (24%)	RSS
Jammu and Kashmir	777	466	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Karnataka	4502	487	156 (32%)	165 (34%)	RSS
Kerala	7924	790	221 (28%)	476 (60%)	RSS
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	8141	5620	1807 (32%)	1593 (28%)	Unknown
Maharashtra	15,272	5473	780 (14%)	1717 (31%)	RSS
Manipur	459	231	14 (6%)	2 (1%)	RSS
Meghalaya	59	39	2 (5%)	14 (36%)	RSS
Mizoram	206	70	12 (17%)	0	0
Nagaland	99	95	9 (9%)	0	0
Orissa	1170	408	141 (35%)	112 (27%)	RSS
Pondicherry	117	54	37 (69%)	2 (4%)	CPIML
Punjab	2863	440	33 (8%)	16 (4%)	CPIML

Rajasthan	1894	542	213 (39%)	154 (28%)	RSS
Sikkim	4	4	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Tamil Nadu	2671	1027	570 (56%)	139 (14%)	RSS
Tripura	176	77	18 (23%)	9 (12%)	Anand Marg
Uttar Pradesh	31,737	6956	785 (11%)	637 (9%)	RSS
West Bengal	7539	4992	41 (1%)	6502 (4%)	Anand Marg
TOTAL	110,806	34,988	6579 (19%)	6356 (18%)	

Source: Author compiled from Shab Commission Report (Annexure XIX); and newspaper reportage

Notes: 1. In some cases police officials did not examine group affiliation for arrest (denoted with "Unknown")

Table B.1: UPA Coalition, Allies, and General Election Performance (Lok Sabha) in 2004 and 2009

Party	Party Type	No. of Seats (2004)	No. of Seats (2009)	Change in Seat Share
UPA				
Indian National Congress (INC)	National	145	206	+61
All India Trinamool Congress (TMC)	State	2	19	+17
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	State	16	18	+2
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)	National	9	9	-
Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)	National	24	4	-20
Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC)	State	2	3	+1
Janata Dal (Secular) (JD (S))	State	3	3	-
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)	State	-	2	+2
Muslim League Kerala State Committee (MUL)	State	1	2	+1
Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)	State	5	n.a.	-5
Independent and Other Parties (<2 Seats)	State	12	12	-
UPA TOTAL		219	278	+59
External Allies				

Samajwadi party (SP)	State	36	23	-13
Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)	National	19	21	+2
UPA & ALLIES TOTAL		274	322	+48
<i>Left</i>				
Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M))	National	43	n.a.	-43
Communist Party of India (CPI)	National	9	n.a.	-9
Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)	State	3	n.a.	-3
All India Forward Bloc (FBL)	State	3	n.a.	-3
Other Parties (<2 Seats)	State	3	n.a.	-3
TOTAL UPA SUPPORT		335	322	-13

Sources: Author compiled from Election Commission of India; Lok Sabha website; newspaper reportage

Notes: 1. Many of the UPA's coalition allies in 2004 were no longer part of the 2009 coalition (denoted with "n.a.")

Table B.2: Indian National Congress (INC) Party Seats and Vote Percentages in Coalition Era (1989-2009)

Year	2009	2004	1999	1998	1996	1991	1989
Seats	206	145	114	141	140	232	197
Vote Percentage	28.55%	26.69%	28.3%	25.82%	29.7%	36.5%	39.5%

Source: Author compiled from historical reports of the Election Commission, India

Table C.1: Pre-Fieldwork Interviews

Title	Organization	Location	Date
Political Scientist	JNU	Delhi	3 June 2012
Lawyer	<i>Private Practice</i>	Delhi	4 June 2012
IAS Officer	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Delhi	5 June 2012
Economist	ISB	Delhi	12 June 2012
CEO	<i>Major Multinational Company</i>	Delhi	13 June 2012
MP (Lok Sabha)	INC	Delhi	17 June 2012
IAS Officer	Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Delhi	21 June 2012
Civil Society Activist	IAC	Delhi	25 June 2012
Politician	BJP	Delhi	3 July 2012

Political Scientist	JNU	Delhi	10 July 2012
Civil Society Activist	IAC	Delhi	13 July 2012

Table C.2: Fieldwork Interviews with Elite Respondents

Code (Del-)	Title	Organization	Location	Date
55	President	PRS	Delhi	10 March 2015
1	Founding Member	AAP [IAC Activist]	Delhi	11 March 2015
56	Vice President	ORF	Delhi	11 March 2015
57	Economist	JNU	Delhi	12 March 2015
72	Co-Founder	ADR	Delhi	13 March 2015
2	Official	AAP [IAC]	Delhi	15 March 2015
3	National Spokesperson	INC	Delhi	16 March 2015
37	CEO	<i>Large Hedge Fund</i>	Delhi	17 March 2015
58	Chairman	Brookings	Delhi	17 March 2015
59	Senior Consultant	NIPFP	Delhi	17 March 2015
4	Senior Advisor (2004-2014)	UPA	Delhi	18 March 2015
38	Former-Secretary General	FICCI	Delhi	18 March 2015
78	Deputy Chief of Mission	<i>Embassy of an Indian Ally Nation</i>	Delhi	18 March 2015
60	Senior Fellow	NIPFP	Delhi	19 March 2015
5	Minister of State (2004-2014)	UPA	Delhi	20 March 2015
6	Advisor to Minister	Ministry of Power, Coal, and Renewable Energy	Delhi	23 March 2015
7	MP (Lok Sabha; 2009-2014)	INC	Delhi	25 March 2015
8	Minister of State (2004-2014)	INC	Delhi	25 March 2015

9	MP (Lok Sabha; 2009-2014)	UPA	Delhi	25 March 2015
10	Senior Official (2004-2014)	Planning Commission	Delhi	26 March 2015
11	Cabinet Minister (2004-2009)	INC	Delhi	28 March 2015
79	Journalist	Times of India	Delhi	30 March 2015
80	Journalist	<i>Independent</i>	Delhi	31 March 2015
39	Senior Official	CII	Delhi	1 April 2015
40	Senior Official	<i>Leading Lobbying Firm</i>	Delhi	1 April 2015
79b	Journalist	Times of India	Delhi	1 April 2015
12	Cabinet Minister (2009-2014)	INC	Delhi	5 April 2015
41	Senior Official	GTI Group	Delhi	5 April 2015
13	Official (2009-2014)	UPA	Delhi	7 April 2015
14	Senior Official	NAC	Delhi	7 April 2015
42	Representative	Intel.	Delhi	7 April 2015
15	Senior Advisor (1991-2014)	INC	Delhi	8 April 2015
16	Official (2014-)	BJP	Delhi	9 April 2015
43	Senior Representative	Walmart	Delhi	9 April 2015
72b	Co-Founder	ADR	Delhi	10 April 2015
44	Senior Official	FICCI	Delhi	13 April 2015
39b	Senior Official	CII	Delhi	14 April 2015
81	Journalist	Caravan Magazine	Delhi	14 April 2015
61	Director	CSDS	Delhi	15 April 2015
82	Journalist	Indian Express	Delhi	15 April 2015

17	Senior Advisor (2014-)	Niti Ayog	Delhi	16 April 2015
62	Professor	DSE	Delhi	16 April 2015
18	Former-Chief Commissioner	Election Commission	Delhi	17 April 2015
17b	Senior Advisor (2014-)	Niti Ayog	Delhi	17 April 2015
63	President	CPR	Delhi	17 April 2015
73	Director	Accountability Initiative	Delhi	17 April 2015
19	Former-Media Advisor	PMO	Delhi	20 April 2015
8b	Minister of State (2009-2014)	INC	Delhi	21 April 2015
74	Senior Official	Janaagraha	Delhi	21 April 2015
64	Former-Deputy Governor	RBI	Delhi	22 April 2015
20	Former-Governor	RBI	Delhi	23 April 2015
21	Former-National Security Advisor	PMO	Delhi	23 April 2015
45	Senior Official	Reckitt Benckiser	Delhi	23 April 2015
22	Former-Governor	RBI	Delhi	24 April 2015
23	IAS Officer	Ministry of Science and Technology	Delhi	24 April 2015
46	Former-Deputy Secretary General	FICCI	Delhi	24 April 2015
26	Cabinet Minister (2009-2014)	INC	Delhi	25 April 2015
82b	Journalist	Indian Express	Delhi	25 April 2015
27	Former-Cabinet Secretary	INC	Delhi	27 April 2015
65	Senior Fellow	CPR	Delhi	27 April 2015
83	Journalist	BBC	Delhi	27 April 2015
66	Director	NIPFP	Delhi	28 April 2015

84	Journalist	Hindustan Times	Delhi	28 April 2015
75	Official	NAC	Delhi	29 April 2015
85	Journalist	CNN-IBN	Delhi	29 April 2015
79c	Journalist	Times of India	Delhi	30 April 2015
86	Editor	<i>Leading Current Affairs Magazine</i>	Delhi	30 April 2015
28	Former-Chief Economic Advisor	PMO	Delhi	1 May 2015
29	MP (Lok Sabha; 2009-)	BJD	Delhi	1 May 2015
67	Fellow	Brookings	Delhi	1 May 2015
80b	Journalist	<i>Independent</i>	Delhi	1 May 2015
24	IAS Officer	Ministry of Finance	Delhi	2 May 2015
30	Official	AAP [IAC]	Delhi	2 May 2015
31	Senior Official	AAP [IAC]	Delhi	3 May 2015
76	Official	RGMVP	Delhi	3 May 2015
47	Senior Official	ABG	Bombay	4 May 2015
48	Senior Official	McCann World Group	Bombay	4 May 2015
49	Senior Official	Rio Tinto	Bombay	5 May 2015
32	Former-Information Commissioner	CIC	Bombay	6 May 2015
68	CEO	IDFC	Bombay	6 May 2015
87	Journalist	Financial Times	Bombay	6 May 2015
50	Senior Official	The Federal Bank Ltd.	Bombay	7 May 2015
51	Senior Official	Reliance Industries	Bombay	7 May 2015
69	Fellow	ORF	Bombay	7 May 2015

70	Co-Founder	Gateway House	Bombay	7 May 2015
52	Senior Official	TCG	Bombay	8 May 2015
53	Official	NAC	Delhi	11 May 2015
77	Executive Director	Population Foundation	Delhi	12 May 2015
24b	IAS Officer	Ministry of Finance	Delhi	13 May 2015
88	Editor	<i>Leading National Newspaper</i>	Delhi	13 May 2015
71	Chairman	CPA	Delhi	14 May 2015
25	IAS Officer	Ministry of Agriculture	Delhi	15 May 2015
25b	IAS Officer	Ministry of Home Affairs	Delhi	16 May 2015
33	Cabinet Minister (1996-2014)	INC	Delhi	16 May 2015
34	Cabinet Minister (1991-2014)	INC	Delhi	18 May 2015
84b	Consultant	UPA	Delhi	18 May 2015
10b	Cabinet Minister (2004-2014)	INC	Delhi	20 May 2015
36	Cabinet Minister (2009-2014)	INC	Delhi	22 May 2015
36b	Senior Official	NAC	Delhi	23 May 2015
35	Senior Official (2004-2014)	Planning Commission	Delhi	26 May 2015
54	Senior Advisor	UPA	Delhi	26 May 2015

Table C.3: Focus Groups

Code	Occupation	Participants	Location	Date
2015-fgINTL	Public Intellectuals	7	Delhi	6 April 2015
2015-fgNGOW	NGO Workers	5	Delhi	10 April 2015
2015-fgPRIJ	Print Journalists	6	Delhi	14 April

				2015
2015-fgONLJ	Online Journalists	5	Delhi	22 April 2015
2015-fgACTV	Civil Society Activists	5	Delhi	3 May 2015
2015-fgBUSN	Small- and Medium-Sized Business' Owners	5	Delhi	20 May 2015
2015-fgBURC	Bureaucrats	5	Delhi	21 May 2015

Table D.1: Congress Cabinet Ministers and their Backgrounds, 1971-1975

Name	Party Affiliation	Portfolio	Professional Background	Location of Study
<i>Cabinet Ministers</i>				
Indira Gandhi (<i>Prime Minister</i>)	Congress (R)	Planning; Atomic Energy; Defense; Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	UK
Y.B. Chavan	Congress (R)	External Affairs; Finance	Party Politician	India
Uma Shankar Dikshit	Congress (R)	Home Affairs	Party Politician	India
K. Brahmananda Reddy	Congress (R)	Home Affairs	Party Politician	India
H.R. Gokhale	Congress (R)	Law and Justice	Technocrat	India
Swaran Singh	Congress (R)	External Affairs; Defense	Party Politician	India
Jagjivan Ram	Congress (R)	Agriculture and Irrigation; Defense	Party Politician	India
Bansi Lal	Congress (R)	Defense	Party Politician	India
C. Subramaniam	Congress (R)	Finance	Party Politician	India
D.P. Dhar	Congress (R)	Planning	Party Politician	India
T.A. Pai	Congress (R)	Industries	Technocrat	India
L.N. Mishra	Congress (R)	Railways	Party Politician	India
Kamalapati Tripathi	Congress (R)	Railways	Party Politician	India

K. Hanumanthaiya	Congress (R)	Railways	Party Politician	India
S.S. Ray	Congress (R)	Education and Social Welfare	Party Politician	India
Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed	Congress (R)	Food and Agriculture	Party Politician	UK
V.C. Shukla	Congress (R)	Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	India
I.K. Gujral	Congress (R)	Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	India
Mohan Kumaramangalam	Congress (R)	Steel and Heavy Engineering	Party Politician	UK
D.P. Chattopadhyaya	Congress (R)	Commerce	Party Politician	India
Kotha Raghuramaiah	Congress (R)	Parliamentary Affairs	Party Politician	India
Moinul Haq Choudhury	Congress (R)	Industrial Development	Party Politician	India
Raj Bahadur	Congress (R)	Tourism and Civil Aviation	Party Politician	India
Karan Singh	Congress (R)	Health and Family Planning	Party Politician	India
K.K. Shah	Congress (R)	Health and Family Planning	Party Politician	India
<i>Ministers of State</i>				
K.L. Rao	Congress (R)	Irrigation and Power	Party Politician	UK
L.N. Mishra	Congress (R)	Foreign Trade	Party Politician	India
R.K. Khadilkar	Congress (R)	Labour and Rehabilitation	Party Politician	India
Sushila Rohatgi	Congress (R)	Finance	Party Politician	India
I.K. Gujral	Congress (R)	Works, Housing, and Urban Development	Party Politician	India
Sher Singh	Congress (R)	Communications	Party Politician	India
K.V. Raghunath Reddy	Congress (R)	Company Law Affairs	Party Politician	India
D.R. Chavan	Congress (R)	Petroleum, Chemicals, and Non-Ferrous Metals	Party Politician	India
Nitiraj Singh	Congress (R)	Petroleum, Chemicals, and Non-Ferrous	Party Politician	India

		Metals		
Om Mehta	Congress (R)	Home Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs	Party Politician	India
R.N. Mirdha	Congress (R)	Home Affairs and Department of Energy	Party Politician	India
K.C. Pant	Congress (R)	Home Affairs, Electronics, Atomic Energy and Department of Science	Party Politician	India
Nandini Satpathy	Congress (R)	Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	India
P.C. Sethi	Congress (R)	Defense Production	Party Politician	India
Annasaheb Shinde	Congress (R)	Food and Agriculture	Party Politician	India
V.C. Shukla	Congress (R)	Finance	Party Politician	India
K.R. Ganesh	Congress (R)	Finance	Party Politician	India
A.K. Kisku	Congress (R)	Health	Party Politician	India
Sarojini Mahishi	Congress (R)	Tourism and Civil Aviation	Party Politician	India
Jagannath Pahadia	Congress (R)	Supplies	Party Politician	India
Mohammad Shafi Qureshi	Congress (R)	Steel and Heavy Engineering	Party Politician	India
K.S. Ramaswamy	Congress (R)	Home Affairs	Party Politician	India
Siddheshwar Prasad	Congress (R)	Education	Technocrat	India
Surendra Pal Singh	Congress (R)	External Affairs	Party Politician	India

Source: Author compiled from newspaper reportage; TNA_FCO_37_815_1971

Notes: 1. INC, as it is now, was then the Congress (R) faction (see Chapters Three and Four for details); 2. Prime Minister Gandhi did not complete her undergraduate studies at Oxford; 3. During this administration, Indira Gandhi shuffled Cabinet portfolios around with a high rate of attrition (often every few months), hence the repetition of departments in the table; 4. Some Cabinet ministers would move to different roles during this administration, namely Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (President of India) and S.S. Ray (Chief Minister of West Bengal); 5. L.N. Mishra died acrimoniously in January 1975 (see Chapter Three for details).

Table D.2: UPA Cabinet Ministers and their Backgrounds, 2009-2012

Name	Party Affiliation	Portfolio	Professional Background	Location of Study
<i>Cabinet Ministers</i>				
Manmohan Singh (<i>Prime Minister</i>)	INC	Atomic Energy; Space; Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions; Planning	Technocrat	UK
Sharad Pawar	NCP	Agriculture; Food Processing Industries	Party Politician	India
M.K. Alagiri	DMK	Chemicals and Fertilizers	Party Politician	India
Anand Sharma	INC	Commerce and Industry; Textiles	Party Politician	India
Kapil Sibal	INC	Communications and Information Technology; Human Resource Development	Technocrat	U.S.
K.V. Thomas	INC	Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution; Agriculture	Technocrat	India
Kumari Selja	INC	Culture; Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation; Social Justice and Empowerment	Party Politician	India
A.K. Anthony	INC	Defense	Party Politician	India
Paban Singh Ghatowar	INC	Development of Northeastern Region	Party Politician	India
S.M. Krishna	INC	External Affairs	Party Politician	U.S.
Pranab Mukherjee	INC	Finance	Party Politician	India
Ghulam Nabi Azad	INC	Health and Family Welfare	Party Politician	India
Praful Manohar Patel	NCP	Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises	Party Politician	India
P. Chidambaram	INC	Home Affairs; Finance	Technocrat	U.S.
Ambika Soni	INC	Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	India
Mallikarjun Kharge	INC	Labor and Employment	Party Politician	India
Salman Khurshid	INC	Law and Justice; External	Technocrat	UK

		Affairs		
Dinsha Patel	INC	Mines	Party Politician	India
Farooq Abdullah	JKNC	New and Renewable Energy	Party Politician	India
Mamata Banerjee	TMC	Railways	Party Politician	India
Meira Kumar	INC	Social Justice and Empowerment	Party Politician	India
Murli Deora	INC	Petroleum and Natural Gas; Corporate Affairs	Technocrat	India
B.K. Handique	INC	Development of North Eastern Region; Mines	Party Politician	India
Dayanidhi Maran	DMK	Textiles	Party Politician	India
A. Raja	DMK	Communications and Technology	Party Politician	India
Virbhadra Singh	INC	Steel	Party Politician	India
M.S. Gill	INC	Youth Affairs and Sport	Party Politician	India
Kantilal Bhuria	INC	Tribal Affairs	Party Politician	India
M.M. Pallam Raju	INC	Human Resource Development; Defense	Party Politician	U.S.
Ashwani Kumar	INC	Law and Justice	Technocrat	India
Harish Rawat	INC	Water Resources; Labor and Employment	Party Politician	India
Chandresh Kumari Katoch	INC	Culture	Party Politician	India
Vayalar Ravi	INC	Overseas Indian Affairs	Party Politician	India
V.K. Chandra Deo	INC	Panchayati Raj; Tribal Affairs	Party Politician	India
K. Rahman Khan	INC	Minority Affairs	Party Politician	India
Pawan Kumar Bansal	INC	Parliamentary Affairs; Water Resources; Railways	Technocrat	India
S. Jaipal Reddy	INC	Petroleum and Natural Gas; Science and Technology and Earth Sciences	Party Politician	India
Sushil Kumar Shinde	INC	Power	Party Politician	India

Dinesh Trivedi	TMC	Railways	Party Politician	U.S.
C.P. Joshi	INC	Road, Transport, and Highways	Technocrat	India
Jairam Ramesh	INC	Rural Development; Environment and Forests	Technocrat	U.S.
G.K. Vasan	INC	Shipping	Party Politician	India
M.B. Wasnik	INC	Social Justice and Empowerment	Party Politician	India
B.P. Verma	INC	Steel	Party Politician	India
Vilasrao Deshmukh	INC	Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises	Party Politician	India
S.K. Sahay	INC	Tourism	Party Politician	India
M. Veerappa Moily	INC	Petroleum and Natural Gas; Law and Justice	Party Politician	India
Kamal Nath	INC	Urban Development; Parliamentary Affairs; Road Transport and Highways	Party Politician	India
Ajay Maken	INC	Youth Affairs and Sport; Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation	Party Politician	India
<i>Ministers of State</i>				
Vayalar Ravi	INC	Civil Aviation	Party Politician	India
Pratik Patil	INC	Coal; Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises	Party Politician	India
M. Veerappa Moily	INC	Corporate Affairs	Party Politician	India
Vilasrao D. Deshmukh	INC	Earth Sciences; Science and Technology	Party Politician	India
Jayanthi Natarajan	INC	Environment and Forests	Party Politician	India
Virbhadra Singh	INC	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises	Party Politician	India
Ajay Maken	INC	Home Affairs	Party Politician	India
Manish Tewari	INC	Information and Broadcasting	Party Politician	India
Praful Manohar Patel	NCP	Civil Aviation	Party Politician	India

Dinsha Patel	INC	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises	Party Politician	India
Sriprakash Jaiswal	INC	Coal; Statistics and Programme Implementation	Party Politician	India
K. Chiranjeevi	INC	Tourism	Party Politician	India
Jyotiraditya M. Scindia	INC	Power; Commerce and Industry	Party Politician	U.S.
K.H. Muniyappa	INC	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises; Railways	Party Politician	India
Bharatsinh M. Solanki	INC	Drinking Water and Sanitation; Power	Party Politician	India
Salman Khurshid	INC	Minority Affairs; Corporate Affairs	Technocrat	UK
V. Narayanaswamy	INC	Planning; Parliamentary Affairs	Party Politician	India
S.K. Jena	INC	Statistics and Program Implementation; Chemicals and Fertilizers	Party Politician	India
Sachin Pilot	INC	Corporate Affairs; Communications and Information Technology	Party Politician	U.S.
Jitendra Singh	INC	Youth Affairs and Sports	Party Politician	India
Krishna Tirath	INC	Women and Child Development	Party Politician	India
Shashi Tharoor	INC	Human Resource Development; External Affairs	Technocrat	U.S.
Kodikunnil Suresh	INC	Labour and Employment	Party Politician	India
Prithviraj Chavan	INC	Science and Technology; Earth Sciences; Prime Minister's Office; Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Parliamentary Affairs	Technocrat	U.S.
Tariq Anwar	NCP	Agriculture and Food Processing	Party Politician	India
K.J. Surya Prakash Reddy	INC	Railways	Party Politician	India
Ranee Narah	INC	Tribal Affairs	Party Politician	India

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury	INC	Railways	Party Politician	India
A.H. Khan Choudhury	INC	Health and Family Welfare	Party Politician	Canada
Sarvey Sathyanarayana	INC	Road Transport & Highways	Party Politician	India
Ninong Ering	INC	Minority Affairs	Party Politician	India
Deepa Dasmunsi	INC	Urban Development	Party Politician	India
Porika Balram Naik	INC	Social Justice & Empowerment	Party Politician	India
Kruparani Killi	INC	Communications & Information Technology	Party Politician	India
Lalchand Kataria	INC	Defense	Party Politician	India
E. Ahamed	IUML	External Affairs; Railways	Party Politician	India
D. Purandeswari	INC	Commerce and Industry; Human Resource Development	Party Politician	India
Jitin Prasada	INC	Defense & Human Resource Development; Petroleum and Natural Gas	Party Politician	India
S. Jagathrakshakan	DMK	New & Renewable Energy	Party Politician	India
R.P.N. Singh	INC	Home Affairs; Road Transport and Highways	Party Politician	India
K.C. Venugopal	INC	Civil Aviation	Party Politician	India
Rajeev Shukla	INC	Parliamentary Affairs & Planning	Party Politician	India
Mahadev Khandela	INC	Road Transport and Highways	Party Politician	India
Jitin Prasada	INC	Petroleum and Natural Gas; Road Transport and Highways	Party Politician	India
Namo Narain Meena	INC	Finance	Bureaucrat	India
Mullappally Ramachandran	INC	Home Affairs	Party Politician	India
Agatha Sangma	NCP	Rural Development	Party Politician	UK

Harish Rawat	INC	Parliamentary Affairs	Party Politician	India
Pradeep Jain	INC	Rural Development	Party Politician	India
Pranabaka Lakshmi	INC	Textiles	Party Politician	India
Gurudas Kamat	INC	Communications and Information Technology	Party Politician	India
A. Sai Prathap	INC	Steel	Party Politician	India
Tushar A. Chaudhary	INC	Tribal Affairs	Party Politician	India
Vincent Pala	INC	Water Resources	Party Politician	India
Arun Yadav	INC	Youth Affairs and Sports	Party Politician	India
Sisir Adhikari	TMC	Rural Development	Party Politician	India
Saugata Ray	TMC	Urban Development	Party Politician	India
Sultan Ahmed	TMC	Tourism	Party Politician	India
Mukul Roy	TMC	Shipping	Party Politician	India
Mohan Jatua	TMC	Information and Broadcasting	Bureaucrat	India
S.S. Palanimanickam	DMK	Finance	Party Politician	India
D. Napoleon	DMK	Social Justice and Empowerment	Party Politician	India
S. Gandhiselvan	DMK	Health and Family Welfare	Party Politician	India
Preneet Kaur	INC	External Affairs	Party Politician	India
Dinesh Trivedi	TMC	Health and Family Welfare	Party Politician	U.S.

Sources: Author compiled from election affidavits posted on myneta.info; profiles on archive.india.gov.in; and newspaper reportage

Notes: 1. Repetition of departments in the table represents portfolios being shifted to (or simultaneously managed by) ministers during the period outlined.

Table D.3: National Advisory Council (NAC), 2004-2014

Name	Professional Background	Location of Study
Sonia Gandhi (<i>Chairperson</i>)	Party Politician	Italy
Mihir Shah	Bureaucrat	India
Narendra Jadhav	Technocrat	U.S.
Ashis Mondal	Technocrat	India
Pramod Tandon	Technocrat	India
Deep Joshi	Activist	U.S.
Farah Naqvi	Activist	U.S.
N.C. Saxena	Bureaucrat	India
Anu Agha	Technocrat	India
A.K. Shiva Kumar	Technocrat	U.S.
Mirai Chatterjee	Technocrat	U.S.
Virginius Xaxa	Technocrat	India
Aruna Roy	Activist	India
M.S. Swaminathan	Technocrat	U.S.
Yogendra Yadav	Technocrat	India
Ram Dayal Munda	Technocrat	U.S.
Jean Dreze	Technocrat	UK
Harsh Mander	Activist	India
Madhav Gadgil	Technocrat	U.S.
Jayaprakash Narayan	Bureaucrat	India

Source: Author compiled from newspaper reports and interview sources

Notes: 1. Not all members remained in the NAC during its entire tenure; 2. Some departed and returned, while others often remained informal advisors after leaving

Table E: Archives

<i>Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India</i>
Jayaprakash Narayan Papers
P.N. Haksar Papers
Henry Austin Papers
Oral History Transcripts: Madhu Dadavate
<i>National Archives, London, UK (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)</i>
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, India (Pol. Affairs); Political

Party (Congress), 1967, 37/40
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, Congress Party in India, 1970, 37/594
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, India (Pol. Affairs); Political Party (Congress), 1970, 37/41
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, General Elections in India, 1971, 37/812
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, Congress Party in India, 1971, 37/815
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, Visit of Prime Minister of India to United Kingdom, 1971, 37/825
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, Visit of Prime Minister of India to United Kingdom, 1971, 37/827
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, South Asia, Visit of Prime Minister of India to United Kingdom, 1971, 37/828
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records, Information Research, Influence of Soviet Union in India, 1973, 95/1546
<i>National Archives, College Park, MD, USA (State Department Records)</i>
General Records of the Department of State, Office of Chief of Protocol, Visits by Heads of Government, Dignitaries and Delegations, 1928-1976
General Records of the Department of State, Briefing Books 1958-1976
General Records of the Department of State, Visit Files, 1966-1970
General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1967-1969 (Political and Defense)
General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1970-1973 (Political and Defense)
<i>Asian and African Studies, British Library, London, UK</i>
Private Papers of W.G. Archer and Mildred Archer, Letter to Mrs. Gandhi concerning the Emergency in India; notes for discussion in meeting with Mrs. Gandhi, 1975-76, Mss Eur F236/269
Private Papers of W.G. Archer and Mildred Archer, Mrs. Gandhi's reply to letter in No. 269; speech by and correspondence with K. Natwar Singh (Dep. Comm. for India); press clippings, 1975-76, Mss Eur F236/270
Private Papers of Vellore College and Hospital, Indira Gandhi visit to the college, papers and correspondence, 1976, Mss Eur F219/7/28
Private Papers of Vellore College and Hospital, Open letter to Indira Gandhi, 1974-75, Mss Eur F219/7/62
<i>Periodicals</i>
Times of India (Archive available online; Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd)
Everyman's Weekly (Archive available at Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison; R.K. Misra for Lok Niti Parishad)

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