Late Bloomers' Politics:
The Rise of Muslim Citizenship Politics
and the Case of the Popular Front of India

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the emerging trend of Muslim minority politics in India. It aims to illustrate that a fundamental shift has occurred over the last 20 years: from an identity dominated, self-serving and inward-looking approach by Muslim community leaders, Islamic authorities and social activists that seeks to protect Islamic personal law and culture, towards an inclusive debate centred on socio-economic marginalisation and minority empowerment. At the core of this thesis is an analysis of the recent academic literature on Muslim citizenship politics and the growing involvement of Islamist organisations and movements in the democratic process and electoral politics. It also suggests that further scrutiny is needed of the assumption that Muslim politics and Islamic movements are incompatible with the democratic political framework of the modern nation state in India and elsewhere. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork undertaken since 2011, this thesis is predominately concerned with Muslim activists, and members and affiliates of the Popular Front of India (PFI), a growing Muslim minority movement. The distinctive feature of the PFI is that unlike the often-studied ulama-led orthodox and reformist groups, this movement is directed by a politically conscious lay middle class leadership, who attempt to advance the claims of the minority Muslim population within India's democratic framework. India's democracy compared with the mostly authoritarian regimes in the Middle East provides us with a fresh framework to understand this moderation phenomenon within Islamist movements. The thesis also attempts to demonstrate that religious groups are able to play a role in democratic politics, development, and policy making, which is often ignored within political theory.

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Glossary

(Acronyms and Urdu, Arabic, Hindi and Sanskrit Language Terms)

Ajlaf	Low “caste” Indian Muslim (convert from Hinduism)
Aligarh movement	Islamic reformist movement in colonial India
Alim/Mullah	Scholar of Islamic law
Ashraf	Upper “caste” or “elite” Muslim
Ayodhya movement	Hindu nationalist movement, seeking to rebuild the Ram Temple
Azan	Islamic call to prayer
Babri Masjid	Associated with the Hindu nationalist movement, after the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992
Barelvi	Islamic movement, focusing on personal devotion and saint worship
Burqa	Long female Islamic dress with facial covering
Dalits	Scheduled castes/tribes; historically disadvantaged communities
Dawah	"Invitation", proselytising or preaching
Deobandi	Islamic revivalist movement within Sunni Islam
Dunya	World or earth
Fatwa	Ruling on a point of Islamic law given by an Islamic authority
Fiqh	Technical term for the science of Islamic jurisprudence
Ghar vapsi	“Home Coming”: Hindu nationalist campaign to convert Muslims and Christians to Hinduism
Haram	Sin or sinful
Hijab	Female Islamic headscarf

Hindutva	Ideology used in Hindu nationalism
Imam	Islamic leadership position
Insanyiat	Humanity
Jahiliyyah	Ignorance of divine guidance, un-Islamic
Jannah	Islamic concept of paradise
Ijtihad	Contextualising of the Quran to take account of changing social conditions
Jati	Sub-castes, see Varna
Jihad	Inner struggle, also violent struggle against non-believers
Kafir (pl.kuffar)	Infidel
Khilafat	Islamic state
Love jihad	Campaign to romantically seduce Hindu women and convert them to Islam
Mandal affair	Education and employment quotas for low caste groups that caused a violent backlash by upper castes in the late 1970s.
Masjid	Mosque
Madrasah	Islamic school
Mogavirs	Low caste fishing communities in coastal Karnataka
Mohalla	Local Muslim residential area
Namaz	Prayer
Qurbani	Slaughter of animals, religious meat offering
Pardah	To cover, or gender based segregation
Ramadan (also Ramzan)	Islamic month of fasting
Roza	Fasting

Saffronisation	Neologism, refers to the politics of Hindu nationalists
Salafism	Movement that focuses on the return to Islamic traditions
Sangh Parivar	“Family of organisations”, an umbrella term for the nexus of diverse national, regional and schematically varied Hindu nationalist organisations
Sharia	Islamic law based on Quran and Hadiths
Sufism	Movement that focuses on the inner mystical dimension of Islam and saint worship
Ummah	Global Muslim community
Ulama (singl. Alim)	Traditionally educated Muslim scholars, who see themselves as the custodians of this tradition
Varna	Stratification or castes of the traditional Hindu community (e.g. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras)
Zakat	Alms or religious tax in Islam

Abbreviations

AAP	Aam Admi Party: newly emerged political party, known for its strong stance against corruption
ABVP	Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad: the student wing of the BJP
AIIC	All India Imams Council: affiliated with PFI
AIMI	All India Majlis e Ittehad ul Muslimeen or All India Council of the Union of Muslims, Muslim political party mainly active in Hyderabad.
APCR	Association for the Protection of Civil Rights: legal aid group of JIH
BD	Bajrang Dal: a militant Hindu organisation and the youth wing of VHP
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party: Hindu nationalist party in power since March 2014
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party: a prominent lower caste and minority party
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DK	Dakshina Kannada (District) in coastal Karnataka
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam: prominent Dalit Party in Tamil Nadu
DSS	Dalit Sangharsh Samithi: Dalit organisation
DUD	Darul Uloom Deoband: prominent Islamist platform in India
GIO	Girls Islamic Organisation: women wing of the JIH
FDCA	Forum for Democracy and Communal Amity: human rights organisation of JIH
IB	Intelligence Bureau
IM	Indian Mujahideen: terrorist organisations
INC	Indian National Congress
IUML	Indian Union Muslim League or just Muslim League
JIH	Jamaat i Islami Hind: a leading Islamist organisation in India
JUH	Jamiatul Ulama i Hind: a leading Islamic platform in India

KFD	Karnataka Forum of Dignity: predecessor of PFI in Karnataka
LeT	Lashkar e Taiba: Pakistani based terror organisations
MG	Milli Gazette: Muslim newspaper based in Delhi
NCHRO	National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation: human rights wing of the PFI
NDF	National Development Front: predecessor of PFI in Kerala
NWF	National Women's Front: women's wing of PFI
PFI	Popular Front of India
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party: Muslim Party in Kerala
PUCL	People's Union for Civil Liberties: human rights organisation
POTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
OBC	Other Backward Classes: classification for historically disadvantaged groups
Radiance	Political magazine of JIH established in 1963
Rehab	Rehab India Foundation: social development organisation of PFI
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh: a Hindu nationalist, paramilitary volunteer organisation in India, which has a strong affiliation with the BJP.
SDPI	Social Democratic Party of India: political wing of the PFI
SIMI	Student Islamic Movement of India: proscribed Muslim student organisation
SIO	Student Islamic Organisation: student wing of JIH
Shiv Sena	Militant Hindu nationalist organisation in Maharashtra
SP	Samajwadi Party: a prominent OBC party in Uttar Pradesh
SC/ST	Scheduled Castes/ Tribes: historically disadvantaged communities, also referred to as Dalits

SYM	Solidarity Youth Movement: student wing of JIH in Kerala
TJ	Tablighi Jamaat: Islamic piety movement
UAPA	Unlawful Activities Prevention Act
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad: Hindu nationalist organisation known for its campaigns to protect Hindu culture and welfare activities.
WPI	Welfare Party of India: political wing of JIH

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Introduction

On 8 January 2015, I was suddenly cornered and interrogated by a group of undercover police inspectors close to Cunningham Road, a commercial area in Bangalore, after coming from a meeting at the Karnataka Billiards Association. I was speaking in Urdu on the phone, writing down a number, and ended the call with the Islamic parting phrase "Khuda Hafez"[1], when four men in casual clothes surrounded me, physically blocking my way. After our initial exchange of words, one of them showed me a police badge, while another agent received instructions from a radio transceiver hidden under his brown sweater. I had been alerted about these sorts of police practices and the sensitive nature of my research on Muslim minority organisations by my respondents, but even so I was overwhelmed by a feeling of paralysis. In the following minutes, I was asked all kinds of questions over and over again: "Where are you staying? Where do you come from? What places have you visited? What are you doing in India and on this particular road on your own? For whom do you work and why are you [allegedly] taking notes of government buildings?" I was asked to empty my pockets, my backpack was searched and a police officer skipped through my note pad, harshly remarking to his colleague, "Look at this, he wrote down so many addresses in Bangalore!" When I asked the police inspector in charge for a reason of this interaction, he promptly replied: "Because you look extremely suspicious!" This interrogation closely followed a bomb attack three days earlier by members of the terrorist group, Indian Mujahideen, in Bangalore, which killed one woman. In the eyes of the police, as one of my research acquaintances later put it, I was a "potential terrorist suspect and the officers hoped to have made a catch" (respondent 145). After 25 minutes, I was released, having been informed that the police would continue to investigate my background and monitor my movements.

[1] Urdu for "may God be your protector".

Ten days later, the FRRO (India's Foreigner Regional Registration Office) contacted the referees of my visa application to inquire about my past itinerary, current whereabouts and activities undertaken during my stay in India. Over the next couple of days, I remained vigilant, thinking about whether they would send someone after me, or if I was already being watched in the billiard club? The following day, after the Friday namaz, I met with two Muslim informants who were close to the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH) and told them about the police incident. Sharief replied with a comforting smile: "Don't you worry! You are not a Muslim. For us, it would be very different. We would be taken to the police station, our laptops would be confiscated, and we would be jailed and questioned for at least a couple of days. By the end, they always ask us for money" (respondent 52[9]). Omar, the other activist, added that "after every terrorist attack Hindu youth groups will cause a lot of fuss and disturbances in Muslim neighbourhoods" (respondent 142). The police interrogation and the subsequent reaction of the two Muslim activists revealed the profound sense of mutual suspicion, insecurity and underlying tension experienced by both state agencies and Muslim minority activists. One manifestation of this is the disproportional imprisonment of and deployment of the police force against Indian Muslims (Amnesty International 2015), who treat religious minorities as second-class citizens and as a constant threat to national security. Muslim activists and Islamic organisations are politically responding to the violence and discrimination they experience by becoming more assertive in the public domain. A 2013 police report entitled "Strategy for making Police Forces more sensitive towards Minority Sections" confirms the problematic relationship between the police apparatus and Muslim citizens from "all socio-economic backgrounds", acknowledging that Muslims by and large distrust the police and view them as "communal, biased and insensitive… ill-informed, corrupt and lacking professionalism" (Indian Express 2014a, 2014b). Previous studies have indicated that disadvantaged groups, including religious minorities in India, perceive the state and police as intruders and threats to their life and wellbeing who frequently violate

their basic human rights, rather than as a source of protection or social justice (Brass 1997, Scott 1998, Corbridge and Harris 2000, Farmer 2005, Spencer 2007).

Given the heightened security context and the sensitive relationship between the Indian state and religious minorities, this dissertation attempts to grasp the emerging trend of Muslim minority politics in India. It aims to illustrate that a fundamental shift has occurred over the last 20 years: from an identity dominated, self-serving and inward-looking approach by Muslim community leaders, Islamic clerics and social activists (Hasan 2009, Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012) that seeks to protect the Muslim personal law and Islamic culture, towards an inclusive debate centred on socio-economic marginalisation and minority empowerment. At the core of this thesis is an analysis of recent academic literature on Muslim citizenship politics and the growing involvement of Islamist organisations and movements in the democratic process and electoral politics (Alam 1999, 2004, 2008, Ahmad 2009). It also suggests that further scrutiny is needed of the assumption that Muslim politics and Islamic movements are incompatible with the democratic framework of the modern nation state in India and elsewhere (Huntington 1993, 1996, Lewis 1993, 2002).

Drawing on qualitative fieldwork undertaken since 2011, this thesis is predominately concerned with Muslim activists, members and affiliates of the Popular Front of India (PFI), a growing Muslim minority movement. The distinctive feature of the PFI is that unlike the often-studied ulama-led orthodox and reformist groups, this movement is directed by a politically conscious lay middle class leadership, including progressive Imams, who attempt to advance the claims of the minority Muslim population within India's democratic framework. Comparing India's democracy with the mostly authoritarian regimes in the Middle East provides us with a fresh framework to understand this moderation phenomenon within Islamist movements (Alam 2007, Ahmad 2009). The thesis also

attempts to illustrate that religious groups are able to play a role in democratic politics, development, and policy making, which is often ignored within political theory (Nandy 1990, Candland 2000, Rosenblum, 2003, De Cordier 2010, Bano 2012).

Over the last few years, various Muslim organisations, movements and parties have entered the political sphere in India, challenging the traditional style of Muslim minority politics, which had been dominated by the Indian National Congress (INC), the All India Majlis e Ittehad ul Muslimeen (AIMIM), the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), and other ulama led-movements and regional forces. This established elite Muslim leadership is increasingly perceived by the Muslim masses as being unable to improve the socio-economic conditions of the majority of India's Muslims and to protect them from the aggressive assertions of Hindu nationalism since the late 1980s. Consequently, through its championing of political participation, human rights and constitutional entitlements, Muslim politics has started to appear more inclusive, comprehensive and determined to commit to a secular agenda, although it maintains a distinct Muslim identity. However, such politics are inevitably defined by inconsistencies and contradictions caused by attempting to balance the tensions and paradoxes of political modernity, democratic demands and religious traditions (Wickham 2013). Whether the Muslim movements that are adopting secular discourses are actually contributing to the welfare of the Muslim community, or rather polarising religious identities further and dividing the minority community internally, remains empirically unexplored. This thesis aims to contribute to this growing body of literature.

Drawing on insights from political sociology, social movement theory and research on political Islam, the thesis illustrates how the PFI promotes a value-based framework for Muslim citizenship politics, develops its claims, attracts and manages members, and negotiates and aligns with other Muslim and non-Muslim groups. The thesis also documents

the resistance that the movement faces from competing Islamic organisations, elite Muslims and civil society groups, as well as state agencies and Hindu nationalists. In doing so, the thesis contributes to the scholarship on this relatively understudied area of Muslim minority politics in India.

In the rest of the Introduction, Section 1.2. will commence the analysis with a brief discussion of the discourse on securitisation of Islam and the Muslim identity to contextualise my case study of the PFI. Section 1.3. will give an overview of the social movement debate in India. Section 1.4. engages with the political openings that contributed to the new type of Muslim citizenship politics under the secular INC government. Section 1.5. will introduce the research questions and methodology, before Section 1.6. ends by providing a chapter summary.

1.2. Securitisation of Islam

The persistence of the perceived threat of terrorist attacks in India, especially since the 1993 Mumbai bombings, has led to a steady increase in police and army visibility in the public domain[2]. Police officers with automatic machine guns in bulletproof vests are seen patrolling train and metro stations, airports, shopping malls and other middle class localities. Less developed Muslim residential areas, which are seen as breeding grounds for Islamic terrorism and radicalisation, are under continuous state surveillance, where police forces walk the streets to demonstrate their constant presence[3] (see also Duffield 2002, 2007).

[2] India has been regularly ranked among the ten countries which are affected most strongly by international and domestic terrorism. Between 2001 and 2015, 6999 people were killed due to terror related activities (Statista 2015).

[3] For instance, I observed such increased police presence in Batla House, a Muslim majority area in Delhi in January 2015. Around 8 to 10 soldiers were patrolling the streets while two soldiers were guarding the beginning of Zakir Nagar Road that leads into Batla House. A female human rights activist explained in an interview in Delhi,

India's military, police and intelligence units have been expanding ever since the 2002 Indian Parliament and 2001 World Trade Center attacks in conjunction with the private sector (Sethi 2014). National security measures were further modified after the 2008 Mumbai blasts, importing anti-terror strategies from American and European intelligence agencies by emulating the 2001 Patriot Act and the 2002 Homeland Security Act (Schwedler 2012, Kundnani 2014). India's anti-terror laws – such as the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) – are disproportionately utilised by police and intelligence forces against Muslim minorities and other vulnerable communities (Amnesty International 2015). More recently, specialised cyber units and comprehensive surveillance systems were planned in order to monitor online activities by "rabid elements" of religious groups (Indian Express 2014a). A Freedom House report (2015) on internet accessibility in India critically addressed government practices, including cases of "network shutdowns in the name of security, and a lack of transparency about blocking and surveillance" (see also Appendix 2). These operations mirror the concerns shared within security circles that Indian Muslims may become radicalised, especially after the demolition of the Babri Mosque and the subsequent riots of the early 1990s (see Appendix 10). In the context of the May 2014 national elections, David Selbourne (2005), the author of "The Losing Battle with Islam", warned that "in India, with its 175 million Muslims, their Mujahideen will be in action soon enough if Hindu nationalists come to power this month" (cited in New Statesman 2014).

2015 that "police presence has dramatically increased under the BJP government [since 2014]. Imagine the consequences for Muslim children to grow up with this kind of a self-image to belong to a dangerous community" (respondent 150).

The rationale for such a "state of exception"[4] is to produce pressure and deter potential terrorists and other radical groups (Kalyvas 2006, Lyall 2009). More importantly, these security measures demonstrate to the public that the government is prepared to counter any attack on Indian soil, especially after the emotional trauma of the 2008 Mumbai attacks with 164 fatalities, which has often been described as India's 9/11. In addition, India's increasing population of Muslims aged under 30 years is becoming a widely debated concern within the security agencies, policy circles and civil society. Srinivasan (2013: 194) argued that

> "the threat posed by the young to state authority and its historic monopoly over mass assembly, communication, and the manipulation of public symbols is very real. Containing the rising protests of the urban young and deflecting their energy into something else [through violence and radicalisation], is a major preoccupation of the state."

The ambiguous nature and often brutal enforcement of anti-terror laws has led to extra judicial killings, more commonly known as "fake encounters", and the disproportional incarceration of young Muslims who experience delayed and improper trials, or no trials at all, for months and years (Mander 2009). According to the Amnesty International Annual Report (2015: 180), "[Indian] laws on criminal defamation and sedition, which fell short of international standards, were used to harass and persecute journalists, human rights defenders and others for peacefully exercising their right to free expression" (see also Ong 2006, Schwedler 2012). In particular, the postponement of trials has been economically ruinous for those involved and their families, which I will analyse further in the empirical chapters.

Moreover, various authors have used religion and specifically Islam as a mono-causal explanation for India's volatile security situation. A former Indian diplomat noted that

[4] Through the state of exception, Agamben (2005:2) has argued that democratic governments have the power to produce "a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system".

"Indian Muslims, who rejected [a violent] Jihad for 35 years, are now being specially targeted on social media by both al Qaida and the Islamic State to participate in Jihad at home and in West Asia. The spectre of global jihad now looms over South Asia" (The Hindu 2015a). Such essentialist views of the Muslim community have become prominent within state security and policy circles, as well as large parts of the Indian public, in which Islam and Indian Muslims are seen as an ontological threat, and worthy of permanent surveillance, because of their increasing potential for radicalisation (Sethi 2014). Max Weber argued (2004 [1904]: 363) in the "The Objectivity of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy" that political leaders treat social policy as "self-evident" where only the means and tools for its implementation and accomplishment "are of concern whereas the end remains untouched, and unconstructed". He further notes that "if we start questioning the end we will soon un-earth issues of class interests and worldviews". Weber's classical analysis of power relations and decision-making within policy circles is still very apposite in an Indian and international context.

Research on securitisation and counter-terrorism has tried to explain the links between the risk of radicalisation, security concerns and public perception. Scholars have argued that the notion of national security appears constructed, biased and shaped by the uneven power relations of political experts on extremism, counter-terrorism and religious violence, who label and define potential security threats (Floyd 2006). The analysis of such experts is often based on secondary data and lacks field exposure within those communities it claims to represent (Githens-Mazer 2012, Andersson 2016). In some instances, researchers have never set foot in the relevant neighbourhoods that they sweepingly condemn as hotspots or breeding grounds of radicalisation. In this process of securitisation, entire population groups are stigmatised by those in governance and within exclusive civil society spaces due to their religious identity (Flyvbjerg 1998, Chandhoke 2003, Githens-Mazer 2012). Consequently,

nuanced debates on the diversity of Islam, the heterogeneous character of religious communities or the structural context of deprivation in which radicalisation occurs, are often ignored by security advocates. Such a narrow comprehension of Muslim communities and religious activism is problematic, because it tends to focus on extreme cases and treats Muslims as an internally unified and a homogeneous entity. However, the 14.2% of India's population or approximately 172 million people who identify as Muslim are not all the same (2011 Census). Around 90% of the Indian Muslim population is Sunni and the other 10% is Shia. More than 50% of them live in North India, while the other half is spread over the rest of the country. Additionally, Indian Muslims are divided along linguistic, regional and ideological lines as well as by status, class and caste hierarchies – including ashrafs and ajlafs (Momin 2004, Sachar 2006, Alam 2007, Rodrigues 2011).

In addition, while Hindu nationalists and police forces have described Muslim neighbourhoods as ghettos and breeding grounds for terrorism and violence, the manifold examples of civic and political activism, including the proliferation of NGOs, educational initiatives and progressive Islamic movements in these spaces remain largely unnoticed. Similarly, the consequences of the failure of secular parties and the state in protecting religious minorities from the assertions of Hindu nationalists have not been sufficiently analysed (Ahmad 2009). Hence, this thesis will demonstrate how political constraints and grievances within the Muslim minority community have partially contributed to a new form of Muslim citizenship politics, which focuses on socio-political inclusion and democratic participation. The subsequent section will provide a brief overview of the literature on collective action and social movements in India, which is important to the development of the research questions in Section 1.5.

1.3. Social Movements and Islamic Activism in India[5]

Within theories of social movements and rational choice, structural constraints and grievance explanations claim that social marginalisation, the absence of human rights and other local wrongs will eventually lead to the mobilisation of individuals responding in a collective action aiming to alter the status quo (Foweraker 1995). Religious minority groups in developing societies are frequently confronted with dangers and risks to their security due to denial of their basic entitlements, resources and dignity as a result of authoritarian government, corruption and poverty. Given such structural constraints, social movements become an indispensable channel for the development and empowerment of under-represented and marginalised communities. In this context, scholars of collective action have established the considerable contribution of social movements to progress and change in developing societies (see Foweraker 1995, Raj and Choudury 1998, Sikand 2004a, Reddy 2009, Shigetomi 2009, De Cordier 2010).

In recent years, the emergence of militant Islamic movements has led many researchers to take a grievance-based approach to their development. It is claimed that it is the poor state of socio-economic and political conditions in many Muslim majority countries that attracts young people to violent movements (Wickham 2002, Byman 2016). However, this study argues that the example of the Muslim population in India challenges these established theories that link collective action to structural strain explanations. Despite the fact that India's large and varied Muslim population suffers from a high degree of political and economic marginalisation, which India's government officially recognised in the 2006 Sachar Report, Indian Islamic movements and organisations generally tend to eschew violence and

[5] Scott and Marshall (2005: 611) have argued that a social movement is "an organised effort by a significant number of people to change (or resist change in) some major aspects of society [...]. Sociologists are usually concerned to study the origins of such movements, their sources of recruitment, organisational dynamics, and their impact upon society".

remain largely compliant and apolitical (Sikand 2002, Engineer 2004). Post-colonial India saw the rise of various social movements by marginalised groups in which Indian Muslims, Dalits, and other historically disadvantaged communities tried to assert their claims through collective action. While Dalits and lower caste groups were more effective at obtaining entitlements and rights through affirmative action, the Muslims suffered from the absence of confident political leadership and instead focused on identity politics, such as efforts to protect Muslim personal law and the Islamic character of their institutions and everyday life (Shah 2004).

In the past, research has been conducted on Islamic diversity and quotidian Islam in India, (Ahmad, 1978, Ahmad 1984, Osella and Osella 2006, Rodrigues 2011), the influence of the ulama and their identity politics, as well as the appeal of inward looking, reformist Islamic movements (Schimmel 1980, Khalidi 1995, Hasan 1997, Gaborieu 1999, Sikand 2002, 2004, Metcalf 2006, Kumar 2011). Metcalf (2004: 24-28) has noted that

> "[Islamic] movements like TJ [Tablighi Jamaat] and JIH [Jamaat i Islami Hind] provide clear sociality and psychological satisfaction to their participants [...]. [However], they increase isolation from political activities, and they reinforce inward-looking cultural isolation. As violence against Muslims has increased, Muslims seem to have grown ever more defensive. This, in turn, feeds the stereotypes and discrimination, which in circular fashion, reinforce Muslim defensiveness".

Hence, popular Muslim movements and scholarly platforms such as the Tablighi Jamaat, Jamaat i Islami Hind, Darul Uloom Deoband and Ahl-i Hadith (Salafi) movements are characterised by their apolitical, inward-looking leadership style, which prioritises Islamic identity, self-cultivation and the spiritual education of its constituency over economic and developmental concerns. In addition, radical responses, such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Indian Mujahideen (IM), Lashkar e Taiba (LeT) in Kashmir and other movements that retaliated to the rise of Hindu nationalism have been seen to have

limited mass appeal (Metcalf 2004, Alam 2008, Haykel 2017). Consequently, the ulama, who still control the majority of traditional Islamic organisations and movements, are frequently blamed by reformers, modernists and intellectuals within the Indian Muslim community for fueling the rise of Hindu nationalism and subsequent danger to their population (Shahabuddin and Wright 1987, Wilkinson 2007). For instance, the ulama's emphasis on reinforcing individual piety rather than encouraging Muslims to integrate into mainstream Indian society has, in the view of the modernists, driven many Muslims into ghettos and isolation (Khalidi 1995, Sikand 2004b, Metcalf 2004, 2009, Hasan 2007a, 2009). Although the authority of this conservative class of clergy persists (Gaborieu 1999, Gil 2008), this thesis questions the assumption that Islamic politics is static, narrowly sectarian and self-centred. Over the last two decades, India has seen the emergence of various Muslim welfare organisations, political parties and assertive social movements, including segments within the ulama, with their own publications, educational initiatives, youth and women's associations and development projects. These new politically ambitious stakeholders are competing with traditional Muslim elites and ulama-led movements, which in turn started to change their outlook on democratic politics and inclusive development. These new Muslim groups try to impact governance and policy making by bringing more Muslims into India's bureaucracy, legal system, regional municipalities and police forces through a politics of empowerment similar to that used by Dalit parties such as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in North India and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu. Some scholars have already recorded the trend of Indian Muslims increasingly focusing on politics of inclusion, citizenship and aligning their efforts with other disadvantaged groups (Alam 2008, Ahmad 2009).

Using the example of the PFI, this thesis will illustrate how Muslim organisations that promote citizenship politics try to generate an alternative understanding of India's

modernity. Islam, in this context, is often used as a representation of social justice to hold the state and the market economy accountable in the wake of increasing social disparity and political violence against religious minorities. The next section will demonstrate that although these Muslim groups accuse the state of failing to deliver development and security to religious minorities, the policies of the Indian National Congress (INC) between 2004 and 2014, have in fact contributed to the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics.

1.4. INC Politics and Muslim Citizenship

Since Independence in 1947, Indian Muslims' desire for democratic participation through elections, courts or civil society was often manipulated and compromised by a political system which was top-down, patronage-based and vote bank driven. Alam (2006), providing a definition of the term vote bank, argued that

> "Muslim politics, since the trauma and dislocation of Partition, is chiefly centred on fear and, therefore, on the question of security. And the only way Muslims could deal with it, however incompletely, was by assuring support to their elites (belonging to the accomplished strata) so that the latter could work out deals for them with the Congress [INC] government. The entire community, baring small groups here and there, learnt to lean on the Congress for security and small relief and in turn assured electoral support for the party in an enduring fashion. The Congress party was assured of what rather loosely has been referred to in Indian political idiom as the 'vote bank'".

However, in a recent study on Muslim voting behaviour in Uttar Pradesh, Verma and Gupta (2016) have questioned the validity of the "Muslim vote bank" as an analytical category. While the study identified a certain tendency for Indian Muslims to support the single party that has the strongest chance of keeping Hindu nationalists out of power, they also stressed that there are various fluctuations and fragmentations of Muslim voting behaviour, including "performance, party preferences, candidates and leadership among many other things". In the conclusion of the thesis, I will illustrate that while the fragmentation of Muslim voters is

a sign of the democratisation of Muslim politics in India, it has also benefitted the Hindu nationalists in the short term, such as in the recent 2017 Uttar Pradesh election. Hence, this political fragmentation could be an indicator that non-elite Muslims have lost faith in the nepotistic and elitist style of governance that exploited Muslims as cheap human commodities at the ballots. Simultaneously, the INC, other secular parties and Muslim elites have been unable to provide protection from the attacks of Hindu nationalists, leading to political frustration and isolation at the national level. Consequently, the INC along with its Muslim elites could not rely on the Muslim masses as a coherent vote bank from the late 1970s onwards. The result of this political neglect and failure to deliver on electoral promises accelerated the demands for a unified and exclusively Muslim political movement, which can currently be seen in the emergence and cooperation of regional Muslim parties and movements. Bhargava (2010) has argued that India's polity provides Muslims with the option of aligning with other socially disadvantaged groups in order to create a stake in politics and a sense of solidarity (see also Haykel 2017). Therefore, this thesis will consider the extent India's democracy is understood as an enabler and political opportunity by Muslim minority organisations that have recently started to participate in competitive politics, despite their political hardships and experiences of discrimination. In the following section, I will argue that INC's policy of outreach to Indian Muslims between 2004 and 2014 has contributed to the new discourse of Muslim citizenship politics.

After the defeat of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2004, the newly elected INC-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) became more concerned with addressing the problems faced by Muslim citizens including their profound sense of political and economic marginalisation and insecurity (Sheth 2009, Mahajan and Jodhka 2010, Verma 2012). The creation of the Prime Minister's Committee on the Social, Economic, and Educational Status of Muslims in India was one attempt by the government to regain the trust of the Muslim

population by addressing some of the challenges they face. The result was an official government investigation initiated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Judge Rajindar Sachar into the development status and sense of insecurity of the Indian Muslim population, published as the 2006 Sachar Report.

The Sachar Report, together with related studies, helped to create a better understanding of the socio-economic realities confronting India's Muslim minority[6] (Metcalf 2009, Basant and Sahriff 2010). The Sachar Report also aimed to counter accusations that the INC had a policy of Muslim appeasement by demonstrating their disadvantaged socio-economic status in India. In doing so, the report had some impact on Muslim politics and collective action. In this context, Muslim intellectuals, politicians, the ulama and social activists have been slowly shifting away from identity politics and instead prioritising the socio-economic conditions of Indian Muslims, such as demanding state measures for their political and economic empowerment (Basant and Sahriff 2010, Alam 2010, Engineer 2011, Verma 2012).

Despite the fact that Muslim politics became more participatory and inclusive under recent INC's initiatives, some scholars contend that Islamic organisations remain conservative in matters of culture and gender equality, and continue to promote an exclusive religious agenda. Sheth (2009: 76) has argued that since the publication of the Sachar Report in 2006, minority politics has been dominated by Muslim leaders asserting their religious identity for economic rewards and treating Indian Muslims as a monolithic entity, which is "retrogressive to the secularisation process". This thesis will use the debate around the Sachar Report discourse as an analytical anchor around which the questions set out in the

[6] Gayer and Jaffrelot (2012: 2) argued that "though alarming reports had been submitted to the Government of India since the 1980s, the general impression that the Muslim community was increasingly lagging behind gained momentum a decade ago, after the unprecedented wave of communal riots of the 1990s, the rise to power of Hindu nationalist forces in 1998 and the Gujarat pogrom of 2002".

following section can be considered through the empirical analysis of various Muslim political and welfare activities by the PFI.

1.5. Research Questions and Methodology

In her paper on the welfare activities of Bangladeshi Islamists, Bano (2012: 86) points out that "little work has been done to analyse the empirical realities of religious political parties and illuminating the processes through which they build their niche within society". While past ethnographic studies have successfully captured the mobilisation strategies of social movements (see Snow 2007 for an overview), ethnographic work on the political strategies, welfare activities and social discourses of Muslim minority movements in India is still in its infancy (Shah 2004, Ahmad 2009, Murayama 2009, De Cordier 2010). This study aims to contribute to the literature on Indian Muslim minority politics by answering the following research questions.

1. To what extent has the interplay of local, national and global politics in India led to the emergence of the particular kind of Muslim citizenship assertions and belief in democracy that is embraced and practiced by the Popular Front of India (PFI)?

2. What political discourses does the PFI adopt for mobilising and activating the minority Muslim community? Does the latest trend of citizenship politics create an alternative conception of modernity that is acceptable to Islamic principles and the secular nation state?

3. What are the sociological characteristics of the PFI leadership, cadres and its target constituency? How does the PFI attempt to build new alliances with other

disadvantaged non-Muslim groups around universal ideas such as social justice, affirmative action and political inclusion?

4. How is this assertive style of Muslim citizenship politics perceived, challenged and negotiated by political opponents, and the wider Muslim and non-Muslim community? What counter-frames are employed by Hindu nationalists, secular politicians, and government agents to diminish the PFI's influence and reputation?

The thesis attempts to answer these questions through qualitative fieldwork conducted in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and New Delhi. Firstly, by using the organisational case study of the Popular Front of India, I carried out three rounds of research in India between 2011 and 2015 (a total of 11 months) that employed a combination of informal and semi-structured interviews, and group discussions. I interviewed more than 150 PFI members (leadership and cadre-base) and supporters, including lawyers, merchants, white and blue collar employees, members of the ulama, social workers, beneficiaries of the welfare services, as well as victims of political violence and police brutality. In addition, I conducted participant observation at campaigns, rallies and other public protests, spending an extensive amount of time in PFI affiliated offices and Muslim localities with a PFI presence. An extensive list of my interviews, research locations and participation in public events and campaigns as well as a map can be found in the Appendix 1.

Secondly, I engaged not only with PFI members and sympathisers but also stakeholders and groups who have opposed them such as rival Islamic organisations, including the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH), other minority and religious organisations, and Dalit and lower caste parties. Additionally, I will also highlight my findings from interviews with and fieldwork

observations of Hindu nationalist leaders and supporters as well as Intelligence Bureau (IB) and police officials.

Thirdly, I included elite interviews with academics, political commentators, journalists, government ministers, politicians and other key informants who were familiar with the activities of the PFI and Muslim minority politics in India. In this study, I use the term "elites" to describe those individuals or groups in decision-making and leadership roles such as local politicians, bureaucrats, party leaders, lobbyist, and business owners but also community and religious leaders, intellectuals, bloggers, grassroots activists, social workers and students. While not always elites in the socio-economic sense, many of these individuals were experts in their respective fields, and so could inform this research project (Goldstein 2002). In this context, I also conducted research among liberal Muslim elites, including members and supporters of the prominent magazine Islamic Voice and its affiliated workshop Discovery Yourself in Bangalore, the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism which was formerly run by Asghar Ali Engineer, as well as the Centre for Peace and Spirituality in Delhi. I analysed elite outputs, including official government and police documents, financial reports, campaign flyers, transcripts of political speeches and other written, visual and audio material.

The following section will first discuss the research design, and the considerations that shaped it. I will outline the different stages of field research, including a brief discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research techniques employed, before highlighting some ethical and practical considerations that emerged during the fieldwork.

1.5.1. Multi-Sited Ethnography

Although the initial research plan was to study one Muslim group in one city in a long-term, fully immersed, ethnographic manner, I decided to revise this strategy, opting for a more flexible multi-sited research design that took me to various cities, regions and states in India. What follows is an explanation of the rationale for this change in strategy.

Firstly, a movement such as the PFI has hundreds of regional offices, project sites, political campaigns and rallies. Confining my study to one location would not have captured its organisational complexity. Instead, I decided to expand the scope of the fieldwork and visit different districts and states. During this multi-sited fieldwork, I gained access to what Goffman (1959) has already called the "backstage setting" of a social movement. I was able to observe participants in local offices, mosques, private houses, during taxis or car journeys, casual outdoor strolls to campaign sites, as well as workshops, seminars and rallies. Gamson (2007) pointed out that in the "backstage setting" the movement's protagonists negotiate agendas, ideas and strategies, make alliances and perform the everyday work of politics and cultural production. At times such informal arrangements proved more effective and less threatening to my respondents than official appointments and meetings in public places. Occasionally, I found myself in vehicles for several hours with key informants, driving across cities or even states, which provided opportunities to listen to conversations about organisational strategies and plans to expand the movement. Also, I was able to spend considerable amounts of time in PFI offices during welfare activities, where I could observe how the local leaders and cadres tried to engage with social issues, handled discussions and settled community disputes. Access to "backstage settings" was often dependent on gaining the trust of influential key informants, who vouched for my integrity within Muslim organisations as well as to the police and state departments, and through introductory phone calls or letters to allow me to enter facilities and access documents. For example,

before an interview with a member of an Islamic youth movement in Kerala in 2014, I received a phone call from a key informant in Mangalore, who was asked by the Kerala activists if he had seen "any documentation" from me, and whether I was trustworthy. The Mangalore-based informant apologised to me for this background check, and reassured the activists from Kerala that I was trustworthy and that he knew me for more than four years. This meant the interview could go ahead.

Secondly, the multi-sited approach was ideal given the significant travel commitments of the PFI leadership and cadre-base, who described themselves as "fieldworkers". Fixing appointments with leaders and members was a constant challenge due to their busy schedules[7]. Days and weeks were defined by uncertainty, dependent on tentative promises of future appointments and on the facilitating skills of key informants. Cancellations, rescheduling, waiting, and misunderstandings were part of my fieldwork routine, and spontaneity, patience and resilience were essential to gain access to the movement's activities and cadre-base[8]. Movement leaders and political elites tend to grant appointments only at very short notice, given their various commitments. An effective strategy was to appear at offices and scheduled events unannounced, which often led to follow up interviews. Such unannounced arrivals at regional offices and events without the prior knowledge of the leadership also provided authentic glimpses into the organisational

[7] Frequently, leaders could have left cities, states or, at times, the country without my knowledge. For instance, it took me four years to get my first interview with one of PFI's founding fathers.

[8] During some fieldwork days, when I had assumed that I wouldn't be able to get a single interview or meeting, an unexpected call could come in or an informant might eventually reply to my messages, so that I would find myself in a car with leaders or politicians, heading to a district campaign, being informed about an event location or introduced to another gatekeeper or potential interviewee. On another occasion I was already in a taxi to the train station to leave for an appointment in the outskirts of Mangalore, when unexpectedly the PFI Chairman called me, and asked to see me at his office in half an hour. Given the higher priority of the meeting with the Chairman, I quickly adjusted my travel plans, cancelled the other meeting, and prepared for the high-profile interview.

structure, and un-staged interactions with the cadre-base, revealing information that challenged the official narrative of the organisation[9].

Thirdly, leaving and returning to the field, as I did over the course of my fieldwork, allowed me to consider the temporal dimension of social movements. Some respondents changed their views, opinions and group affiliations with respect to the PFI and Islamic politics over the course of the last five years due to media reports and personal experience among other reasons. I tried to document and explain such shifts during my fieldwork, since the reasons for such swings in opinion and allegiance by interviewees over time constituted crucial qualitative data for this research project[10]. Finally, I argue that the duration of and immersion in fieldwork must be flexible, especially where the research subjects are under state scrutiny and experience structural discriminations, as in the case for Indian Muslims, and in particular the PFI as an Islamic group. Historically, anthropologists were frequently affiliated with the state (Fielding 2008). However, today's academics and researchers are often motivated to give unheard minorities and disfranchised communities a stronger voice (Brockington and Sullivan 2003). They are thus critical of governments, regimes and political systems. Therefore, qualitative research can be conducted at enormous risk – sometimes, even life threatening – in repressive contexts or so-called police states. In certain scenarios, staying immersed in the field more than 'necessary' can be a security risk for the researcher as well as their research participants, informants and associates. In the Indian context, a researcher can become a topic of grave concern and suspicion to the police and other state

[9] During a brief fieldwork stay in Hyderabad in 2012, I wanted to seize the opportunity to visit the PFI state office in the city. The address was readily available on the PFI website. However, after an intensive search with a local rickshaw driver, I realised that the office did not exist. After following up on the missing office case, a Muslim journalist, and supporter of the PFI who studied in Hyderabad, confirmed that there is no office in the city, mainly because of PFI's rivalry with the long standing AIMIM party: "When there is already KFC in town, you don't want to have another McDonalds" (respondent 132).

[10] For instance, one initial supporter of the PFI, who has appeared on the same political stage, had changed his views and disassociated himself from the movement between 2011- 2015. In the early phase of my research, he spoke enthusiastically about the new minority politics that groups such as the PFI represent, and praised the confidence of their leaders. However, two years later, he called the same people "novice leaders" and their social welfare impact "peanuts" and "rubbish". During our last meeting in 2015, he was worried about the criminal potential with "35 legal cases against PFI cadres in Kerala alone" (respondent 84).

agencies due to their particular interests[11]. Therefore, instead of carrying out a single round of fieldwork over a year, as initially planned, I opted for three shorter stays lasting between two to five months each.

1.5.2. Data Analysis

In most cases, the accounts of this thesis are based on field notes and semi-structured interviews. Some events had to be reconstructed from memory shortly after they occurred[12]. Although I could record my interviewees with their full consent, I was regularly discouraged from using recording devices, including simple notepads. Any hint of a record that could outlast the interview was frequently viewed as dangerous for the individual or the group, so carrying a notepad, camera or laptop (even without any intention of using it) could be sufficient to raise suspicion. The habit of keeping a field diary helped me to reflect upon the data and interviews as well as to think through my own positionality during fieldwork. Such reflexive writing provided me with a sense of agency in a context of high uncertainty as well as a channel to process my doubts, anxieties and other subjective experiences during an often isolating research routine (Stake 1995).

It was also necessary to compare the various data sets for incompleteness, competing claims and other irregularities, while calling and emailing back and forth to fact check and fill gaps in the data. Three trips to the field added new dimensions and refined the analysis, reduced various biases and improved access. Even after the official completion of the fieldwork,

[11] For instance, a police clerk in the Police Commissioner Building in Mangalore in November 2012, called me "a dangerous man" after I had explained to him my broad research interests in Islamic organisations. He then asked to check my passport and visa status. Another recent example includes the state government of Gujarat, which is trying to control the research topics of PhD students (Times of India 2016). In addition, India's visa regime became more restrictive to foreign researchers, whereby the issuing practices of visas are gradually used to exercise control over certain sensitive areas, political subjects and geographies of public concern.

[12] I used various kinds of memorisation prompts such as written bullet points, voice recordings after an interview, or brief SMS draft messages on my phone (an old Nokia), which I took during the events or conversational pauses. Such mental bridges helped to write about and reconstruct conversations and nonverbal information.

incoming field material from emails and phone calls by informants, local news reports and political events had to be accommodated and contributed to additional layers of complexity.

In addition to the interviews and participant observations, I conducted an in-depth textual and visual analysis of movement publications, videos and photos. Social movements produce a vast number of documents for diverse audiences in different regional languages. I obtained such documents, including speeches, pamphlets, books, brochures about campaigns, conferences and movement constitutions, manifestos, membership regulations, rule books, dawah and religious literature, as well as various types of visual and audio footage[13]. I also studied official government, police and media outputs about the movement. For security purposes, police agencies have produced reports about the PFI's political activities. Such sources proved useful to triangulate and reconstruct multiple claims and frames linked to the movement.

However, researchers must be critical of the context and the intention of images, documents and footage. According to Macdonald (2008: 287),

> "a document, like an untrustworthy witness, must be cross-examined and its motives assessed. How was it written, what was it really, why did it take place in that way, what was the point? Who had a motive? Who benefited? Who was in a position to write and disseminate it? Who was it intended to deceive and why?"

Software such as Photoshop and online services such as Instagram make it very easy to manipulate the content of photos and videos for the desired effect. Hence, I triangulated the analysis of visual and textual content with follow-up interviews and discussions to fully comprehend the intended effects. Muslim organisations ran documentation departments, publishing and media houses, producing daily newspapers and monthly magazines. Spending time in these social spaces enabled me to speak to the editors and activists about agendas

[13] At times, translations or translators were provided from within Islamic organisations. Given the regional and lingual diversity and nature of my fieldwork, I also worked with outside translators and transcribers on speeches, articles, and visual and audio material. To reduce the data error, I provided basic training in research methods and reflexivity.

and the symbolic meaning of certain speeches and content. I could be involved when websites were edited, inquire about public relation strategies, and listen to discussions between editors and members about press releases. Such observations helped to contextualise how the movement's output, content and agendas are internally produced and contested. However, like interview appointments, access to documents had to be negotiated. At times, I encountered difficulties in obtaining lists and statistics regarding membership, funding and donors. The reasons for such denial can often be insightful, and worthwhile to follow up.

1.5.3. Ethical Representation and Positionality

Clifford (1988) has argued that ethnographic research in developing countries raises important questions of representation, especially after imperial powers lost their cultural and political sway over formerly occupied territories. Hence, the authority to speak and write about groups, identities, cultures and societies by the ostensible Western (educated) expert cannot be taken for granted anymore. For this thesis, I cautiously reconsidered my positionality (in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status) and have acknowledged that research projects are not only about the implementation of research tools, but are reflexive and deconstructing enterprises (see Scheyvens and Storey 2003). In order to generate a better understanding of the subjective life-worlds of movement leaders, cadres and the target constituency, my research design aimed to be an actor-oriented social immersion (Geertz, 1973, Brockington and Sullivan 2003). However, scholars, who analyse behaviour and social interaction within natural settings to gain insights into (sub-) cultures and the workings of formal and informal organisations, are confronted with the challenge of gaining access, building trust and representation (Fielding 2008). During qualitative data collection, I frequently encountered such issues of trust and representation. Muslim activists expressed concerns about a "gazing approach" or "academic tourism" that affirms political

categories and negative stereotypes similar to the classifications used in police reports and newspaper articles, in which various Muslim organisations (e.g. Popular Front of India, Jamaat i Islami Hind, Tablighi Jamaat, Darul Uloom Deoband) were merged to the single category of Islamic fundamentalist or terrorist organisation (respondents 2, 8 and 70). Additionally, leaders and members of Muslim organisations indicated a degree of interview fatigue, anticipating biased questions based on flawed assumptions in respect of Islamic activism. A PFI member explained that "when a gora [foreigner] shows up, we immediately think that he will ask about funding from the Middle East, discrimination of women in Islam and terrorism". Given that a degree of mistrust and fear of misrepresentation by my Muslim respondents was omnipresent during every stage of my research, I have included a brief discussion of the concept of trust in the Appendix 3.

1.5.4. Trust, Empathy and Confidentiality

Recent government reports indicate that Indian Muslims lack trust in state institutions and the police, because of the increasing hostility and structural discrimination towards them (Sachar Report 2006, Indian Express 2014a, 2014b). My fieldwork suggests that such mistrust and suspicion within the Muslim community has partially resulted from negative experiences in the past, whereby leaders and members of Islamic groups were vilified and attacked by the media and police[14]. For instance, prejudiced reporting and a disregard for the ethics of representation have damaged social relations, and made Muslim groups and activists more defensive towards and suspicious of outside researchers. Consequently, in my experience journalists and researchers are rarely welcomed into these securitised and stigmatised communities as Muslim interviewees were well aware of the mainstream

[14] The Washington Post (2007) conducted an interview with a senior PFI leader entitled "A Professor Praises Terrorism", which has made PFI cadres wary of foreign journalists. More recently, during a student protest in Delhi, a Muslim student activist was defamed and insulted because of his father's former membership in an Islamist group 35 years earlier (Indian Express 2016).

media's portrayal of them as dysfunctional and even dangerous (respondents 24, 27 and 132). In this context, some Muslim respondents would only talk to me on the condition of anonymity for fear police scrutiny or retribution by Hindu nationalist groups. In order to protect my research participants and ensure confidentiality and anonymity, most of the names of interviewees and some research locations have been changed or omitted. Otherwise, titles and ranks of leaders and cadres of the PFI and other organisations are presented as they were held during the time of the fieldwork.

On numerous occasions, I was half-jokingly, other times seriously, called a "CIA" or "German spy" or "intelligence agent". Hafez and Wiktorowicz (2004: 40) noted that Islamic activists are constantly facing the threat of government infiltrators and informers. These concerns by Indian minority activists seemed valid when one of my interviewees, a senior police official in Bangalore, claimed that he has undercover agents within the PFI and other groups. Sporadically, PFI members googled me on their smart phones during meetings to check my student status on the university website. At other times, I was approached by cadres who emptied and searched my backpack and asked me to show them my notes. This was a procedure that the state and police also applied and was not very different from the police encounter recounted at the beginning of this thesis. Equally, cadres were often reluctant to provide me with their mobile numbers or email addresses for follow-up questions. Even those PFI members who I had known for a long time had to be constantly reassured of my intentions to maintain their trust and my insider status. Ahmad (2009: 31-48), who was born and raised in a Muslim family in India, but partially educated and employed in Europe, reflected on his identity as a researcher of Indian Muslims. He described his experience of being distrusted by Islamic activists at the Aligarh Muslim University (his alma mater). His reflexive account reveals that even as an ostensible national, lingual and religious insider, Ahmed was still perceived as a suspicious outsider within his own milieu. This conflict

reminds us that identities are in flux, contested and socially constructed, rather than fixed and monolithic (see also Brass 1997, McAdam 2002).

Before I could start the interview with Muslim respondents, I needed to spend considerable time describing my motivation, objective and sources of funding for the study, my personal, often family, background and other credentials, including whom I had already met and who I knew within the PFI and other Muslim organisations. These conversations were part of an ongoing fieldwork routine, given the large number of members and associates of Islamic groups who I have met over the last five years. My ability to speak Urdu and Hindi as well as my cultural and professional knowledge of India, gained by working for a grassroots NGO in North India between 2005 and 2007 and through a study exchange at the University of Mumbai in 2009 have proved crucial in building trust with Muslim minority activists. In addition, by ensuring respondents that I was not simply interested in short term output, but in fact had a genuine interest in documenting and understanding PFI's activities and motivations in the long term helped to build rapport and distanced me from their experience of certain unethical practices by journalists and government agents. It was also salient to reassure respondents through appropriate and careful language and behaviour given the sensitive context. Derogatory language or politically charged terms such as 'fundamentalist', 'extremist', 'radicals' or 'Islamist', which were often used by the media or police to describe the PFI and other Muslim groups, had to be avoided with the leaders and cadres during my fieldwork. During initial meetings, I emphasised topics related to empowerment, social work and welfare provision, which often led to receptive and approving gestures and responses from interviewees. However, during interviews with respondents from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), police and Hindu nationalist groups, I approached the issue of Muslim politics from the angle of national interests and security. This kind of informed selectivity was vital to carry out this research project and to navigate through diverse political settings, despite the researcher's personal opinions.

Moreover, personal anecdotes and reassuring credentials helped to make interviewees feel more comfortable and to overcome the initial issue of distrust. Sharing and discussing my experiences, including police security related concerns helped to build rapport and empathy with Muslim activists. After telling Muslim respondents about my own first-hand experience with the police, interviewees felt more at ease describing how they were framed and arrested by the police or maltreated by the state and its bureaucracy in their everyday life. Therefore, a certain degree of 'informed empathy' through 'accidental' ethnographic observations can be an asset when writing about, reconstructing and interpreting the lifeworlds of Muslim activists in India (Woon 2013, Fujii 2015, Enria 2016).

1.5.5. Elite Bias

Islamic movements are often studied through the lens of vocal urban leaders and established organisations while the voices of rural, semi-literate, and in particular young and female supporters are ignored (Schwedler 2011: 367). Benford (1997: 421) has argued that

> "[scholars] tend to study movements either by interviewing people identified as key activists, via media accounts (most frequently newspaper stories), or by analyzing movement-generated or related documents. In all three cases, we obtain data that tend to reflect the views of movement leaders and extra movement elites".

During my fieldwork movement leaders were often eloquent 'storytellers' and 'salesmen' of programmes and political causes. Some of these senior activists had more than 35 years experience within social movement organisations and would assert their authority by setting the agenda, providing lecture-like answers, and at times explaining in a patronising or uninterested manner their view on particular issues. Such power dynamics raise concerns about the quality of the access that I was granted: what kind of group activities were

highlighted or avoided, which project sites and welfare programmes were shown to an outsider, and what was the intentionality behind it? I was often confronted with silence or complacency when I inquired about internal disagreement, tensions between cadres, hierarchical dimensions or issues of social exclusion within Muslim groups, including the PFI. Such sensitive topics were often simply ignored or underplayed by senior leaders, leaving me somewhat frustrated. In order to avoid such distortion and elite bias, the research design included the voices of ordinary members, former cadres, sympathisers and women from different social classes, locations, and organisations. This inclusive approach contributed to the triangulation of the data, through which I could compare elite narratives and movement publications with accounts from lower ranking or former members in order to highlight the paradoxes and ambiguities within the complex and heterogeneous nature of Muslim minority politics in India.

Although triangulations and other precautions were applied to reduce the elite bias, achieving an inclusive sample and gaining full access to members, including female cadres, remained a challenging task throughout my fieldwork. Leaders tried to monitor and control my movements and access to the cadre-base as well as my participation in events. They also supervised interviews with lower-ranking cadres or delayed meetings with female activists. Despite my reassurance of long term study interests, after the first two rounds of fieldwork leaders started to wonder about the length and timeframe of the research project. Activists were reluctant to understand my aim of generating a vast sample of interviewees, and asked in confusion “how many more people do I want to talk to” and questioned the purpose of it – claiming “everyone will say the same”. Leaders were also concerned that cadres, who were less trained and educated in the language and discourses of international organisations, might express politically incorrect views that could be detrimental to the organisation. Consequently, cadres internalised this reservation towards outsiders and

would occasionally refuse to speak to me or refused me entrance to offices or campaign grounds without permission from their seniors. Other leaders and members of Islamic groups would refuse my interview requests, postpone meetings or were simply not interested. While such non-responses or no-shows can lead to biases, the reasons potential interviewees decline or cancel appointments can be very informative, and must be carefully interpreted in each individual case. For example, difficulties in accessing female members of Islamic groups, which became a frequent hurdle during my research, was an insight into the agenda of the PFI and other Muslim groups and will be discussed in Chapter 7 in detail.

Finally, during my fieldwork in 2014 I observed substantial frustration among PFI members about a perceived organisational bias. In the eyes of PFI activists, more established Islamic groups and parties, including Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), would unfairly receive the lion's share of (positive) attention from the research community within and outside of India. For instance, PFI leaders argued angrily that the selection bias would help portray the JIH as the only legitimate voice of Muslims in India. A PFI key informant furiously recalled in the PFI office in Bangalore that "when Morsi [the former Egyptian President and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood] came to India [in March 2013], he only visited the Jamaat [JIH]… Foreign scholars, who visit India, will also stop after meeting with Jamaat leaders. If you would have not run into me at the conference [in Bangalore 2011], I am sure that you would have been studying the Jamaat by now" (respondent 2[8]).

1.5.6. Dilemmas of Participation

Being a participant observer is important for an effective application of the ethnographic method and to gain insights into the working of social organisations and collective action.

However, after commencing my fieldwork in 2011, I soon faced the question of the degree to which I would be allowed to participate in the politics of the PFI and other Muslim organisations, provided that I spent a substantial amount of time with the activists at protest rallies, conferences, offices and in the Muslim neighbourhoods. Occasionally, I was approached by PFI leaders to contribute 'symbolically' to the movement's activities. Leaders asked me to speak in front of supporters and larger crowds at public functions, cadre training camps and seminars about topics including the role of Indian Muslims during the independence struggle, the state of Muslims in Europe, as well as about developing skills such as public speaking and CV writing. While closely working with Muslim activists in the PFI and other Muslim groups my role as an outsider has also been used instrumentally. In the past, leaders have used my presence to indicate or augment their social standing: when they took me on tours of project sites and Muslim neighbourhoods, seated me visibly in the first row at conferences next to senior leaders and used me as a source of entertainment in the offices and popular hangout spots (see Appendix 20). Furthermore, despite making it clear to the leadership and key informants that my research would be impartial and potentially critical of the PFI's social and political activities, certain expectations and hopes that this study would validate their work and agenda were expressed. Moreover, journalists affiliated with the PFI and other Muslim groups indicated some interest in quoting me or writing feature articles about me as a foreign PhD student researching the PFI and Muslim minority politics. Other requests by journalists who were affiliated with mainstream newspapers often coincided with political events such as the 2016 Kerala election or the PFI's involvement in political violence. Requests of such kind put me in a difficult situation, as it invited the police interest when the PFI is already under state surveillance. Adversaries of the PFI have also threatened me with deportation and prosecution for complicity in subversive activities.

Therefore, as I navigated through different social settings and participated in the campaigns and events of diverse Muslim and non-Muslim organisations during my fieldwork, I had to deal with and reflect upon delicate role conflicts. One such example came in November 2012 when I took part in a political rally by the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH) in Bangalore – a political rival of the PFI. Without prior notification, a PFI informant appeared at the small campaign ground and I greeted him while I was standing next to senior JIH representatives. As a consequence, I was closely watched by the JIH members, which created a tense and uncomfortable situation. Similarly, when meeting with a well-known member of a Hindu nationalist organisation, I occasionally sat on the back of his scooter as we drove through a small town. I was worried that PFI members would see me with the Hindu nationalist, which could undermine my relationship with and access to the PFI. On a third occasion, a police official from the Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) asked me to provide him with resources regarding the "origin of terrorism" and assist him with his proposed book on "terrorism in India". In addition, during my interviews, a sense of being watched or reported on by vigilant citizens was often present. Whether in cafes, trains or other public places, Muslim interviewees could feel constrained and uncomfortable. A Muslim businessman warned me that the police might monitor and investigate me if I continue with my research on the PFI. Interviewees such as Hindu nationalists, politicians and police inspectors constantly pointed out that the PFI is dangerous by indicating classified intelligence reports openly linking the PFI to terrorism, and mentioning government plans for banning the group and arresting its leadership. I also interviewed victims with visible physical injuries who claimed to have been attacked by PFI cadres, as well as injured Muslim activists, who stated they had been tortured by Hindu nationalists and the police.

Hence, conducting research with victims of physical violence from various adverse organisations, maneuvering between and within antagonistic political milieus and parties,

including Hindu nationalists, Islamists and state security agents, and being regularly exposed to political rumours raises questions about the personal security and mental wellbeing of the researcher. These manifold role conflicts and sensitive narratives of victimhood or personal loss by my respondents during the fieldwork are methodologically challenging as well as insightful. They also mirror the permanent tension of being a participant observer in the field, which must be carefully navigated, maintained, and logistically and emotionally managed.

1.6. Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 will provide the theoretical framework of this thesis which consists of three components: the study of Islamic activism, secularism and social movement theory. I will commence by reviewing the debate around Islamic movements and the moderation thesis, and why Muslim minority activism in India constitutes a compelling case study. Furthermore, I will discuss the secularisation thesis and India's democratic framework, in which Islamist groups have been operating since Independence in 1947. The last section will draw from secondary literature on social movements and outline the analytical framework within which the empirical chapters and research questions are situated.

Chapter 3 will introduce the Popular Front of India (PFI), its founding spirit, funding and membership structures as well as its organisational history to address how the PFI has been produced by the history and geography of South India. Secondly, by reviewing the literature on the emergence of Hindu nationalism, I will show how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been expanding beyond its traditionally North Indian focus and entered South India, in particular in the coastal area of Karnataka, where the PFI has a strong support base. The

final section of the chapter will highlight the new type of Muslim citizenship politics that was partially a response to the emergence of Hindu nationalism. I will also argue that Muslim citizenship politics was supported by the social policies of the INC, and contrast it with the dominant ulama-led style of Muslim minority politics from the colonial period onwards. Tracing the historical pattern of Muslim politics in India helps to make clear the need to better understand contemporary Muslim citizenship movements, and explore the challenges they face in attracting mass following from ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims.

Chapter 4 demonstrates how the PFI uses the existing psychology of fear among the Muslim community to establish itself as a physical and ideological protector. By analysing ethnographic material from collective action campaigns and movement activities, I will show how the leadership creates collective victimhood frames and engages in muscle politics. In order to comprehend the politics of victimhood of the PFI and other Muslim groups, the chapter will further examine the concepts of religious or moral injury (Mahmood 2009) and sentimental hurt (Devji 2005) in the context of the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 and the Hindu nationalist government elected in May 2014. Thereby, I will address the lack of research on emotional pain within the social sciences (Goodwin 2007, 2009).

Chapter 5 will show how the state, the police and Hindu nationalists deal with the minority assertions of the PFI, demonstrating that the PFI is seen as a constant terrorist threat and a danger to the Hindu majority. I will discuss the Hindu nationalist campaigns that took place during my fieldwork in order to highlight how fear as well as a strong sentiment of political injustice, among segments of BJP supporters are instrumentalised for the rationalisation of violence for Hindu self-defense. Furthermore, fieldwork accounts with officials in the police and Intelligence Bureau as well as documents and classified reports dealing with the PFI and Muslim minority politics will be scrutinised.

Chapter 6 will provide a detailed analysis of the internal workings of the PFI, highlighting the PFI's practice of moral vigilance and agenda of self-cultivation to generate support, solidarity and social cohesion among its followers. I will also demonstrate how the movement provides political education, legal aid and promotes a rights consciousness that appeals to its members. Such legal pragmatism is essential to contain violence and to show that marginalised groups can have an impact in parliament, courts, the market and during interactions with the police (Wiktorowicz 2004: 66-67). Finally, the chapter will analyse how the PFI reaches out to its young Muslim support base by facilitating religiously inspired welfare activism, including disaster and riot relief work and social service that aims to enhance community bonds and commitment to the movement.

Chapter 7 will show that the discourse of Muslim citizenship politics that is promoted by PFI is also resonating with other Muslim groups, including the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH). My fieldwork suggests that various Islamic organisations are indeed aiming for a similar approach to Muslim politics, even if these organisations have tensions and differences with each other. In order to expand the debate, I will use my data from two Islamic groups namely the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Jamaat e Islami Hind (JIH), their political wings the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) and the Welfare Party of India (WPI), student organisations and women groups, including the National Women's Front (NWF) and the Girls Islamic Organisation (GIO). The chapter will show how these groups raise awareness and mobilise around the unprecedented risks that arise from technological and economic changes, consumerism, and the arrival of pluralistic lifestyles that threaten traditional institutions (e.g. family and education) and cultural identities. I will look at their proposed discourses of value-based politics, which vocally defends the Muslim personal law and offers an alternate mode of modernity, including a critical engagement with India's

economic system, corrupt state elites, female empowerment and cooperation with other non-Muslim groups. The second part of the chapter will highlight some pertinent concerns by former members, liberal Muslims and non-Muslim groups with respect to the current discourse of Muslim citizenship politics. Critics have argued that groups such as the PFI and JIH will re-introduce illiberal features and Islamise society as soon as they win a political mandate through elections (see also Schwedler 2004, Sheth 2009).

The Conclusion will provide a summary of the main findings of the thesis, and reiterate how Muslim groups, including the PFI, are departing from earlier Muslim politics in India that relied on the secular patronage of the INC, other regional parties and Muslim elites. The PFI and other groups are instead developing an assertive type of Muslim citizenship politics much in line with low caste and Dalit parties. In this process, the dominant style of politics of elite Muslims and the ulama, that has been centred on an inward-focused Islamic identity, is being challenged by non-elite Muslim leaders and social activists since the late 1980s. The thesis will argue that this is changing the face of Indian Muslim politics, and indicates the arrival of Muslim citizenship politics. Therefore, new Muslim groups demonstrate a higher level of political pragmatism and confidence compared to the traditional ulama-led movements by making various concessions and novel assertions within India's democratic framework. In doing so, Islamic groups such as the PFI are trying to align with secular and morally disputed allies in order to overcome the community's political isolation and to increase its influence and representation in policy making and national politics.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework: Islamic Movements and the Secular State in India

This chapter will discuss the recent scholarship on Islamic movements and their growing involvement in democratic processes and electoral politics to critically review the existing assumption that religious movements cannot constructively participate in public discourse. Such assumptions about religious movements remain dominant in debates on the secularisation thesis in social science, policy and governance circles (see Nandy 1990, Candland 2000, Rosenblum 2003, Bano 2012, Kettell 2012, Devine 2015). Yet, we also see a growing number of studies illustrating how Islamist movements engage with democratic politics, raise secular and egalitarian demands and form alliances with ideologically dissimilar groups (Schwedler 2004, Lawson 2004, Alam 2007). So far studies on the moderation (and radicalisation) of Islamic groups are heavily focused on Muslim majority countries, many of which are under authoritarian regimes. The impact and direction of Islamic activism in Muslim minority contexts has largely been neglected within political theory (Devji 2005, Ahmad 2009, De Cordier 2010, Reetz 2010). Hence, this chapter will argue that India's democratic experience constitutes a compelling analytical case to understand how Islamic movements can actively engage in and defend democratic processes, rather than being opposed to notions of participation and democracy.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 2.1. will review the literature on Islamic movements and the moderation thesis. It will discuss whether Islamic movements are compatible with democratic processes, and able to align with non-Muslim groups. Section 2.2. will engage with the secularisation thesis and India's secular state. This is crucial for our understanding of the workings of contemporary Islamist movements in India, which are operating under a secular regime. Section 2.3. draws on secondary literature on social movements and outlines the analytical framework within which the empirical chapters are

situated. In the concluding section, I will bring together the key arguments that have been made. It raises some important implications for the subsequent empirical chapters, in which I lay out the argument that Islamist movements are able to raise secular demands in the Indian minority context and beyond.

2.1. Islamic Movements and the Moderation Thesis

Scholarship on Islamic movements, including the literature on extremist, radical, fundamentalist and militant Islamic groups, is heavily contested (Ahmad 2009:3). Such research is often based on secondary analysis without empirical grounding, informed by security paradigms and media-driven public attention (Githens-Mazer 2012: 4-5). Roy (1994) for instance has argued that Islamist movements throughout the world are motivated by "socio-political" causes and the idea of a righteous Islamic state as a political ideology. Islamist leaders, in their display of public piety, often appear to receive their legitimacy directly from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. The widely-held assumption is that Islamic movements challenge the status quo through a social revolution and the application of the Sharia to every aspect of social life, and as a structuring principle of politics, judiciary and economy (Schwedler 2004: 205).

In contrast, Sayyid (2003) and Mahmood (2005) contend that such a portrayal of Islamic movements motivated by a macro-political and revolutionary agenda and aiming to establish an all-encompassing Islamic state (e.g. Esposito 1992, Roy 1994, Goele 1996, Burgat and Dowell 1997), ignores other forms of engagement by diverse dawah or piety groups. These include the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), female mosque movements that try to Islamise society from below, and intellectual movements within civil society which are not aiming to overthrow the incumbent secular or authoritarian state elites. While some Islamic

movements try to disengage from or overthrow the jahiliyyah [un-Islamic or ignorant] systems through force, other groups attempt to peacefully Islamise society, engage in civic disruption against the jahiliyyah state or withdraw from it entirely (Robinson 2007, Springer 2009, Ahmad 2009). Other forms of engagement are political alliances between Islamist actors and non-Islamist ruling elites, and Islamist movements that reduce the focus on an Islamic state to appeal to non-Muslim constituencies (Lawson 2004). In certain cases, Islamist groups create political parties that interact with other political actors through coalitions and parliamentarian politics. Wiktorowicz (2004:2) provides a broader definition of Islamist movements that "accommodates the variety of contentions that frequently emerge under the banner of 'Islam', including propagation movements, terrorist groups, collective action rooted in Islamic symbols and identities, explicitly political movements that seek to establish an Islamic state and inward-looking groups that promote Islamic spirituality through collective efforts".

Therefore, while Islamic movements are not monolithic, but instead highly organic and variegated in organisational strategies, political objectives, and social outreaches, they are still predominantly presented as holistic entities. In fact, Islamic movements have often been described as ideological projects that are averse to political pluralism, democracy and secularism, and also wish to control female behaviour and sexuality, and discriminate against sexual and religious minorities (Bayat 1996, Sahgal and Yuval-Davis 1992, Aftab 2008). In particular, after the emergence of Islamist groups such as al-Qaeda and the September 11 2001 attacks, Islamist movements around the world have been critically portrayed by various scholars as states of exception, unwilling to integrate into democratic regimes, and reluctant to accept the separation of religion and politics, therefore posing an existential threat to the social order (Fukuyama 1992, Gellner 1992, Esposito 1992, Kepel 2002, Bayat 2007). Metcalf (2006:3) has argued that prejudices against Islam as "inevitably

politically militant, that Muslim women are particularly oppressed, or that Islam is a static tradition, sunk in medievalism" have become part of the non-Muslim collective memory around the world. This way of seeing Islamic movements is rooted within the discourse of orientalism (Said 1978). Colonial scholarship regularly analysed Islamic history as an aggressive project that was driven by an agenda of violent expansion, while Muslims as oriental others were seen as inferior to Western rational subjects and knowledge regimes (Inden 1990, Chakrabarty 2000, 2003). Political theorists such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington have long explained Islamic movements through the historical lens of violent conflict, the anachronistic tradition of the Quran, and Islamic theology per se, while describing it as the archenemy of modernity, secular democracy, and female empowerment (Lewis 1993, 2002, Huntington 1993, 1996).

These persistent views of Islamic movements as threats to liberal democracies around the world also explain the growing number of studies focusing on Islamic radicalisation, which imply a sense of internal or external revolution of individuals and groups who are turning against the status quo and existing government structures. The process of radicalisation also indicates a stark shift from peaceful activism or political inaction to varied degrees of assertion, including violent measures, that are employed by organised groups or individual agents (Ellner 2005, Brighton 2007, Jenne 2007, Githens-Mazer 2012). Scholars have also studied the recruitment processes and motives of individuals who have been radicalised in the past, which has led to fierce debates over the influence of religious discourses, social milieus, mental illnesses and other idiosyncrasies (Saad-Ghorayeb 2003, Neuman and Rogers 2007, Fraihi 2008).

Such research objectives have been criticised by social constructivists for being culturally essentialist, treating categories such as Islam, Islamists, or Muslim women as static entities,

and lacking nuanced empirical engagement with the manifold political realities of Islamic movements. Many of these political terms such as Muslim or Islamist "lose credibility when confronted with some contrary realities such as the wide variety of identities an average person activates most days (spouse, parent, household member, traveller, consumer, worker, supervisor, member of groups)" (McAdam 2002: 125, see also Brass 1997). Lieberman and Singh (2017) have argued that non-religious identity categories have rarely been made into "autonomous political units" through census data in order to explain group conflict or violence. Hence social constructivists argue that an essentialist's view of religion fails to engage with broader debates on Islam, democracy, gender equality, including Islamic feminism, and the contested local realities of modernity (Sayyid 2003, Vatuk 2008, Schneider 2009). Indeed, a growing number of studies comprehend Islamic movements as compatible with democracy and capable of promoting democratic values, social change and reform (Esposito and Voll 1996, Casanova 2001, El Fadl 2004, Lawson 2004, Schwedler 2004, 2011, Bayat 2007, Alam 2007, Ahmad 2009).

In this context, researchers have examined the trajectories of moderation and temporal changes from violent to non-violent, radical to moderate, passive to proactive and obedient to assertive politics through the modus operandi of Islamic groups, their leadership and cadre-base (Wickham 2002, 2013, Lawson 2004, Schwedler 2004, 2011, Alam 2006, Alam 2007, Ahmad 2009, Bano 2012, Islam 2015). This moderation thesis stresses that so-called extremist groups will become more moderate, and compromise their exclusive ideology through participation in electoral politics and coalition building in order to expand their support base. It initially became a prominent analytical tool after the end the Cold War to analyse left wing and religious parties in the former Soviet Union and how they behave and integrate in the various newly founded democracies in Europe (Kalyvas 2000).

Wickham (2013) argued in her study on the moderation process during the political rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, 2011, that Islamist groups have changed their political outlook and started to see that departure from "illiberal features" such as the sharia, violence, and anti-democratic agendas as well as a drive towards democratic participation are viable organisational strategies. Moreover, Mahmood, (2005: xviii) rejects the assumption that the visible display of conservative religiosity such as the hijab indicates radicalisation or constitutes a threat to democratic frameworks. She argued that "the fact that Egyptian Muslims who exhibited signs of this [Islamist forms of] sociability were an integral part of the democratic protests of 2011 casts doubt on the easy line of causality drawn between abidance by conservative social mores and the danger posed to democratic project". Such observations resonate with Lawson's (2004: 90) study of the minority Shia uprisings in Bahrain between 1994 and 1998, which were of an Islamist nature, except that religious demands were only peripheral. At the core of those protests were secular demands relating to freedom of speech, the amendments of laws and the fight against unemployment and discrimination against religious minorities.

Roy (1994:5) further argues that from the 1970s Islamist movements had a lot in common with the radical left or Christian movements that were inspired by liberation theologies. These groups promoted a "cult of the return to the past of authenticity and purity; the concern with dress food, and conviviality; the rebuilding of a traditional way of life". Ahmad (2009:5), building on Roy's work, focuses on how the Islamist identity is constructed through strict symbolic boundary maintenance. He stresses the notion of purity and Islamist leaders' monopoly of interpretation of pure Islamic practices. Such boundary framing is purposefully used to demark the movement from rival groups and to discredit other Islamic and non-Muslim authorities such as the local ulama or modernist elements, who are seen as impure. In other words, to maintain a superior reputation, Islamist movements frequently utilise

"strategies of vilification and exaltation to present [themselves] as a moral authority, while discrediting its detractors as unworthy of the sacred trust of religious interpretation" (Wiktorowics 2004: 171). For example, reformist movements such as the Wahhabis, the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Deoband, Tablighi Jamaat and Ahl-i Hadith movements in South Asia are mainly concerned with self-cultivation and pure practice inspired by a more literal interpretation of the Quran. Thereby, these piety movements discredit saint worship and other non- Muslim practices.

Despite claims to be striving for purity and a return to tradition, Roy (1994) and Robinson (2004) have characterised Islamic movements as modern phenomenon with urban, secular, educated cadres between 20 and 30 years of age, often holding technical medical degrees from Western countries, rarely studying jurisprudence, or being madrasah educated, and have little ulama involvement. The mass following of Islamist movements is mainly from urban or semi-urban backgrounds, rooted in modern economic systems, practicing some form of consumerism with the perception of being deceived by the promise of modernisation and misguided state policies. Moreover, Islamist groups demonstrate technological expertise, using social media channels such as Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, and other digital platforms for recruitment, campaign mobilisation and the dissemination of agendas and organisational objectives.

Against this backdrop, scholars have argued that Islamic movements are no exception but a specific critique of and even a product of modernity, which is also found in political theory dealing with postmodernists and Christian fundamentalists. Hence, this research challenges those views that Islamic movements promote an outright rejection of modernity and the political project of liberalism (Roy 1994, Lapidus 1997, Euben 1997, 1999, Sayyid 2003). The intellectual roots for this critique of modernity can be found in the early ideas of Islamist

philosophy, especially the ideas of the Jamaat i Islami founder Abul Ala Maududi, who later influenced the Islamic intellectual and leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Sayid Qutb. Euben (2002: 38) has noted that Sayid Qutb (1964) shaped contemporary Islamic thinking as no one else did, and his work "Signpost" can be regarded as an Islamist movement manifesto in the context of Westernisation, materialism, and secularism in many post-colonial nations:

> "Qutb insists that the survival of the Islamic community depends on overcoming the pernicious influence of jahiliyyah. In other words, Muslims can be redeemed from bankruptcy and fragmentation that plagues the rationalist, secular West only by recapturing the essential, universal, constant, and a priori unity of religious and political authority in Islam."

In her earlier work, Euben (1999: 89) stressed that "[Qutb's] Islamic ideas are compelling in part because they are a powerful challenge both to the legitimacy of secular, modernising Middle Eastern regimes and to the Western rationalist and imperialist ways of understanding and thus organising political life". Given such resistance by Islamic movements towards unrestrained political rationality and post-enlightenment thought, political alliances between Islamist and other post-modernist groups should be feasible, since they are both critical of open-ended and unrestricted liberalism and progress.

Although this democratic trend of forming alliances with ideological dissimilar groups exists within Islamist movements, critical studies suggest that the indication of democratic openings and participatory politics by religious groups can be deceptive, and instead are instrumental to re-introducing illiberal features and Islamising society as soon as they secure political power through the electoral system[15]. In addition, scholars have argued that

[15] A similar criticism was mirrored in the politics of the Muslim Brotherhood after they came to power in Egypt 2011. Before the electoral victory, there was concern that the Muslim Brothers under Morsi will ban alcohol and pork, and further alienate the Coptic minority community. Previous to the coup d'état by the military in June 2013, the incumbent government led by the Muslim Brothers tried to implement elements of the Sharia within the constitution, which caused an international media outcry (Guardian 2012).

Islamist movements are often against post-modern ideals such as Western lifestyle and pop-culture, consumerism, individualism and sexual freedom and are thereby still inherently incompatible with democratic states (Ahmed 1992, Turner 1994, Barber 1995, Islam 2015). In the Indian context of an assertive Hindu nationalist movement with a political wing, the BJP, Jaffrelot (2013: 888) has argued that the moderation thesis has to be revised. With the background of state sponsored violence against Muslim minorities, Hindu nationalists "have constantly oscillated between a radical ethno-religious strategy and phases of apparently tactical moderation which did not alter their core ideology and therefore moderation was never internalised, contributing to the volatility of democratising political systems" (see also Ruparelia 2006). Other studies emphasised that religious groups will never be fully characterised by a "linear, uni-dimensional progression towards greater moderation" (Wickham 2013). For instance, Islamist groups in Egypt have "traced a path marked by profound inconsistencies and contradictions, yielding agendas in which newly embraced themes of freedom and democracy coexist uneasily with illiberal religious concepts carried from the past" (Wickham 2013:3). Therefore, it is irrelevant whether religious groups are genuinely or tactically participating in elections and compete for mass support with rival parties. Even if their leaders and members do not believe in democratic processes in the first place, empirical evidence suggests that political actors will be shaped by democratic rules, public accountability, and state surveillance as well as by incentives such as access to spaces in government and civil society. This will result in more inclusive, yet internally heavily contested, agendas (Chandra 2005, Roy 2007, Tezcur 2010).

Bayat (2007) further argued that whether Islamist movements align with democratic and post-modern forces always depends on the reading of a particular pressure group and the leadership's capacity to mobilise around their interpretation of social change. Sayyid (2003: 17-18) also echoed this by asking what kinds of Islamic movements have emerged under

certain historical and institutional conditions. Consequently, the thesis maintains that Islamic movements and religious mobilisation for political, socio-economic or cultural causes should be understood within the historical process, political contexts and micro milieus in which they occur in relation to macro political structures.

So far, few studies have applied the moderation thesis as a tool to understand India's democratic experience of accommodating various ethnic and religious parties (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987, Chandra 2005, Ahmad 2009, Jaffrelot 2013). While it may be problematic to speak of political moderation in the context of majority Hindu parties within India's democracy, there is some evidence that suggests that Muslim minority politics became successively more inclusive. Jaffrelot (2013: 888), referring to Ahmad's (2009) study on Islamic movements in India, has noted that "the moderation thesis is more heuristic in India in the case of political parties that represent minorities, like the Jamaat i Islami, which has renounced some of its fundamentalist articles of faith, such as the rejection of electoral politics, in the course of its interaction with democratic practices". Chapter 3 will discuss the moderation process of the PFI and JIH in more detail.

The next section will discuss India's secular state, which constitutes a challenge to the persistence of the secularisation thesis and, in turn, may provide a pertinent space for Muslim minority groups to become more involved in democratic politics.

2.2. Secularism and Islamic Movements in India

The study of Islamic movements is still heavily focused on Muslim majority countries, whereas the impact and direction of Muslims in minority contexts has been neglected within academia and policy circles. The influence of new ideas on politics and democratic

involvement from Muslim societies outside the Middle East requires more scrutiny[16] (Devji 2005, Ahmad 2009, Reetz 2010, Haykel 2017). Therefore, the study of Islamic movements in the Indian context has the potential to offer a new perspective, given that they occur in a secular democratic framework that has provided the space for a new type of assertive citizenship politics which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Scholars have often portrayed India's 172 million Muslims (2011 census) (as well as the roughly 600 million Muslims in South Asia) as adherents to a version of Islam that is unified, and comparable to Islamic practices in the Middle East. For a great many years, Hindu nationalists have used such oriental assumptions to demean Indian Muslims as violent invaders, who have to prove their loyalty to and assimilate into the Hindu majoritarian culture (Van der Veer 1993, 1994, Sarkar 1996, Hansen 1999). Moreover, these views about Indian Muslims partially resulted from a selection bias within Indian academia, in which social science studies predominantly focused on the majoritarian Vedic religions of Hinduism and Buddhism (Ahmad 1972, Fazalbhoy 1997), while disciplines such as sociology and anthropology have been dominated by upper caste Hindu scholars, who perpetuated the dearth of research on religious minorities (Visweswaran 2010: 140-141, Kumar 2016).

Unlike the majority of Muslims in the Middle East, many of whom have been socialised under authoritarian regimes, secular democracy has been integral to the daily lives of Indian Muslims since India's Independence in 1947. Even under British rule, the Deobandi ulama, including the Jamiat Ulama i Hind, were capable of aligning with secular forces and were regarded within the Muslim community as freedom fighters who played a crucial role in the Independence Movement (Metcalf 2005, Sikand 2005).

[16] Devji (2005: 12-22) argued that the influence of Islamic ideas from the Islamic periphery to the Middle East has been under-researched, including Shia politics in Iraq, the Deobandi influence on the Taliban, or the historical impact of Indian Islamic scholarship such as the Ahl-i Hadith (Salafi) movement on Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism via scholarly exchanges (see also Haykel 2017). A brief discussion of the arrival and hybrid character of Islam as well as the consequences of the colonial intervention in India has been included in Appendix 9.

In contemporary India, Islamist organisations have defended India's secular democracy, aligned with secular or low caste Hindu groups and established their own democratic parties (Alam 2004, Hasan 2007, Ahmad 2009). In fact, the majority of Islamist groups moved away from or were never persuaded by the idea of an Islamic state, but rather embraced the market and democratic space as the main instrument to achieve social and political change and organise collective action (Alam 2008, Iqtidar 2013). Especially over the last two decades, uncurbed capitalism has been made into a prime target for change by various Islamist groups, advocating for reform within the general limitations of India's democracy (Islam 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that for Islamic groups in post-colonial India, the secular state became the main focus and political reference point for collective action. The state and in particular the INC enjoyed legitimacy, and was seen by Indian Muslims as a paternalistic provider that had to fulfil its obligations as a care taker and protector (Tilly 1985, Shah 2006, Ferguson 2013). For example, public protests have mainly occurred in the past as a response to adverse policies towards Islam, in cases during which the state neglected its role as patron of minority rights, cultural heritage, personal law, Islamic schools or as a protector against communal violence (Engineer 1987, Das 1995, Rosenblum 2003, Ahmad 2009). The following section will analyse the framework of secular state structures in post-colonial India in which Islamist parties learned to operate politically as well as to fathom their political trajectories and organisational objectives. First, I will highlight the secularisation thesis, and the contested notion of various forms of secular realities in order to then contrast it with the distinctively different version of secularism in India.

The end of the Second World War was followed by higher living standards, increased rates of literacy and promises of enhanced peace and stability[17], and proponents of the

[17] The classical analysis of modernity and secularism has addressed some negative consequences occurring in modernising societies such as the notions of anomie, reification and alienation, but the more profound emphasis

secularisation thesis enthusiastically predicted that modernisation, rationalisation and bureaucratisation combined with the legal separation of the state from religious institutions would diminish the influence of religion in the public arena[18] (Parsons 1964, Berger 1967, 1969, Luckmann 1967 Habermas 1989, Bruce 2002). Max Weber (1962 [1919], 1963 [1922]), who provided some of the foundations for such visions of unilateral development trajectories, argued in his colossal work on world religions that the secularising process would lead to the disenchantment of the world, governed by instrumental rationality, in which spiritual and religious authority is replaced with abstract, legal and administrative bodies. Such a Eurocentric conceptualisation of secularism and modernity has cast religion as "an expression of (personal) childishness or (collective) immaturity" (Cannell 2010: 88) and as "a privatized and individualized belief" (Mahmood 2005, xiv) that eventually will be replaced by a "modern, rational, post metaphysical secular consciousness" (Casanova 2011:57, see also Cannell 2006). From the 1980s onwards, with the emergence of political Islam, ethnic nationalism and Hindu fundamentalism, the secularisation thesis encountered a crisis of legitimacy. Evidence suggests that religion has not vanished in the public arena and is in fact on the rise in both developed and developing countries; this is understood as a response to the attempted relegation of religion to the private sphere and therefore a rejection of political and top-down secularism (Madan 1998, Berger 1999, Norris and Inglehart 2004, Thomas 2005, Mahmood 2005, Bano and Deneulin 2009, Sharma 2016).

However, the paradigm that successful modernisation can only occur alongside the decline of religion continues to be persistent in governance, policy making, and more generally in liberal political theory. Conversely, the role of religious movements and discourses as a

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was on the "opportunity side" and bright future prospects of secularisation, and modernity that was fostered by the belief in technology, the nation state and the rise of instrumental rationality (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992, Dunn 1998, Baumann 2000).

[18] Casanova (1994: 7, 2011: 60) analytically divided the "theory of secularisation" into three interlinked components: First, institutional separation (state, economy and academia from religious institutions). Second, religion will diminish with increased levels of modernisation in societies. Third, modern secular politics assumes that religion is confined to the private sphere.

resource for collective action, community development, social work and democratic engagement has remained a phenomenon of the margins in academia[19] (Candland 2000, Ager and Ager 2011, Kettell 2012, Devine 2015, Kidwai 2017). In other words, the secularisation thesis remained unimpeachable: religious parties and leaders are excluded from public life and policy spaces, and are predominantly associated with dysfunctional and fragile states. The assumption persists that religious politics leads to proselytisation, extremism, narrow illiberalism, exclusive identity assertion, and is discriminative towards other religious, ethnic and sexual minorities, due to lack of reason and an unwillingness to seek political compromises. Therefore, in liberal political theory, the discussion of religion is still largely absent or superficial, while religious actors are often treated as anomalies within electoral party politics or humanitarian and development sectors (Nandy 1990, Rosenblum 2003, Ager and Ager 2011, Bano 2012, Kettell 2012, Jacob and Kalter 2013, Devine 2015, Mavelli and Wilson 2017). In this context of the persistence of the secularisation thesis, some scholars expressed critical reservation of its uni-dimensional propagation and Western ontology. Given the vast differences in arrangement, practices and receptions within Europe and beyond, the study of the experience and implications of secularisation necessitates the inclusion of qualitative, contextual, regional and country specific research agendas (Bhargava 1998, Hansen 2000, Asad 2003, Cady and Hurd 2010, Starrett 2010, Bubandt and van Beek 2012). The following section will elaborate on India's distinctive version of secularism and its critics.

Hansen (2000: 255) critically highlighted the "tendency to understand the secular state in rather undifferentiated terms: modern, homogenising and driven by objectifying scientific modes of governance". Against this backdrop, Donald Smith's (1963) influential book "India

[19] A recent example constitutes the 2016 Development Study Association Conference in Oxford, September 2016, in which out of 65 panels and over 400 presentations only two presentations dealt explicitly with the role of religion on potential development outcomes.

as a Secular State" rejected the portrayal of the Indian state as secular because of the persistent influence of religious authorities on state affairs, the state's association with organised religion and government interference in religious matters such as undoing the repercussions of the caste system (Bhargava 2010: 83). Smith's rejection of the Indian state as secular mirrors the, above mentioned, discourse of Eurocentric secularism and the institutional separation of state and religion (Bhargava 1998, Hansen 2000, Casanova 2011). Scholars of Indian secularism argued that this Eurocentric discourse is unable to engage with the manifold non-Western and local arrangements of religion and society (Asad 1993, Galanter 1998, Hansen 2000, van der Veer 2001). For instance, Western ideal types of secularism including the wall of separation principle and state practice without religious references is unfeasible and even detrimental to implement in India, given that social structures and reforms have been intertwined with religious practices for centuries (Madan 1998, Tambiah 1998, Sud and Tambs-Lyche 2011). That's why, for Madan (1987: 753-54), secularism constitutes an "impotent" and "alien cultural ideology" that failed to capture the "totalising" character of religious forces in South Asia.

It can be argued that secular INC elites with their antipathy towards religion in the public domain may have contributed to the raise of Hindu fundamentalism in India, since they helped to erode the ground for spiritual leaders, who may have been more capable of containing religious conflict (Madan 1997, 1998, Sharma 2016). Hindu nationalists have relentlessly blamed the INC and India's secular constitution for minority appeasement and being anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim, which has allegedly opened the door to Islamic radicalisation in schools and to terrorism due to insufficient state surveillance (see Tambiah 1998, Bhargava 2010). However, Chatterjee (1998) points out that Hindu nationalists have successfully exploited certain features of the secular state, including its commitment to progress, modernisation and the nation state with its unified national identity to consolidate

the Hindu identity for electoral gain by using minorities as scapegoats, who are portrayed as anti-national and unwilling to assimilate. Nandy (1998) also stressed that in contemporary India, secularism, which is accompanied by an array of neoliberal policies, is an imported Western template, which is hostile to plurality and indigenous traditions. It exclusively benefits the nation state and the homogenising agenda of the liberal Hindu upper castes and middle classes, while it punishes those citizens who are not yet part of the vision of the secular nation state (see also Chatterjee 1998, Ong 2006, Schwedler 2012).

Other scholars have argued that the Indian state was always characterised by its distinct religious nature and it cannot be grasped through Western perspectives of secular modernity. Hence, Indian secularism is constantly shaped by the interaction of Western and non-Western influences, and produces westernised and indigenous futures as part of this synthesis (Bhargava 1998, 2010, van der Veer 2001, Ahmad 2009). Unlike in the newly found nation states in Europe[20], religion was rarely perceived as a threat to the Indian state, but was a useful tool to mobilise against the British during the independence struggle. In other words, "recognition of religion and culture and its various symbols in the public arena was considered perfectly legitimate from the governing point of view" (Alam 2007:46), while religious references in public by politicians were perceived as a "sign of moral consistency and patriotism" (Hansen 2000: 258).

Furthermore, in contrast to popular perceptions that secularism in India is a repressive tool of westernised elites and the liberal middle class, who are detached from the grassroots

[20] Before 19th century, religious authorities and secular states in Europe were furious revivals. Catholic priests and associates were seen as reactionary, anti-national and disloyal, because of the foreign influence of the Vatican on state affairs and the indoctrination in religious schools. During the formative years of these nation states, governments reduced religious privileges, which were accompanied by illiberal and authoritarian features, while Catholics were marginalised, discriminated and imprisoned in the name of liberalism, rationalism and science. Therefore, secularism as a governing ideology was a key component for the creation of modern European nation states. Although it is commonly understood that secular states replaced religious institutions, Asad (2003: 193-194) argued that secularism was strongly shaped by religious influences and continues to unfold religious forces in numerous manifestations.

realities of the masses (Nandy 1998), Michelutti (2007, 2008) illustrated that such a dichotomy between secular elites and the poor has to be questioned. She shows that while political elites in India often use the vernacular languages and religious themes of common people to mobilise grassroots support, local communities and religious movements also adopt the language and discourses of the modern state, policy making and secularism in order to assert their civic rights and demands for socio-economic inclusion (see also Chatterjee 2004, Jodhka 2007, Nielsen 2011). The uniqueness of this Indian secular arrangement has to be understood through India's post-colonial experience. After Independence in 1947, constitutional secularism as a state ideology was promoted by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who privately held the conviction that to modernise India centuries of religion practice had to be undone (Inden 1990). However, unlike Lenin in the Soviet Union or Ataturk in Turkey, Nehru abstained from a radical secularisation policy, including the use of violent force to impose secular beliefs and lifestyles on India's often deeply religious citizens. Instead, he allowed religious groups and their followers to practice, propagate and maintain religious institutions without state interference, so that India's various religions and communities could peacefully coexist[21] (Goele 1997, Madan 1998, Chatterjee 1998, Hansen 2000, Inden 2000).

Hence, India's version of constitutional secularism has some distinct features and its advocates argue that it can help other nations in their management of multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies. The Indian state treats the institutional differentiation of state and religion in a flexible manner: in some cases it positively discriminates in favour of some religious groups, while it excludes other religious denominations from the same treatment. For example, Muslims and Christians are being granted state funding to set up religious

[21] In "The Discovery of India", Nehru ([2010] 1946: 382) has reassuringly claimed that minorities in India shall feel safe and protected in the post-colonial, democratic polity, arguing that "religion, culture language, the fundamental rights of the individual, were all protected and assured by basic constitutional provision in a democratic constitution, applying equally to all. Apart from this, the whole history of India was witness of the toleration and even encouragement of minorities and different racial groups".

schools or to live according to their personal laws to protect their cultural heritage, whereas others, such as low caste Hindu communities, have benefitted from affirmative action in education and the public sector, because of the historical discrimination of the caste system (Chandra 2005, Bhargava 2011). Bhargava (2010: 27-62) argues that the Indian state has followed the strategy of "principled distance", in which the state views all religions as equal, which does not imply equal treatment for all. Instead, for smooth integration of diverse religious groups into the nation state, the government is obliged to provide minority concessions. In India's democratic polity, with various religious and ethnic communities, uneven development standards, and miscellaneous historical and cultural traditions, "asymmetrical treatment is the only way of realising an appropriately interpreted equality". This is similar to Chatterjee's (2011: 24) view, who stressed the importance of a "differentiated rather than equal citizenship as the normative standard for the modern state", since "radical equality" and neutrality compared to the flexible equidistant principle of tolerance can lead to alienation and resistance. This also mirrors Langer and Brown's (2008: 48) study, in which they argued that "attempts by the state to remain neutral may sometimes be interpreted negatively by minority groups, who associate neutrality with de facto dominance of majority culture".

Hence, for Bhargava (2010), the Indian state is secular and can inform other secular nation states because of its flexible interference in religious affairs and minority protection. Madan (1998: 309) also stressed that "in multi religious societies, such as those of South Asia, it should be realised that secularism may not be restricted to rationalism, that it is compatible with faith, and that rationalism (as understood in the West) is not the sole motive force of a modern state". Therefore, the unique feature of India's secular arrangement allows an individualistic as well as a collectivistic interpretation of rights. This flexibility may be better suited to multi-religious countries, as it permanently deals with the issues of minority

inclusion and advancement, and has never tried to extinguish religious identities in contrast to the various Western manifestations of more aggressive political secularism (Bhargava 2010: 85-99). That is why for Indian Muslims, who felt threatened as an endangered minority after the religious violence of Partition, secularism became a practical arrangement that protected their physical existence, language, cultural fabric and religion against the assimilative pressures of the Hindu majority (Bajpai 2002, Ahmad 2009).

Moreover, Chatterjee (1998: 366-367) has addressed the limitations of liberal political theory, in which Western secularism is embedded. He argued that this framework runs into trouble when it has to deal with issues of group or collective inclusion, since it is based on the principle of treating every citizen as equally. This tension is reflected in the contentious debates regarding multiculturalism, diversity, immigration and Leitkultur[22] in Europe, which are often impractical for understanding how identity politics or community reforms play out in practice. In particular, when liberalism turns to illiberal means to superimpose certain preferred worldviews of the majority regarding culture or dress codes, the Western framework inevitably rejects the possibility that Muslims and other religious groups can be "good" democratic citizens (see also Ignatieff 2005). Therefore, from a comparative institutional perspective, further empirical research on India's manifold secular arrangements between the state and religious groups could contribute to the harmonious coexistence of different communities in various societies and help to acknowledge diverse multi-cultural and multi-religious realities.

In the empirical chapters of this thesis, I will use the Popular Front of India (PFI) to illustrate that India's secular democratic experience has enabled Muslim minority activists to politically organise and promote an agenda that focuses on democratic inclusion, affirmative

[22] German for: guiding or majoritarian driven culture, in which religious minorities are expected to integrate. Leitkultur can be seen in opposition to the concept of multiculturalism (see Henkel 2008:9)

action and social justice, while Indian Muslims have assertively defended their Islamic heritage and traditions. Additional examples of this can be found in the emergence of proactive social movements and new Muslim political parties over the last 20 years that have challenged the old Muslim elites and the dominance of the secular INC. The last section will introduce social movement theory and show that structural strain is an insufficient explanation for the creation of mass based Islamist movements despite their destitute socio-economic conditions and political marginalisation.

2.3. Social Movement Theory

"Social movements [in India] haven't been a popular topic with researchers, making up less than 3% of all studies in history, political science, sociology and anthropology sponsored by the Indian Council of Social Research (ICSSR) up to the mid-nineties ... [while] the study of the politics of the masses has been largely ignored" (Reddy 2009). In particular, other than those studies on the Indian ulama, the plurality of Islamic practices, and more recently Islamic terrorism (Ahmad 1984, Shahabuddin and Wright 1987, Robinson 1997, 2007, Metcalf 2004, 2009, Osella and Osella 2006), few researchers have empirically examined Muslim politics with respect to citizenship assertions and socio-political inclusion and recognition[23] (Alam 2006, 2008, Ahmad 2009, Osella and Osella 2013, Punathil 2013, Islam 2015). This section will illustrate that Islamic activists use organisational tactics, cultural symbols and managerial strategies that are employed by all kinds of social movements and pressure groups across the world (Euben 1999, Roy 2004, Wiktorowicz 2004). Given the dearth of theoretically informed scholarship on Indian Islamic movements, this section will

[23] Shah (2004) has provided an annotated reference list of social movements in India, which indicates the absence of the study of Muslim-led social movements.

introduce the relevant social movement theories and concepts relevant to the empirical questions of the study.

Social movement theory[24] is an interdisciplinary approach that represents a synthesis of the dominant rational choice approach, structural analysis and the research of framing in order to understand collective action (Robinson 2004: 116). Scholars of social movements acknowledge the importance of agency and the fact that individuals make rational choices, but they also stress the significance of social context and structural change, which also impact these decisions. However, past studies have primarily applied social movement theory to Western societies, assuming "the presence of a dense articulate and communicative civil society [within] liberal democratic regimes" (Foweraker 1995: 6). The absence or weakness of democratic institutions and civil societies in developing countries has been widely ignored by scholars of social movements, while the analysis of Islamic movements has been overly descriptive and concerned with religious ideologies, neglecting the rich literature on social movement theory (Rashid 2001, 2002, Wickham 2002, Sikand 2004a, 2004b, Wiktorowicz 2004, 2006).

Nonetheless, in some cases social movement theory has been utilised to study Islamic movements and groups, partly because of the societal and political events in the Muslim world, such as the Iranian revolution in 1979, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the September 11 2001 attacks and the emergence of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State (IS) and other forms of Islamic movements (Esposito 1992, Hafez 2003, Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004, Wiktorowicz 2004, Wickham 2004, Schwedler 2006, Bayat 2007, Ahmad 2009, Yadav, 2010, Tezcur 2010, Byman 2016). In the following section, I will briefly introduce the different approaches within social movement theory, including structural

[24] The study of social movements originated in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of diverse collective campaigns concerning women, minority, and student rights and anti-war sentiments in Europe (Turner and Killian 1957, Smelser 1963, Wilson 1973, Foweraker 1995, Snow 2007).

strain, political opportunity, resource mobilisation and framing studies and point towards their relevance in respect of the study of Islamic movements.

Wickham (2002: 7) noted that "whether defined by cultural alienation or political and economic deprivation, the rise of Islamic activism is typically portrayed as a collective protest against the abject conditions prevailing in much of the contemporary Muslim world". In other words, Islamic movements can emerge from the failure of modernity and the secular state to generate wealth, employment, social security and political freedom (Turner and Killian 1957, Wickham 2002, Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2006). The emerging post-colonial nation states promoted an – at times – aggressive secular nationalism that rendered Islam and the ummah insignificant to governance (Turner and Killian 1957, Esposito, 1992, Wickham 2002, Sayyid 2003, Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2006). Early examples of such secular top-down state building projects were established in Egypt under Mohammed Ali or Khedive Ismail; in Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk; in Iran under the Shah; and after the Second World War in Algeria by the National Liberation Front; in Tunisia under Bourguibism; in Egypt under Nasser; in Syria and Iraq under Ba'athism; and in the communist regimes of Afghanistan and South Yemen. Although widely regarded as successful nation state projects with powerful domestic and international political allies, these secular or Kemalist regimes mainly represented national elites and small middle class constituencies, who captured powerful political and economic positions, secured privileges, and envisioned themselves as vanguards of modernisation (Amin 2007). However, these elites were unable to translate promises of inclusive development, national prosperity and unity into a political reality. Instead, the great bulk of the population felt alienated and betrayed by pervasive corruption, socio-economic stagnation and a disconnection between merit and reward, which eventually played into the hands of Islamist groups in the 1970s (see Wickham 2002, Sayyid 2003, Amin 2007). Esposito (1992: 8) contends that the greater the structural strains

and political frustrations with the ruling elites, the stronger the collective responses that are grounded in religious symbolism.

Although these grievance-based explanations are still relevant and commonly referred to by policy makers and security experts, one cannot gloss over the incompleteness of this approach. According to the grievance-based explanation, we should observe social movements, revolutions, riots, and insurgencies in most developing countries in which lack of freedom, grave poverty and other structural constraints are pervasive. However, such contentious action is de facto not the case, particularly for the politics promoted by Indian Muslim organisations, and the absence of a nation-wide political Islamist movement in India. The grievance approach might account for subjective motives as to why people participate in certain movements, but cannot explain the conditions under which, and how, collective action will in fact emerge.

In addressing the shortcomings of the grievance-based explanations, contemporary social movement theory on Islamic activism utilises the resource mobilisation approach. Movements are seen not just as irrational outbursts against the crony secular elite class, and hence as a result of the collective suffering of a population or sub-section of society. Instead, collective action is analysed as being rationally and strategically organised by individual agents, using categories such as division of labour, cost-benefit calculations, outcome maximisation and rational incentives (Tilly 1978, MacAdam 1992, Wiktorowicz 2004). Foweraker (1995: 16) argued that the resource mobilisation approach "replaced the crowd with organisation and dismissed the psychological variables of alienation and frustration in favour of the rational actor employing instrumental and strategic reasoning". Studies of Islamic movements have placed substantial emphasis on the role of organisational resources and religious institutions in political contexts where there are civic and democratic

constraints (Wiktorowicz 2004b, 2006). In particular, religious networks, including mosques, schools, universities and neighbourhoods, which are highly interconnected and frequently outside the realm of state control, can be regarded as "cultural laboratories" (Singerman 2004: 154) and pertinent to provide support, a sense of collective identity and social capital for an Islamic movement. In addition, these informal networks provide spiritual incentives and reduce the free-rider effect, but can also create strong conformity pressure and alienate liberal and non-Muslim supporters (Devine 2015).

Another approach within social movement theory further focuses on political opportunities, namely those external factors such as the opening and closing of democratic spaces, access to formal and informal political institutions and decision-making processes (Tarrow 1996). Hafez and Wiktorowicz (2004) argue that access to institutionalised politics is important to make an impact in parliaments, courts, and policy spaces. Such system accessibility is crucial to contain violence and generate a pragmatic desire to compromise with others. However, collective action does not depend entirely on institutional accessibility but equally on the degree of state repression that influences the behaviour of the movement's activists. For instance, state repression increases the cost of participating in collective action, and also creates additional grievances that can lead to more support for social movements (Kalyvas 2006, Lyall 2009). Given changes in political opportunities, social movements are understood as being flexible: they are imbued with choices and able to tactically depart from their original doctrine. Therefore, researchers indicated how a rational actor approach can change because of shifts in the political context and how those actors respond to these opportunities and constrains (Wiktorowicz 2004). This could be observed, for example, by the participatory turn of Hamas after the second Intifada in 2000, where it had to promise some kind of electoral possibility, or the Jamaat i Islami Hind's (JIH) shift to democratic

participation, lifting the ban on its members voting in elections, which was taboo before the emergence of Hindu nationalism in the late 1980s.

More recently, social movement researchers began to expand the structural dimension of grievance, political opportunity and resource mobilisation explanations for collective protest because these concepts did not fully capture the role of symbolic meaning, identity politics and culture. With the end of the Cold War and its ideological debates in the early 1990s, interests in studying identity, ethnicity and religion, and in particular Islam as a source of conflict and clash of civilisations became prominent. Stuart (2008:7) has argued that

> "mobilisation along group identity lines has become the single most important source of violent conflict… People are primarily motivated by their group identity – their religion or ethnicity – and consequently group motives are a vital driving force. For this to happen, the group boundaries must be relatively clearly defined and have some continuity over time".

Consequently, researchers started exploring new paradigms of how individuals perceive themselves as belonging to a collectivity (Anderson 1991) and how symbolic meaning is generated and articulated through social interaction to stimulate participation in social movements, which became known as the study of frames[25] (Snow 2007). A frame is an assembly of collective worldviews, sentiments, opinions, perceptions, truisms and beliefs that mobilise, activate and sometimes radicalise individuals. Islamic movements, like any other form of collective action, are concerned with values and meaning and are fighting through societal discourses to alter dominant cultural codes and ideologies (Melucci 1996). Political leaders generate and articulate frames "by simplifying and condensing aspects of the world out there, but in ways that are intended to mobilise potential supporters and

[25] For Goffman, who introduced the concept in "Frame Analysis" (1974) and "Forms of Talk" (1981), frames indicate "schemata of interpretations" that enable people to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" social events and phenomena (Goffman 1974: 21).

voters, to garner bystander support and demobilise antagonists" (Snow and Benford 1988: 198). In the following section, I will briefly outline three of the main collective action frames.

Firstly, diagnostic framing strategies identify injustice and victimisation processes, as well as the victims and culprits (Benford and Hunt 1992). Researchers of Islamic movements have discovered that religious leaders are utilising miscellaneous diagnostic frames, invoking notions of cultural imperialism and conspiracy theories that Western countries are attempting to undermine the Muslim world and the strength of Islam for their economic, political and military self-interests (Snow and Bryd 2000).

The second, core framing task proffers solutions, strategies and plans of action to tackle the diagnosed problem. Islamist actors often propose frames that involve the revival of Islam and the avoidance of any identification with the symbols and lifestyles of the secular elite class. This anti-secular framing task effectively aims to resist the cultural penetration of the discourses of the identified subjugator (Qureshi 1978). This is illustrated by the way capitalist and financial systems as well as the Western media are frequently framed as harming and undermining Muslim societies (Wiktorowicz 2004b). Therefore, prognostic framing strategies "typically include refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents as well as a rationale for its own remedies" (Benford 1987:75).

Thirdly, Snow and Byrd (2000) argue that effective diagnostic and prognostic frames cannot be presumed to result in the mobilisation of a movement's supporters. Consequently, to overcome this free-rider phenomenon, frame articulators generate motivational frames that constitute "the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis" (Snow and Benford 1988: 202). According to Salehi (1996: 51), within Islamic activism leaders frequently make "the protest a religious obligation by subjecting the political situation to religious definitions and interpretations" to deal with the

free-rider dilemma. Hence, religious movements often use motivational frames and appeals to religious or moral duty as the basis for collective action. In addition, the study of frame resonance with potential constituencies is a crucial dimension of framing analysis. Wiktorowicz (2004: 16), building on Snow and Benford's (2000: 619-622) work, argues that

> "where a movement frame draws upon indigenous symbols, language, and identities, it is more likely to reverberate with constituents and thus enhance mobilisation. Such reverberation, however, depends on not only its consistency with cultural narratives but also the reputation of the individual or groups responsible for articulating the frame, the personal salience of the frame for potential participation, the consistency of the frame and the frame's empirical credibility in real life" (see also Waardenburg 1985).

Finally, social movement theory, which its various dimensions of grievance, political opportunity, resource mobilisation and framing analysis will help us to understand how the PFI, an assertive Muslim minority movement in India, articulates and promotes its political agenda, recruits members, sustains its support base and deals with the state, other Islamic groups and potential adversaries such as Hindu nationalists.

2.4. Conclusion

This theoretical framework commenced with a brief review of the literature on political moderation and Islamist movements, which can be compatible with secular democratic regimes. Using the empirical case of Muslim politics in India's democracy, the thesis aims to contribute to the political study of Islamic movements in minority contexts. Secondly, the chapter has analysed the different arrangements of political secularism taking India's democratic experience as an example to enhance the understanding of non-Western secularism via a comparative institutional perspective. Thirdly, I have introduced the main trends of social movement theory. This will be relevant for the empirical chapters in order to contextualise and comprehend the use of organisational tactics, cultural symbols and managerial strategies by Islamic movements in India. The following empirical analysis will

further analyse how organisational and ideological transformations of Muslim politics in India are influenced by "splits along generational lines, intense internal debates about strategy, and a shift in their ideological plank from politics as sacred mission to politics as the public contest between rival interests" (Ghobashy 2005: 374).

Chapter 4 will use social movement theory and, in particular, the idea of the grievance frame to illustrate how political victimhood is strategically fabricated by Muslim minority activists. It will also elaborate on how the use and display of emotions such as religious hurt and anger are consciously taken up by Islamic movements to expand their appeal. Chapter 5, building on insights of social movement theory and the grievance discourse, will highlight how adversaries of the case study, the PFI, including Hindu nationalists and the police, frame the issue as the Hindu majority being under threat by aggressive, proselytising Islamic troublemakers and terrorists.

Chapter 6, applying a rational choice and resource mobilisation perspective, will specifically look at the active members and supporters of the PFI to explain the appeal through their eyes. The chapter will illustrate that Islamic ideology and the idea of moral discipline play an important role in recruiting supporters, but equally that practical benefits such as social services and legal activism are hugely valued by followers of the PFI.

Chapter 7 will speak directly to the research on India's democracy and how that has created a space for Islamic movements to become increasingly more involved in participatory politics. In the empirical analysis, I will show that debates around continuation of the Sharia as personal law, gender equality, secular education and the engagement of non-Muslim groups are taken up and discussed within Islamic movements. The second part of the chapter will introduce some critical evidence about Muslim minority politics in India and the failure of Islamist groups to fully accommodate secular discourses.

Finally, debates around Muslim personal law and continuous violence against Indian Muslims raise serious questions about the government's relationship with secularism and religious minorities (Sumit 2003, Madan 2010). Bhargava (2010) speaks of the majority-minority syndrome that exists in contemporary India, where minorities feel insecure and alienated. Chapter 3 will introduce the case study of the Popular Front of India (PFI) and show how this alienation of Indian Muslims led to a call for constitutional rights for Muslim minorities ensuring egalitarianism and the elimination of injustices (Bajpai 2002 Alam 2008). This thesis will try to contribute to the small but growing body of literature that seeks to analyse the emergence of a more assertive, but also more democratic, style of politics from parts of the Indian Islamist spectrum and the shift away from the inward looking, docile and obedient style of minority politics. This is due to changes in the political environment, including the threat to the secular state by the rise of Hindu nationalism and increasing disappointment with the INC, its regional allies and Muslim elites.

Chapter 3:

The Emergence of Muslim Citizenship Politics and the Popular Front of India

"Insaf par mulk banao [build the nation on justice]!"
(PFI 2011 – Slogan at the Social Justice Conference, Delhi)

This chapter will provide the socio-political context for the deprivation of Indian Muslims that helps to explain the emergence of the Popular Front of India (PFI). By tracing these historical patterns and political developments, I will provide the analytical foundation in which the empirical chapters are embedded, contribute to a better understanding of contemporary Muslim citizenship movements, and explore the challenges Muslim minority politics faces in attracting a mass following from ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims. The PFI, among other Muslim groups, tries to change the Muslim minority discourse by influencing national politics, and creating a unified Muslim identity movement that promotes full citizenship for Indian Muslims and other religious minorities. Over the last two decades, Muslim groups have started to actively participate in public discourse via party politics, building strategic alliances with non-Muslim groups, and organising collective action campaigns and legal awareness programmes to defend India's constitutional democracy (Alam 2007, Ahmad 2009).

Research on citizenship politics has analysed various dimensions of political participation and access to rights and social institutions, stressing that the underlying principles of citizenship are fairness and justice for all. Earlier studies were exclusively concerned with what extent the variable of class restricts access to political participation, social mobility and full citizenship (Marshall 1950). Such scholarship has often failed to address variations in gender, race, social status, religion, ethnicity as well as practices of structural discrimination

(Somners 1993, Turner 1993, Flyvbjerg 1998). Current research on citizenship has acknowledged these shortcomings, and stressed that citizenship is a highly ethnically structured and gendered process. In India, religious minorities, and especially the heterogeneous Muslim minority community, lack adequate access to social and educational institutions, political decision-making, and public and private sector employment compared with other socio-religious groups – a state that was acknowledged by the Sachar Committee Report (2006). For the first time in India's post-colonial history, an official government investigation, initiated by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, highlighted the socio-economic marginalisation of the Indian Muslim population. Moreover, other studies have suggested that the rise of Hindu nationalism since the late 1980s, including its widely propagated anti-Muslim ideology, has exacerbated the feeling of alienation and fear of cultural extinction among Muslim minorities (see Hansen 1999, Basu 2001, Wilkinson 2007, Basant and Sahriff 2010).

Given the systematic deprivation of Indian Muslims, Alam (2008: 54) studied the emerging phenomenon that he termed Muslim citizenship politics, including "the politics of empowerment, egalitarianism and deepening of democracy [through] the politics of citizenship rights". This paradigm shift is evidenced by an awakening of a non-elite Muslim political consciousness, which is leading to a radical and symbolic break with the patronage politics predominately represented by the Indian National Congress (INC), Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), All India Majlis e Ittehad ul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and other regional parties as well as by the apolitical, self-serving and inward-looking style of politics of various ulama-led movements.

Section 3.1. will introduce an emerging group and social movement, the Popular Front of India (PFI), its founding spirit and organisational structure, demonstrating how this

movement constitutes a vital case study for the inquiry into Muslim citizenship politics. The PFI assertively demands social and political recognition, democratic inclusion as well as historical and social justice. The chapter argues that this kind of politics represents a distinct break from that of long-standing Muslim political elites within political parties, Islamic organisations, and orthodox ulama-led movements, which have been more defensive, identity conscious and exclusively concerned with the protection of its Islamic laws and cultural heritage.

Given the diverse range of social movements in India, the chapter will also address the question of how the PFI has been produced historically in the particular landscape of South India, which is an area of Muslim minority politics that remains little explored. Section 3.2. will focus mainly on the emergence of Hindu nationalism and other influences such as migration and remittances to provide the background of how these factors have contributed to the emergence of the PFI and Muslim citizenship politics. It will discuss how the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has expanded beyond its traditionally North Indian heartland and entered South India, in particular via the coastal area of Karnataka, where the PFI sustains a strong support base. I will use this coastal region, the Dakshina Kannada (DK) District, which has suffered from the political violence of Hindu nationalists, as a lens through which to understand the emergence of the PFI. Various Hindu nationalist groups have increased their presence in many places across the region, especially after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in the early 1990s (Assadi 2002). Consequently, the chapter will argue that recent Muslim mobilisation and assertions by the PFI must be seen in the context of these political changes.

Section 3.3. will then demonstrate how the rise of Hindu nationalism has exacerbated the sense of insecurity among Indian Muslims, but simultaneously triggered the new type of

Muslim citizenship politics that has been supported by the INC between 2004 and 2014. While engaging with the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics, the section will also provide a summary of the old and dominant style of Muslim minority politics from the colonial period onwards and highlight how the orthodox and inward-looking ulama movements have historically been more influential in winning the local support of ordinary Muslims. Tracing this historical pattern helps to make clear the need to better understand the contemporary Muslim citizenship movements, and explore the challenges they face in attracting a mass following from ordinary Muslims in India. The concluding Section 3.4. will highlight some concerns with respect to the debate on Muslim citizenship politics, including the issue of silencing minorities within minorities such as women and low caste or "Dalit" Muslims, and the danger of increasing communal polarisation through assertive Muslim identity politics.

3.1. The Case of the Popular Front of India

The PFI is a self-declared social movement and South Indian confederation of Muslim regional organisations. The Vice President of the PFI stressed that the movement's objective is to "support all underprivileged and marginalised segments of society and expose Hindu fascism and right wing politics" (respondent 8[2]). The movement claims to be politically active in more than 22 Indian states with its headquarters in New Delhi since 2011 (PFI 2015c). The PFI is closely connected to several civil society and minority organisations such as the All Indian Imams Council (AIIC), the National Confederation of Human Rights' Organisation (NCHRO), the Campus Front of India (CFI), the National Women's Front (NWF), the Rehab India Foundation, and PFI's political wing the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Police officials have described the PFI as one of the "fastest growing cadre organisations" in India (respondents 69 and 70). According to an estimate by the Chairman

of the PFI in January 2015, the movement with its associational nexus of organisations listed here has more than 300,000 members, including 30,000 student members, and over one million supporters (respondent 18[4]). In the 2016 Kerala state election, the SDPI became the fourth strongest party with approximately 280,000 votes (New Indian Express 2016). Public programmes run by the PFI are well attended with gatherings drawing crowds between 1,000 and 25,000 people, depending on the nature of the event. In the past, events such as 2009 National Political Conference in Calicut, Kerala and the 2012 Why PFI Campaign in New Delhi have attracted as many as 500,000 people, displaying immense organisational capability. National decision-making is organised around the 15 members of the National Executive Council (NEC), who are elected in the National General Assembly (NGA) every two years. The NGA consists of 400 leaders, including PFI State and District presidents, senior cadres and representatives from other groups that are affiliated with the movement across India. The NEC with its 15 executive members frames the social policies and formulates the political programmes of the organisation. The national executive members are followed by members in charge of the state, district and council offices within the organisational hierarchy of the PFI[26].

3.1.1. Movement Demographics

PFI's leaders and some segments of its core membership hold higher education degrees and are employed in the formal sector, ranging from estate agents, software engineers and lawyers to local businessmen, journalists, teachers and doctors. The movement also has Imams and scholars of Urdu and Arabic among its leaders. Some of them have lived and worked abroad, mainly in the Middle East or the United States. These Muslim activists are recognised as community leaders, and tend to be well versed in modern technology and

[26] The "Constitution: Rules and Regulations" provides a detailed overview of the internal electoral and cadre-base procedures of the PFI (see PFI 2014).

legal discourses, but remain socially conservative and concerned with the protection of India's Islamic heritage and Muslim culture in everyday life (Assadi 1997). The PFI and other Muslim groups have increased their influence of religious institutions and Islamic property, including mosques and Islamic schools, which have enhanced their popularity among common Muslims (Engineer 2011). Hansen (2000: 261) noted in his study of Muslim politics in Mumbai that an emerging Muslim lay leadership, which is increasingly more aware of the socio-economic challenges faced by Muslim communities, is using a "pragmatic strategy of plebeian [or non-elite] assertion that evolved from the entrepreneurial spirit and milieus of small industry and informal businesses". This novel participation in politics and social activism mirrors some aspects of lower caste Hindu assertions and anti-elite movements of the 1980s and 1990s, which will be further discussed in this chapter. Hence, Muslim citizenship politics is partially a result of the arrival of an educated Muslim middle class, which has developed an unprecedented confidence to act, form political parties and social movements, and assert its presence in the public domain (Ahmad 2008). The Director of the Institute of Objective Studies, a Delhi-based research organisation close to the JIH, summarised this trend in November 2012:

> "The new generation of Indian Muslims, who are now 25 to 45 years of age, does not have any memory of the violence of the Partition compared to their parents. They want to work for their future. So, they are demanding a fair share in politics and in the process of development and education" (respondent 37).

In this context, the new Muslim lay leaders are becoming gradually more involved in socio-economic issues concerning the community through activities such as educational projects, the provision of scholarships for the youth, health, reservation and gender campaigns or environmental projects. Many middle class Muslims, students and youths indicate an amplified sense of social responsibility and are less concerned with the judgments of the ulama and elite Muslims, which had previously controlled Muslim politics (see Hansen 2000,

Osella and Osella 2008, Alam 2010). For instance, the lay leadership of the PFI considered the movement as an informal social service provider, legal advocate as well as local guardian in the absence of sufficient protection by the state and Muslim elites due to the assertion of Hindu nationalism. During my fieldwork, I closely observed how the PFI has established itself as a local defence force, relying on a well-trained cadre-base that has facilitated welfare activities, disaster and riot relief work and provided physical protection from political violence for the wider local Muslim constituency, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 6.

In contrast to PFI's middle class leadership profile, the movement's main support base is predominately from the informal sector and semi-literate, lower middle classes. Fernandes (2000, 2006) has argued that after India's economic liberalisation in the early 1990s, some parts of the country witnessed the emergence of urban, English-speaking, white-collar workers who are employed in the fast-expanding private sector in India (see Appendix 7 for a discussion on India's liberalisation). This group consists of 150 to 200 million Indians. The number of Muslims, and therefore PFI members, belonging to this middle class segment is miniscule, which is reflected in the findings of the Sachar Report (2006). A PFI State President explained to me in Bangalore that "most of our PFI members are from the working class such as coolies, chaiwallas, rickshaw drivers and marginalised youths" (respondent 1[2]). In addition, a 40-years old Mangalore-based teacher and social activist, who supported the PFI publicly, noted that "mainly the petty merchants and the youngsters turn to the PFI to get protection from the saffronised lumpen elements [Hindu nationalists]" (respondent 114). PFI leaders are determined to stress that the movement is expanding its social base by gaining support from Muslims, working in the private sector and white collar professions: "Over the last few years, we were able to win wider support by penetrating the creamy [rich] classes and elites like engineers, businessmen and lawyers", argued a local PFI leader, 2012, whilst hastening to add that, "our main objective remains to mobilise at the grassroots

level" (respondent 4[3]). Nepstad (2015: 418), referring to a study on civil resistance by Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), provides the rationale for a group's effort to expand its support base:

> "[Successful] movements tend to include people from diverse socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. This, in turn, means that economic, military, and political elites are more likely to have some personal ties to protesters, which may make them more sympathetic to the movement" (see also Brysk 1995).

During my interviews about membership structures and regulations, it was emphasised by the PFI leadership that the movement does not inquire into the religious or political backgrounds of prospective members. A PFI leader, who was from a Salafi family, argued in Calicut that "our supporters are coming from Deobandi, Barelvi, Shia, Salafi or Sufi groups. We are not forcing anyone to follow a particular theological school. Inside the organisation, we are strictly operating according to the principle of sectarian plurality" (respondent 30). Consequently, the PFI has refrained from asking new recruits, whether they have been in any Islamic reformist movement such as JIH or Tablighi Jamaat or had previous encounters with the police. PFI's Membership Regulation (see PFI 2014, Constitution) states as a criterion for joining the movement that candidates must become practicing Muslims and be over 15 years of age. This exclusive membership feature, which only allows Muslim into the PFI, was justified by two PFI leaders in Bangalore. The first activist argued that

> "all religious communities in India have their own social organisations. There is a need for a direct concentration on Muslims in various socio-economic aspects, which was also highlighted in the Sachar Report. That is why, we are only accepting Muslims to become full members" (respondent 2[1]).

The older of the two leaders reassured me that "we [the PFI] strongly care for other communities and we always welcome outside advice, but the negative conditions of our Muslim brothers and sisters have compelled us to be a reformist movement inside the community" (respondent 1[2]). Interestingly, in a 2004 organisational statement by a senior

leader, PFI's language seemed more identity focused, as the leader justified the movement's exclusive character in religious terms: "The basic problem [of the Dalit community] is equality… But as far as religious minorities like Muslims are concerned, it's a question of their religious identity" which is endangered (Rediff 1999). PFI's political party, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), partially compensates for the movement's exclusive Muslim character. In the SDPI's (2009a) constitution, it is stated that every Indian citizen is eligible to be enrolled as a cadre "irrespective of religion, caste, creed and sex". The SDPI has promoted lower caste Hindu and Christian candidates in the past. However, the party's support base suggests that predominantly Muslim men attend the party's functions and constitute its vote base. The SDPI has also been active in political sensitive states and regions, in which the PFI could not enter. A PFI member in Pune, who was accused of holding a Pakistani passport in the context of the German Bakery Blast in 2012, argued that the movement's expansion into Maharashtra is challenging because of the strong presence of the Shiv Sena, a local and highly assertive Hindu nationalist organisation:

> "It's better for us to operate under the name SDPI rather than PFI, because of the threat for our members regarding Shiv Sena's harassment, house searches and imprisonment by the police. Every label that might indicate NGO is instantly dubbed as a terrorist organisation. So we don't have a PFI branch in Pune at the moment. In Mumbai, we only have a few working cadres but no official space, since offices were closed, due to the pressure on landlords by Shiv Sena and the police" (respondent 9[5], see also Appendix 17).

Because of PFI's negative public image as potential facilitator of radicalisation and terrorism (which will be discussed in Chapter 5), their leaders frequently emphasised the "transparent" and "democratic set up" of the movement, by offering courses on management, anti-corruption, and permanent rotation of its leaders and senior members through internal elections. "Merit and commitment are the essential features, which will define the position in the movement" was the official explanation by a senior leader

(respondent 23[2]), stressing the non-hierarchical nature of the movement[27]. Interviewees highlighted that the PFI relies on a decentralised and highly disciplined volunteer cadre-base. The PFI District President of the small town of Madikeri noted that "our local PFI units are taking up various social and political issues across cities, regions and states" (respondent 14). The movement carries out manifold, regularly overlapping campaigns, freely exchanges executive and cadre positions in between different sub-organisations, and state and district offices are set up as local community centres that are situated in Muslim mohallas. Despite PFI's constant efforts to appear transparent, critics point towards the absence of membership lists and leadership profiles that would provide the socio-economic background of the movement (respondents 60, 117, and 118). These findings are corroborated by research on other Islamic organisations working in politically restrictive environments, which highlights the leaders' interest "in quickly and informally transforming sympathisers into members and activists without formal membership lists that could trace them back" (Singerman 2004: 157, also Chenoweth and Stephan 2011: 56). The following section will briefly look at PFI's funding structures and financial resources.

3.1.2. Funding and Accountability

In November 2012, the PFI Chairman announced that "by the grace of God, we do not face any financial hardships. Our members and supporters give generously and we are very transparent how we spend their money" (respondent 18[2]). In the auditor's report of 2013 -2014, the PFI's expenditures were listed at approximately 4.9 cores (£510,000), including administrative expenses and community development activities, reaching a total of almost

[27] The same PFI leader provided a personal example of the non- hierarchical PFI structure: "After our events, where food is provided, I will always join the queue, and wait until it is my turn to be served. I will not misuse my power and senior status".

600,000 beneficiaries (see PFI 2014d). Given the delicate nature of disclosing donor lists,[28] the PFI has compromised on the principle of transparency for the protection of movement adherents. During interviews with Muslim businessmen in Bangalore and Mangalore in 2011 and 2012 who have supported the PFI financially, it was stressed that "donors want privacy" and are hesitant to be "openly associated" with the organisation (respondents 40 and 75). PFI leaders confirmed that wealthy Muslims have discreetly contributed to the movement through zakat (Islamic alms) and made other donations under the condition of anonymity, due to the donor's concerns of state surveillance and prosecution. A human rights activist and PFI member, who used religiously laden language, emphasised that:

> "to whom Allah has given plenty, those will give to us. These donations are sacred, which forbids us to ask any further questions. It's a completely secret process and nobody knows who has donated what or how much" (respondent 10[1]).

The PFI Constitution (2014) states that "the main source of income of the organisation shall be the subscription fees from members. The organisation may depend on any other source of funding that is not detrimental to the ethical values and laws prevailing in the country". PFI leaders confirmed that the movement is financially sustained by monthly contributions from members and supporters as well as annual Ramadan donations – the month that sees the highest rates of Islamic philanthropy. A PFI activist explained that "members give according to their own capacity. Some of them work in the Gulf [Middle East] and send money back[29], but we don't take petro-dollars or sheikh money. Also poor people contribute. Just yesterday a poor woman gave me a 10 rupees donation, which came purely from the heart" (respondent 2[3]). This emphasis in the PFI on local donations from average Muslim citizens as well as the leaders' rejection of foreign funding enhances the

[28] Chapter 5 will highlight that the Indian government views the PFI as part of a foreign, Islamist conspiracy that attempts to expand its religious outreach through Islamic education and radicalisation of the Muslim youth.
[29] The symbolic role of remittances, as well as PFI's negative association with foreign funding from the Middle East as potential funding for Islamic terrorism will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

movement's claim to represent ordinary Muslims, while it also indicates the PFI's social proximity to the grassroots and commitment to local empowerment and justice (David 1996).

At a political rally with several thousand attendees in Mysore 2012, the PFI Vice State President of Karnataka highlighted the issue of funding while standing on a podium overlooking the Muslim masses: "The government has accused the PFI for being foreign funded, but you [the people in the audience] know it better!" The speaker addressed the audience directly: "Everyone, who has recently given us money, please raise your hands!" As hoped by the speaker, the majority of people enthusiastically raised their hands. During the month of Ramadan in 2011 and 2012, I observed how PFI cadres collected donations in Muslim neighbourhoods and in front of mosques such as at the Sultan Shah Masjid (in Shivaji Nagar, Bangalore) and the Jamia Masjid (in Chickpet, Bangalore), holding large sheets for donations and handing out small business cards with organisational information and prayer times during the holy month. During subsequent visits to PFI offices, I encountered PFI members sitting on the office floor counting rupee notes and coins after a collection. Such focus on local funding can positively influence the commitment of members and volunteers to a movement, given that foreign funding or "big money" raises the suspicion of potential misuse and corruption, therefore discouraging local support[30] (Bano 2008). Having outlined the financial structure of the PFI, the next section will analyse the movement's origin in South India.

[30] For example, the president of a Pakistani grassroots organisation has addressed the pitfalls of accepting "big money", explaining that "real volunteers get disheartened. The really genuine worker leaves when he sees money come into play. The people who are more interested in personal gains start getting attracted to the organisation …They now say that you're gaining profit out of this work. They say that in fact you are hiding away the money" (cited in Bano 2008: 2303).

3.1.3. Born in Crisis: Foundation of the PFI in South India

The discussion of collective action in the previous chapter demonstrated that the emergence and trajectory of social movements cannot entirely be explained by common hardships experienced by certain communities (see Turner and Killian 1957, Wickham 2002, Wiktorowicz 2004a, 2006) or the organisational skills of political leaders and activists (see Foweraker 1995, Singermann 2004). These explanations need to be complemented by a consideration of the opening and closing of political opportunities and the exogenous factors that influence the creation and direction of movement politics (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004). Here, I will explain how we can understand the emergence of the PFI with respect to changes in political opportunity structures. During my interviews with political analysts from Karnataka, Kerala, and Delhi, it was argued that the PFI's emergence was a consequence of grievances and political changes for Muslims in South India: the rise of an assertive Hindu nationalist movement, the demolition of the Babri Mosque and the political failure of Muslim and secular elites to protect religious minorities (respondents 37, 73, 84, 125, 135, see Appendix 10 for a discussion of the Hindu nationalist campaign that led to the destruction of the Babri Mosque).

In early December 2012, after returning from fieldwork in Mangalore, I had an interview with the PFI's recently elected Vice President, who was also the proprietor of the political magazine 'Thejas'. The Vice President, who was in his mid-60s, a former English literature professor from a middle class Muslim family, was one of the founding members of the PFI. He has been described to me by PFI cadres as the "chief intellectual" and one of the most influential protagonists of the movement. Three months earlier, in the PFI headquarters in Delhi, he had invited me to visit him in his home state of Kerala, if I "was truly serious in [my] endeavor" to understand the ideological and practical foundations of the PFI (respondent 8[1]). In our conversation during the car journey, and later in his office, the Vice President

gave me a powerful lecture on the broader socio-political perspective of Muslim activism in Kerala and Karnataka, slowly growing softer in his voice and more accommodating to my questions, as I spent more time with him. He stressed that the inception of the PFI was intertwined with the "de-institutionalisation" and the authoritarian turn of the INC: "under the quasi dictatorship of Indira Gandhi's [INC] rule in the mid-1970s, Muslims had to rethink politics and their role in India's democracy". Asghar Ali Engineer, a popular Muslim interpreter of religious conflict, argued during an interview in Mumbai in 2011 that Muslims throughout India started to feel insecure:

> "[The INC] historically constructed itself as the stalwart of Muslims and other minorities. However, with growing populist and regional movements in the 1970s and 1980s that threatened the Congress dominance, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi increasingly used communal politics against religious minorities for electoral mobilisation[31]" (respondent 80[1]).

These insights reflected the importance of placing the advent of the PFI in the context of government failure regarding the socio-economic conditions and security concerns of the Muslim minority that started with the emergency under Indira Gandhi. This feeling of alienation among Muslims reached its culmination in the early 1990s with the destruction of the Babri Masjid by Hindu nationalist forces (Hansen 1999). While this explains the national backdrop against which the PFI took shape, it is also important to understand the PFI's regional specificities and in particular its roots in South India: why did the PFI emerge in South India and not in the North, where Muslims live in far more challenging socio-economic conditions and in larger numbers? In what way is the politics of contestation and communalism defined by geography[32]?

[31] For instance, the National Congress in Kashmir accused Muslims of being anti-national, and pro-Pakistan, while the INC in Punjab demonised Sikhs as unpatriotic and secessionists from 1975 onwards (Widmalm 1998).
[32] These and other questions were informally discussed over a lunch break among members of the Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) at the SIO's presidential election in Bangalore in November 2012, which I attended.

For a long time, the PFI had one of its strongest support bases in the Dakshinna Khannda (DK) District, which shares a border with North Kerala. This area of coastal Karnataka has experienced numerous riots and violent clashes since the mid-1990s (Assadi 1999, 2002, PUCL 2009, 2010). The trade and coastal city of Mangalore, the third largest city in Karnataka, became notorious for various attacks on churches and mosques, aggressive campaigns of moral policing, and it is one of the original places where the rumour of forceful conversion by Muslim groups (better known as love jihad) emerged. Mangalore, the DK District as well as its nearby district of Udupi (see Appendix 1 for a map) were described as the gateway to South India for the Hindu nationalists in the mid-1990s and have been informally labeled as the "RSS headquarters of South India" (respondent 76, and Frontline 2014). Therefore, within less than one decade it has been argued that Karnataka, which was historically seen as a pocket of resistance to the influence of Hindu nationalists, has become one of the states in India most affected by riots (Assayag 2004), and is viewed with great concern within India's intelligence circles[33] as a breeding ground for Islamic terrorist cells (Assadi 1999, PUCL 2009, 2010, 2012). A Mysore-based political scientist, who has lived in Mangalore for 10 years and has known the PFI leadership, argued that

> "after the BJP's cultural and political intervention, the public administration, educational and cultural institutions and other superstructures in the DK District became fully supportive of Hindu nationalism. Even the civil society has become part of it. If you asked any college professor or principal, they will say that we are pro-Hindutva" (respondent 73[2]).

This statement mirrors my own observations in Mangalore and the DK District during my fieldwork between 2011 and 2015, when I had various informal encounters with individuals who, directly or not, indicated their proximity to the BJP and Hindu nationalism (these

[33] For instance, Riyaz and Iqbal Shahbandri, commonly referred to as the Bhatkal brothers, are associated with the foundation of the Indian Mujahideen, a terrorist group based in India (Hindu 2010). Both are from Bhatkal, a village in the coastal area of Karnataka 140 kilometres from Mangalore.

findings will be discussed in Chapter 5). A journalist, who specified during an interview in 2012 that he was not originally from Mangalore, recalled that

> "when I moved here, I was so shocked to see the communal trenches and mutual distrust among communities. Speeches by the RSS as well as communal Muslim outfits [implying the PFI] would openly label each other as terrorists and as anti-nationalists, which would never occur in Bangalore or Mysore in public" (respondent 108, also 109).

In addition, political and cultural issues centred on hijabs in schools, religious conversion, beef consumption, the saffronisation of education and the distortion of history are ubiquitously depicted in local media outlets[34] (The Hindu 2012). A senior journalist and political commentator from Mangalore noted "the DK District was seen as an experimental laboratory for the Hindutva ideology to make an inroad into South India during the BJP campaign in the 1990s. Before the destruction of the Babri Masjid, Muslims and Hindus lived in relative harmony, but after that religious identities became completely adverse" (respondents 110, also 113). Hence, mixed neighbourhoods became a rarity, where streets, alleyways, bridges and canals demarcate the beginning of Muslim, Hindu and Christian localities. Muslim mohallas were locally referred to as "little Pakistans", including Bandar, a market and residential area of Mangalore, in which the PFI's and JIH's district offices are located. When I walked in and around Mangalore, I observed the tacit demarcations in the form of orange flags and other cultural and religious symbols such as in Ullal[35]. Section 3.2. will discuss why and how the DK District and the whole of Karnataka could eventually become prone to the appeals of the Hindu nationalists and how that may be interlinked with the emergence of the PFI and the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics.

[34] A PFI activists talked about the "Islamophobic media" in Mangalore in 2012, "[which] will print full names and portrays of Muslim terrorist suspects in hard copies and on websites, exposing names and family details, often without any proof, what so ever".

[35] Ullal is a small town about 8 kilometres from Mangalore. Most of the people in Ullal belong to either the Muslim or low caste fishing communities. The town became notorious for its communal tensions over the last two decades.

3.1.4. New Muslim Confidence

The increasing political violence in coastal Karnataka and eventually throughout South India during the 1980s and 1990s contributed to the emergence of the PFI. After the Babri Masjid was destroyed in 1992, the National Development Front (NDF) (since 2006 renamed PFI) was officially created and published its manifesto. Muslim activists have debated the idea for such a movement since the late 1980s due to the growing number of riots in Kerala and Karnataka that led to the loss of self-confidence by the Muslims in South India (respondents 8 and 35). The NDF was a "purely local formation of students, activists and concerned citizens in different parts of Kerala", who came together with the intention to "protect Indian Muslims in the context of Hindu fascism" (respondent 7[3]). The PFI Vice President stressed that

> "initially we were concerned with [1] the political empowerment of Muslims, [2] expose RSS techniques, [3] relate to other downtrodden groups, [4] bundle our socio-economic resources within the community, and [5] differentiate Hindus from Hindu nationalists".

With this agenda, the PFI aimed to challenge the "poor reaction" and "incompetent approach" to the emergence of Hindu nationalism by Muslim elites in the INC, IUML, AIMI or JIH in South India. According to the Vice President, "we [Muslims] were fed up with our old leaders, who were unable to comprehend the rise of the RSS and the existential threat to the Muslims. Muslims lacked political awareness. Our leaders only cared to create wealth for themselves and to give big donations to the ulama" (respondent 8[2]). Originally, the PFI's agenda and mobilisation strategies centred on survival and security concerns without a broader political vision for the state or country. Gradually, the movement expanded its agenda and political ambitions, while adopting a secular language and trying to build alliances with non-Muslim groups, which has been described by a senior PFI leader as "a long process of political learning" (respondent 36, also Appendix 16).

Subsequently, the NDF (now the PFI) received wider support in Kerala, and from its neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu[36]. A PFI founding member argued that "Muslim activists started to become interested, and we [Keralites] asked them to organise themselves" (respondent 23[3]). For instance, the Karnataka Forum for Dignity (KFD) was founded in Mangalore in 1999, after a riot which killed nine Muslims, according to the native Mangalorean and PFI Chairman (respondent 18[2]). When I inquired about the other regional organisations that eventually merged into the PFI in 2006, the PFI Vice President answered proudly, hinting at his Keralite origin that "the other groups were charmed by the NDF and we encouraged them to organise themselves to do a similar job… There has been plenty of interaction, especially between the KFD and NDF". Mangalore, the former headquarters of the KFD, and Calicut, where the NDF was founded, are 230 kilometres apart and the Muslim populations of the two cities and their hinterlands share various historical, cultural and linguistic features.

After the South Indian Council meeting, an empowerment conference for South Indian Muslim politicians and social activists in Bangalore 2004, three Muslim organisations decided to unite under the name PFI in November 2006. The South Indian Council meeting and the subsequent foundation of the PFI, which coincided with the publication of the Sachar Report (see Section 3.3.), signposted an attempt by South Indian Muslims to forward a national agenda of organisational development and citizenship politics in order to "transport the positive message of empowerment" to other parts of the country, in particular to the disadvantaged Muslims in the North and North East of India (respondent

[36] Initially, three Muslim groups came together in the late 1990s, namely the National Development Front (NDF) in Kerala, Manitha Neethi Pasarai (MNP) in Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka Forum for Dignity (KFD). During my fieldwork, some PFI members were still using the old names of these organisations such as Karnataka Forum of Dignity or National Development Front. A few supporters did not know about the merger and the creation of PFI as a supra-organisation.

36, see also PFI 2011d). The PFI Vice President explained this new assertiveness of South Indian Muslims:

> "We thought that our confidence, organisational success, community development and uncompromising stance against Hindu nationalism needed to reach North India… Initiating a South Indian-led movement was easier for us with similar collective identities, cultures, a non-Urdu speaking support base, Muslim constituencies with a trauma-free history, without being depressed about their lost glories of the past as in the Northern States. In fact, the Muslims from the North admire us [Southern Muslims], for our achievements in socio-economic and educational terms" (respondent 8[5], see also Appendix 8).

Dreze and Sen (1995) have argued that Kerala's long tradition of religious service organisations combined with effective government policies led to sustained development throughout the state. In addition, Lakshmi (2012) illustrated that in Karnataka Muslims received substantial economic assistance in the 1980s via the reservation of 18% of government jobs and 20% of places in education, which was accomplished by India's first Minority Commission (see also Jaffrelot 2003, Assayag 2004, Assadi 2006, Sachar Report 2006, Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012). Given the socio-economic achievements of South Indian Muslims, the PFI leadership articulated a social and religious responsibility and moral imperative to reach out to Muslims in other regions. PFI leaders believed that Muslims from North and North East India, and also from neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, should profit from Kerala's example to regain political strength and prosperity in the post-Babri Masjid era, based on political cooperation and knowledge transfers from South Indian Muslims. In a closely related interview regarding the economic achievements of religious communities in South India, the PFI Chairman, who has been a businessman and worked in Dubai for five years before he became a full time social activist and chief editor of the Mangalore based magazine 'Prastuta', expressed his deep concern about the status quo of Indian Muslims: "We cannot allow our Muslim brothers in the North and North East to live in such appalling social conditions. Only with discipline and the right faith, they will get a life

like we do" (respondent 18[2]). The Rehab India Foundation, the PFI's social development organisation, which has set up and is operating various development projects in the North and North East of India (Rehab 2014: 9), has also appealed to its South Indian Muslim constituency in the context of Eid al-Adha [Islamic festival of the sacrifice]:

> "You can give your own Qurbani [offering] meat to family and friends nearby, of course. But what if you could reach a family on the other side of the country, who is living in some of the worst conditions imaginable and give them the gift of relief and sustenance during a difficult time?"(Rehab 2016).

Moreover, in an interview in Delhi in 2012, a Muslim political scientist at the Jamia Millia University argued that "South Indian Muslims are not just focusing on basic rights and development related issues, but are obsessed with political power". He continued by stressing that "it's a historical moment. For the first time, it is the 'South' that imposes demands on the 'North' and not vice versa" (respondent 125). Consequently, the PFI tries to represent the aspirations of South Indian Muslims, who believe that they have higher incomes and are better educated and integrated into mainstream society compared to their Northern and Eastern counterparts. This tension between Muslims from North and South India is also conveyed in Sikand's (2005: 139) interview with a teacher from Kerala: "Many North Indian Muslims are like Brahmins, thinking that we in the South are inferior and that they have nothing to learn from us. Some of them even say that we cannot be good Muslims since we don't know Urdu." Conversely, various PFI cadres from South India associated the "North" with "undisciplined" and "corrupt behaviour", which has to be "reformed". The PFI Vice President confessed that "I don't like to travel a lot, especially to the North with the traffic chaos and the horrible weather. Delhi has 4 degrees in December and 45 degrees in June. How can someone survive there?" (respondent 8[4]). This reservation is echoed by a PFI student activist, who joked "North Indian Muslims act before they think and South Indian Muslims think before they act" (respondent 32). Assayag (2004: 34) noted "whenever the

question of Muslims in India comes up, the South is generally ignored. And if by chance there is a reference to the South, it is usually the [ulama] perspective of Delhi and Lucknow."

Therefore, to date the South Indian discourse of Muslim politics has been largely neglected, with studies focusing predominately on the North. This thesis attempts to redress this by scrutinising empirically the proliferation of new ideas and minority assertions in the form of a social movement that emerged from the periphery of Muslim politics in places such as Mangalore and Calicut rather than the Muslim heartland of North India. This is important not only because the geographical location of South India has previously been excluded from the analysis, but also because it adds a novel dimension to our understanding of Muslim politics in India: the arrival of a new kind of citizenship politics. However, academics and policy makers were very cautious about the discourse on a homogenous "South Indian Muslim identity" given the manifold issues in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh as well as social stratifications within the Muslim community (respondents 51, 125 and 127). These concerns will be addressed in the conclusion of the chapter. The next section will highlight the emergence of the PFI in relation to intergenerational conflict of Islamist politics in India and in particular within the JIH.

3.1.5. Intergenerational Conflict and the Jamaat i Islami Hind

This section will illustrate that the organisational history of the PFI can be understood as being to some degree the result of internal debates and intergenerational conflicts within Islamist politics in India and in particular the changes within the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH), concerning its young cadres. The JIH is a major Islamist movement that claims to represent Indian Muslims. Its principal goals are to enhance Islamic awareness and education, to disseminate literature about Islam, and to protect what they understand to be a Muslim

identity[37]. JIH's foundation goes back to the teachings of the Islamic scholar, Abul Ala Maududi in 1941, who set out the objective of forming a universal Islamic system (tauhid) in South Asia, whose basis was the claim that religion could not remain a private matter. Although the JIH abandoned Maududi's idea of the khilafat (Islamic state) in India after 1947, members were disallowed from voting, supporting secular candidates or becoming civil servants or lawyers. However, the JIH slowly shifted towards increased political participation because its base was not supportive of its impractical and theological conception of political Islam and in particular its belief that by propagating Islam to Muslims and converting non-Muslims, the majority of Indians would eventually and peacefully accept the authority of a khilafa, or Islamic ruler, once again (Sikand 2003: 338). In the early 1980s, the JIH could not suspend its members' desire to participate in elections any longer and the voting ban was lifted. From the late 1980s onwards, JIH defended secularism and supported secular candidates as the greatest weapon against Hindu nationalism (Ahmad 2009: 193).

It was, however, the support of a politically corrupt system as well as the compliance and political passivity of the senior JIH leadership, especially after the state emergency in the mid-1970s, that alienated many urban Muslim students, who were better educated, aware of their constitutional rights, and less willing to obey to the traditional ulama. Hansen (2000: 264) has noted that eventually a small group of "bright students with excellent academic prospects and self-discipline" founded the assertive Student Islamic Movement India (SIMI) with Mohammad Ahmadullah Siddiqi as its first president in the late 1970s (initially with approval from the JIH leadership, but SIMI fully separated from JIH in 1982). SIMI was motivated by two main objectives: to take a strong stance against Hindu nationalism and against the older generation of Muslim leaders, who were perceived to be too weak to

[37] The JIH has more than 7000 members, 50,000 party workers and around 300,000 supporters (De Cordier 2010: 480). The movement is restricted to Muslim members, but the newly established Welfare Party of India (JIH's political wing) is open to all faith-based and secular candidates and members. Its critics view the JIH as a reactionary elitist movement (Khalidi 1995, Sikand 2002, Metcalf 2004).

protect the community and betraying the Islamic spirit of the movement (Sikand 2003: 338, Ahmad 2009: 135 -164). The PFI Vice President, who has been a former SIMI member, stressed that

> "SIMI is going back to the Jamaat's ideology of the 1950s [as a counter hegemonic movement]. We wanted to purify Muslims, again. SIMI activists thought that Muslim leaders were softening and accommodating with the jahiliyyah system. It was basically a fight between different generations within the Jamaat. We, the youngsters, wanted more criticism of the system, and the old men wanted to preserve it" (respondent 8[4]).

This corresponds with the work on SIMI by Ahmad (2009:9), who argued that the new generation of Muslim activists was eager to express its "yearning for democratic rights in contrast to the wishes of the older generation of Islamists". In the following section, I will highlight the historical connection between JIH, SIMI and the PFI, and link it to the wider discussion regarding the "de-monopolisation of religious authority" in India (Ahmad 2009: 10). Currently, the PFI and JIH are two independent organisations that have a highly ambivalent relationship with each other that is defined by organisational opposition and rivalry as well as sympathy. Several high-ranking leaders of the JIH and PFI today were founding members of SIMI in the 1970s. A PFI student activist noted that "our [PFI] leaders belong to the Jamaat Parivar [family]". I will further discuss the latest dynamics between the PFI and JIH and its implication for Muslim citizenship politics in the conclusion of the thesis.

The current President of the Welfare Party of India [JIH's political wing] and the PFI Vice President know each other from their time in SIMI in the early 1980s and are still "on speaking terms" (respondents 8 and 147). Interestingly, 35 years ago after their membership in an assertive youth movement, these middle-aged leaders are currently central in developing a novel political vision for Indian Muslims, and their expertise and influence are crucial to the movement of Muslim citizenship politics. In addition, JIH has learned from its dealings with dissenting SIMI cadres by becoming gradually more accommodating to

youthful voices, and by allowing student wings such as the Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM) and the Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) to develop independent agendas and function as internal critics (respondents 50 and 136).

During an interview in Cochin in early 2015, a senior PFI leader, who is a retired librarian and founding member of the movement, reflected upon his time in SIMI until he left in 1984:

> "In the 1980s, when Hindu nationalism was on the rise, the Jamaat [JIH] continued their religious focused activities with seminars and books and left politics entirely for political parties. But SIMI was a youth movement with some unconventional methods for that time, taking protests to the street, and addressing political issues. Now, the Jamaat and all other groups are doing it too, but at that time, we [SIMI members] were avant-garde" (respondent 23[3]).

SIMI's novel culture of resistance, including strikes, marches, boycotts, and the dissemination of seminars and literature highlighting topics such as the dangers of capitalism, the caste system, and attacks against Muslims and Islam (Sikand 2003), subsequently became firmly established in the repertoires and collective action strategies of most contemporary Muslim organisations. Despite SIMI's political legacy of public expression and contention for Muslim groups in India, PFI leaders were highly critically of SIMI, describing SIMI as an exclusive and intellectual student movement that represented a "system of privilege" – unable to speak the language of ordinary Muslims at that time (respondents 23 and 30). Illiterate Muslims were excluded since SIMI's membership was conditioned by education, in-depth studying, and reciting of religious texts. In this context, former SIMI members and current PFI leaders envisioned a movement for the masses that would reach through "its language and deeds" the sentiments and needs of Indian Muslims. The PFI and SIMI coexisted for nearly 10 years, during which time SIMI criticised the PFI for promoting a constitutional approach for social change (respondents 8[3], 25, and 29, also Appendix 21). Former SIMI members who joined the PFI in the early 1990s admitted that they learned from "past mistakes", conceding that SIMI's approach to politics, proclaiming

an Islamic state on Indian soil and threatening to kill Hindus, at least in theory, was not sustainable. A PFI cadre in his early 20s strongly emphasised that "we cannot support SIMI's ideology… The propagation of temple bombings by SIMI's radical Madhya Pradesh fraction has been a huge mistake". On the contrary, a PFI sympathiser argued in Malappuram 2014 that "PFI is much smarter packaged now, but its objectives have remained the same [as those of SIMI]: to protect Islam and Muslims" (respondent 27). SIMI cadres were required to leave the movement for constitutional reasons as their membership ended at the age of 30. After that these former SIMI cadres were free, but still morally obliged to spread SIMI's message, work for the community and to protect Islam. Critics have argued that those members who left SIMI, because of the age limit have not necessarily abandoned SIMI's ideology. Therefore PFI has been regarded as a continuation of SIMI (respondents 42 and 140).

SIMI radicalised during the 1990s in response to the rise of Hindu nationalism, denouncing the secular state, and by the early 2000s openly threatened to launch an armed jihad on Indian soil, resulting in its proscription for alleged terrorism in 2001 (Sikand 2003, Ahmad 2009). Sikand (2003:344) argued that

> "[SIMI's] commitment to an inflexible, ideologised vision of Islam… rules out pragmatic compromises that are so essential in order for the movement to flourish in a country where Muslims are in a minority, thus leading to an eventual confrontation with the state. It appears that in Muslim minority countries, only those Islamist movements that have chosen a pragmatic policy of gradualism have been able to survive and prosper in the long run."

Despite the PFI's commitment to democracy and secular constitutional language, the movement's reputation has suffered immensely due to its historical affiliation with SIMI, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. The next section critically reviews the rise of Hindu nationalism, which is currently dominating political and cultural discourses in India. This is

important, given that the emergence of the PFI is strongly related to the accumulated political grievances of the Muslim minority in South India.

3.2. The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism

Over the last three decades, the Hindu nationalist movement led by the RSS-VHP-BJP nexus (also referred to as Sangh Parivar) has developed into "the most powerful cluster and cultural organisation in [India]. The Hindu nationalist agenda, discourses and institutions have gradually penetrated everyday life and have acquired a growing, if not uncontested, social respectability in contemporary Indian society" (Hansen 1999:3). At the core of the Hindu nationalist movement is the notion of Islam as an evil and barbaric force, with Muslims viewed as mass murderers and invaders who were appeased by the colonial administration and later by the secular post-colonial state (Andersen and Damle 1987, Sarkar 1996). From the 1920s onwards, the Hindu nationalist movement, which exploited a majoritarian argument to speak for the entire nation, has aggressively nurtured an image of the enemy in the form of a monolithic and antagonistic Muslim community. The ideology of Hindu nationalism was shaped by V.D. Savarkar (1923), who published the book 'Hindutva – Who is a Hindu'. In his work, Savarkar argued extensively for India as the fatherland (pitribhumi) and the holy or religious land (punyabhumi). Consequently, in the view of Hindu nationalists, only Hindus can acquire the status of true patriots, since Muslims and Christians have their own holy lands elsewhere (Misra 1999). An early example of this anti-Muslim sentiment from Hindu nationalists can be found in the book 'Hindus: A Dying Race' by U.N. Mukherji (1909). Referring to Mukherji's work, Sarkar (1996: 290) argued that the theme of

> "medieval Muslim tyranny elaborated in numerous late 19th century literal texts was given new immediacy in the 1920s and linked up through the trope of the

> dying Hindu with interrelated counter images of the Muslim as ever proliferating, sexually prolific and lusting after Hindu women" (see also Jones 1981).

These anti-minority views have been used in post-colonial India and especially since the 1980s in order to invoke hatred against Muslims, and prejudice against Muslims has become deeply embedded into the cultural memory of various segments of the Hindu population, sometimes resulting in violence and murder. The persistent racist and hostile sentiments of BJP supporters have also helped to justify political violence against religious minorities in the name of Hindu self-defence, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In this context, Muslim communities are frequently blamed for their backwardness and marginalised position in society in the public discourse. Hindu nationalists have claimed that Indian Muslims suffer from the persistence of an anachronistic religious tradition, including Islamic education in madrasahs, traditional mullah teachings and the impact of radical Islam (Hansen 1999, Basu 2001, Basant and Sahriff 2010). Research by Wilkinson (2007) supports the argument that communal prejudices prevail and that Islamophobia within the Hindu community has increased over the last several decades. The increased Islamophobia can be partially ascribed to the consequences of September 11, the American-led 'War on Terror', the fragile relations between India and Pakistan, the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, disagreement over Muslim personal law and reservations and the re-emergence of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s. Metcalf (2004: 16) has noted that "in India today, the common sense is widespread that Muslims violated India in the past; are less than fully Indian today; and their presence is a problem to be solved". Consequently, Indian Muslims have developed a fear psychology, which has contributed to the socio-economic marginalisation and ghettoisation of the community (Hasan 1997, Sikand 2004a, Brass 2004, 2006, Metcalf 2004, 2009).

Approaching Hindu nationalism from a social movement perspective, it is interesting to note that most of the leaders and members are not from subordinate groups seeking to make

democracy more inclusive for those who lack resources and influence. Instead, the core constituency of the Hindu nationalist movement and its political party, the BJP, belong to dominant and upper castes and the middle classes that emerged in the late 1980s: their objective is to maintain the status quo of the historical class and caste hierarchies (Basu 2001). Jaffrelot (2001) argued that both the BJP and its followers tend to be highly sceptical of India's democracy. An anti-parliamentarian attitude is pervasive among BJP supporters, who approve of strong dictator-like leaders[38], and the Guajarati-style authoritarian but business-friendly state[39] (see also Yadav 2000). Although the BJP has attempted to increase its appeal to lower caste groups and even religious minorities for electoral gains, the results of which could be observed in the national election in 2014[40], it is widely argued that the BJP is still making an insufficient contribution to creating an inclusive democracy in India and remains a party with a predominately upper caste and middle class constituency (Jaffrelot 2001, Times of India 2014).

Scholars of Hindu nationalism have argued that the movement's powerful momentum in the late 1980s was due to a well-planned and organised expansion by the RSS-VHP-BJP nexus that should be understood in the context of a specific political, economic and societal environment. Kohli (1990: 384) pointed towards the increasing political void in the 1980s, in which the "organisational ability of the Congress party [INC] has declined and popular new parties have failed to fill the organisational vacuum". In order to understand the appeal of the Hindu nationalist ideology to middle class and dominant caste groups, researchers have

[38] Adolf Hitler, as a political leader, is vastly admired for his strategic skills, ethnocentrism, and racist views within Hindu nationalist circles – discussed in Chapter 5. Meanwhile, 'Mein Kampf' is a widely available and bestselling book in India, which was promoted by several vendors during my visit to the national book fair in Delhi, 2012.

[39] This disposition of the BJP's major support base is underpinned by a 2008 CSDS survey that 51% of elite and upper middle classes find that governing decisions should be taken by technocrats, while according to the annual Hindustan Times' (2013) youth survey, 52% of urban middle class youth and young professionals think that India "would be better off in a dictatorship".

[40] The INC politician, Shahshi Tharoor, argued shortly after the Lok Sabha elections in May 2014 that the "accommodative and inclusive language [by the BJP] should be welcomed… Modi appears to realise that if he wants to make a success of his government, he will have to lead the nation from the centre and not from the extreme right where he had built his base in the BJP" (Indian Express 2014c).

analysed political developments since independence in 1947 up until the mid-1980s. The INC was the dominant political "catch-all party" after Partition, cutting across income, class, caste and religious divides (Madsen 1970, Jaffrelot and Verniers 2009), while democracy in post-colonial India for decades meant "protection and extension of social privileges to the educated Hindu middle class, and condescending paternalism vis a vis lower caste groups and minorities" (Bose 1998). In this political system, which was dominated by INC's patronage of specific groups and classes, Hindu nationalists were unable to appeal to the masses and "to articulate their most extreme views in public", while the Muslim minority felt comparatively safe and protected (Jaffrelot 2013: 879).

However, in the 1970s and 1980s, Dalits and other disadvantaged groups entered the political arena, asserting their citizenship rights and entitlements in the form of reservation claims and political participation. Historically, "[Indian] politicians were drawn mainly from educated upper caste communities, but since the 1970s a growing number of individuals from lower caste and plebeian social backgrounds have been attracted to the political field, bringing with them styles of language and social practices which, in the eyes of respectable citizens, appear both crude and uncultured" (Hansen 2000: 260). Scholars argued that this popular turn in Indian politics eventually made India's democracy more inclusive compared with previous decades. The literature refers to these significant reconfigurations of India's democracy as participatory usurpation of the poor, bahujan participation, plebian assertion, the vernacularisation of politics, as well as politics for recognition and dignity. However, the decline of the centrist INC has also contributed to the rise of exclusivist identity politics with sectional political agendas (Mitra 1992, Yadav 1999, Hansen 1999, 2000, Jaffrelot 2001, Jodhka 2007, Michelutti 2007). Section 3.3. will discuss the implications of this for Muslim minority politics.

In the eyes of the privileged upper castes and classes in the 1980s, these lower caste groups were deliberately courted and overly protected by the INC and other regional parties. Debates regarding reservations and the 'mandalisation of politics'[41] amid pervasive bribery and corruption scandals in the INC caused substantial disgruntlement among the middle classes and elite sections, who eventually drifted towards the Hindu nationalist movement (Hansen 1999). Jaffrelot (2001) and Hansen (1999) noted that the Mandal affair and anti-Muslim discourse in Kashmir were equally important as the Shah Bano judgement and the Ayodhya movement in rallying upper caste and middle class support around the BJP in the early 1990s, leading to a massive erosion of INC support (see Appendix 10). In short, the Hindu nationalist movement attracted the upper middle class and many higher and dominant caste groups for two reasons: firstly, to defend the traditional social hierarchy in a rapidly transforming India; and secondly for their economic liberalism and protection of the "middle world composed of the provincial professions, small industries and country trading and banking" (Jaffrelot 2001).

In 1998, the Hindu nationalists with their political party, the BJP, were voted into office in Delhi for the first time, and were in power in various Indian states. Karnataka has been governed by the BJP since 2004; the first South Indian state to be ruled by a BJP government. The success in Karnataka can be seen as the result of an effective campaign to widen the BJP's political influence in South India through anti-minority agitations following the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The next section will discuss further the case of coastal Karnataka, the DK District and in particular Mangalore where I experienced the strong presence of Hindu nationalists that led to increased local grievances and a growing sense of insecurity for the Muslim minority. These findings were especially significant given their

[41] The debate around the Mandal Commission between 1978 and 1980 became the most divisive post-Independence political controversies. The Commission, established by Minister Morarji Desai from the Janata Party, revived the idea of education and employment quotas for low caste groups, which has provoked a pan-Indian outcry by upper caste Hindus (Bayly 1999).

occurrence in a region in which the PFI with its assertive Muslim citizenship politics was particularly well received, and experienced considerable organisational growth[42].

3.2.1. Communalism in Coastal Karnataka

This section will engage with the factors that led to the Hindu nationalists in increasing their influence in the coastal region and eventually in all of Karnataka, which is important to understand the emergence of the PFI. I will analyse the new alliances between dominant merchant classes (Bunts), the Brahmin class of Hindu Konkanis and various disadvantaged low caste Hindu groups. Such alliances helped the Hindu nationalists to mobilise around a unified Hindu identity, absorbing lower caste communities, including fishermen (mogavirs) and farmers (billavas), who felt alienated from and frustrated with the outcome of the land reforms in Karnataka in the early 1970s and the subsequent process of modernisation (Assadi 1999, 2002, 2004, Rao 2010). Moreover, I will highlight how economic migration to the Middle East changed the cultural and economic context of the Muslim community and its relation to other groups via remittances and the arrival of a more conservative version of Islam.

Assadi (1999, 2004) has argued that the preconditions for the political violence and the electoral success of the Hindu nationalists in Mangalore and the DK District have to be analysed through changing political and social coalitions between different groups, and the emerging economic mode of merchant capitalism in the early 1970s, which subsequently resulted in fierce competition between Muslim and non-Muslim groups[43]. This type of

[42] Although the PFI initially emerged in Kerala, the state is not analysed in this section, mainly because of the BJP's unsuccessful political campaign in Kerala. I will discuss Kerala in the conclusion of the thesis with respect to the 2016 state elections, in which the PFI participated.

[43] "Merchant capitalism" has dominated Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is still relevant today and essentially means that those who own commodities (e.g. big family businesses, value chains) have substantial control over the manufacturers and employees, and will most likely reduce workers' rights for profit maximisation (Lichtenstein 2012).

economy commenced with the removal of the zamindari system and the implementation of strict land reforms under Devraj Urs as Chief Minister of Karnataka[44]. During the colonial era land was mainly under the control of the dominant castes such as Bunts and Navadas[45], while Christian Konkanis had substantial influence in educational institutions. Hence, for disadvantaged groups such as Muslims and mogavirs (fishermen) the coastal area of Karnataka as well as most other parts of the state were defined by limited social mobility until the 1970s (Assadi 1999, 2002, Rao 2010).

The land reforms of the 1970s caused anxieties regarding their socio-economic future among the dominant groups in the coastal area of Karnataka. In particular, the powerful community of the Bunts, who lost their institutionalised privileges from land entitlements, felt severely threatened by the new economic order. Consequently, many Bunts found alternative economic opportunities by migrating to Mumbai and became relatively wealthy due to their growing influence in the financial sector[46] (e.g. Canara Bank, Syndicate Bank, Corporation Bank, Karnataka Bank, Vijayaall), educational institutions (e.g. Manipal University) and the hospitality sector (e.g. Udupi Hotels) (Assadi 1999, 2002, Rao 2010). Networks for cultural relations (sanghas) emerged in Mangalore and Mumbai, helping to cement a special relationship between the two cities. Some Bunts came into contact with the ideology of the Hindu nationalist organisation, Shiv Sena in Mumbai (see Appendix 17), and the remittances send to the DK District from Mumbai were mainly used to invoke past glories, lost traditions and religiosity, which increased religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims (Rao 2010, The Hindu 2011a). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the cultural and

[44] The zamindari system was an aristocratic type of land ownership in colonial India. The social reformer and INC politician, Devaraj Urs, spearheaded the land reforms in Karnataka (with the campaign slogan "land to the tiller"), which has empowered historically disadvantaged groups (Rao 2010).

[45] Dominant castes were smaller, self-cultivating land owners (the great peasant class). They were not necessarily Brahmins, but were defined by land ownership, political power and ritual supremacy. One of the dominant caste groups in the DK District are the Bunts or Shetties, who are well known for their various commercial activities.

religious pride of the Bunts and other powerful caste groups assisted the Hindu nationalists in absorbing the disgruntled and alienated lower caste groups such as fishermen and farmers to support their movement in South India (Assadi 1999).

In parallel to these developments in the 1970s, Muslims from throughout South India started to migrate to the Middle East in the wake of its successful oil explorations. This changed the economic standing and religious outlook of Muslims in Kerala, Karnataka and beyond. Muslim migrant labourers came in contact with the reformist Salafi movement[47] (Osella 2006, Punathil 2013). Subsequently, coastal Karnataka witnessed a substantial increase in religious institutions including mosques and madrasahs (Assadi 1999), and experienced a growing sense of a "conservative sort of religiosity" (Engineer 2011). A Muslim interviewee in Mangalore in 2012 explained that "hijabs were almost absent 15 to 20 years ago, but are now worn by 95% of Muslim women in the DK District. Whatever happens in the Gulf [Middle East] will shortly be seen in Mangalore" (respondent 96). In this context, the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in the coastal district has suffered from politicised issues around Islam and the increased visibility of Islamic signifiers including the hijab and the mosque.

This fascination with the Middle East was ubiquitous during my fieldwork in coastal cities such as Mangalore and Calicut and it has been sociologically scrutinised in Caroline and Filippo Osella's (2008) work on identity transformation and aspiration among Muslim youth in Kerala. Through the consequences of migration and remittances, Muslims in coastal Karnataka garnered economic influence in various sectors, and soon started to control industries such as the fishing, cashew and textile sectors, which were formerly managed by

[47] Unlike a majority of Sunni Muslims, Salafis seek to convert Muslims and non-Muslims to a "purer", more literal and superior form of Islam, as they see it, which is unpolluted by modernity. In this effort, they have been lavishly supported by the government of Saudi Arabia, which has appointed emissaries to its embassies, who proselytise for Salafism. One of the first outposts in India has been the Jamia Salafia in Varanasi, which was established in the 1960s.

low caste Hindu groups[48] (Assadi, 1999, Ichlangodu 2011). The economic success of Muslims contributed to the economic alienation of the lower caste Hindus, in particular the fishing caste of the Mogavirs from the 1970s onwards. Assadi (1999) argued that economic competition was a critical factor that exacerbated the tension between Hindus and Muslims. A journalist, interviewed at his family house in a village outside of Mangalore in 2011, added that "mogavirs were low caste Hindu fishermen, while Muslims were subcontractors. Historically these communities traded together and shared a similar class consciousness. But this changed after the demolishment of the Babri Masjid, when they stopped doing trade together" (respondent 52[3]). The economic conflict together with the growing influence of the Hindu nationalists was important in eroding the mutual trust between lower caste Hindus and Muslims, both of which had voted for the INC in the past. Furthermore, in order to reduce INC support by lower caste Hindus, Muslims and Christians became prime targets of the Hindu nationalists by the early 1990s. The communal tension in the coastal area has continued over the last 15 years, especially with the BJP led central government elected in March 2014[49].

3.2.2. Political Strategies and Mobilisation in Coastal Karnataka

Having described the socio-economic changes in coastal Karnataka since the 1970s, this section will briefly discuss some of the political strategies used by the Hindu nationalists to build a successful campaign in Mangalore, the DK District and later in all of Karnataka. This is important to understand the emergence of the PFI. The BJP's campaign to rebuild the Ram Temple in Ayodhya utilised the characteristics of a grassroots movement through Dalit and

[48] The dominant Muslim group, known as Beary, constitutes 15% of the total Muslim population in the DK District. The current PFI Chairman is from that community. 90% of Beary Muslims live in Mangalore, while 10% have settled down in the Middle East, and over 30% have lived abroad for more ten years. Beary Muslims are also successful in trade and commerce, which resulted in a higher average household income compared with other lower caste Hindu communities (Assadi 1999, Ichlangodu 2011).

[49] For instance, two mosques were vandalised by BJP supporters on 16 May 2014, when Modi won the national elections (Coastal Digest 2014).

lower caste mobilisation. This was made a priority by the BJP leadership in the early 1990s, when Hindu nationalist organisations tried to gain the support from tribal and low caste constituencies through philanthropic outreaches in order to unify the heterogeneous Hindu population and to weaken the INC (Shah 1999, Corbridge and Harris 2000). Brass (1994: 155) has analysed the underlying logic of the BJP campaign that used Islam and the Muslim community as political scapegoats.

> "At the level of the village and its surroundings, jati , the local aspect of caste, may provide a basis for economic action, political organisation and social conflict. In a unit as large as a district, however, correspondingly larger units of political action or political coalitions across jati boundaries become necessary for effective political action… at the national level, caste becomes virtually ineffective as a basis for sustained political mobilisation for the available caste category at this level lack appropriate social content. Alternatives to caste as an organising principle for political conflict also exist at every level of Indian politics, particularly from the district upwards. At those levels, categories such as Hindu and Muslim become prominent language".

However, after the destruction of the Babri Mosque in December 1992, which was followed by extensive violence in many parts of India (Appendix 10), the BJP lost segments of its North Indian middle class constituencies. The violence and instability were seen as detrimental to India's liberal market economy, in which the middle class supporters of the BJP were embedded. Consequently, political violence was rejected as a legitimate means to win elections (Basu 2001). As a result, the BJP decided to launch its political project and tried to expand its political influence to South India, in which the DK District, with its highly competitive community-based capitalism, played an important part. The BJP's level of ambition in South India was mirrored in the unprecedented occurrences of communal clashes, displaced people and riot victims (Assadi 1999). Hindu nationalist organisations initiated several political campaigns in Karnataka from the mid-1990s, spreading political rumours about Muslims who were accused of aggressive practices to convert low caste Hindus to Islam. Rumours were accompanied by intimations of Muslim overpopulation and

the notion that remittances were being used to Islamise Hindu neighbourhoods**.** Communal policing against religious minorities in the form of attacks of private celebrations, also known as "homestay attacks", gained nationwide media attention (New Indian Express 2012). Moreover, the BJP has exploited religious sentiments to fabricate a hostile image of a historically violent Muslim community in Karnataka. For instance, Hindu nationalist groups started various Idgah (Islamic Sufi shrine) controversies such as the Baba Budan Giri Idgah, in which they asserted that these Idgahs were formally Hindu temples and that should be rebuilt (Assadi, 1999, 2004, Sikand 2000, for a detailed account see Appendix 4).

Hence, the BJP effectively managed to damage the syncretic culture of the coastal region, while the economic and cultural expansion of the Muslim community was used by the BJP to stimulate Hindu angst against the Muslim 'other'. This complex economic and political competition along religious and caste lines constituted a fruitful foundation for the Hindu nationalist movement that won the election in Karnataka in 2004. In the course of this thesis, I will demonstrate that the growing Islamophobia in coastal Karnataka due to the ongoing assertions of the Hindu nationalists is contributing to the PFI's expansion and increased support among marginalised Muslims. The last section of this chapter will discuss how the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics has emerged as a response to the secular crisis, the failure of the Muslim elite in the context of Hindu nationalism, and the increasing violence against religious minorities.

3.3. Old and New Trends within Muslim Minority Politics

In the wake of an assertive Hindu nationalist movement and the destruction of Babri Masjid in the early 1990s, Indian Muslims have become increasingly disenchanted with their

political and religious representatives, and alienated from India's secular and democratic framework (Yadav 1999, Bhargava 2010). Few studies so far have explored the wider implications of the perceived and experienced secular crisis of the Muslim minority, which, according to Alam (2008: 46), "brought about a radical change in the orientations and dispositions in Muslims towards the Indian nation and the politics within it". This section will elaborate upon this new trend within Muslim politics that was initially a reaction to the assertive Hindu nationalist movement, but was later reinforced by new incentive structures laid out by the INC government. Before proceeding with this, I will briefly recap the old style of Muslim minority politics and the role of the ulama, who were perceived as increasingly unable to protect the community, in order to understand the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics and the new Muslim lay leadership of the PFI.

The rise of the ulama as the leaders of the Indian Muslims was interlinked with the Indian Mutiny of 1857[50], in which the ulama fought for the community and called for a violent jihad against the coloniser. The British retaliated in brutal fashion, and members of the ulama were hanged throughout the country. This sacrifice for their Muslim cause, and their subsequent role as freedom fighters during the Independence movement, which is still prominent in the collective memories of Muslims in contemporary India, cemented the ulama's role as the legitimate Muslim leaders in the eyes of the Muslim masses (Sikand 2005, Metcalf 2005). However, the Mutiny also showed that, instead of armed protests, other forms of resistance to maintain Islamic traditions and Muslim identity had to be developed, given the supremacy of the coloniser's military apparatus (Schimmel 1980, Shah 2004, Robinson 2007, Metcalf 2009, Alam 2010). From this awareness, the famous Deoband madrasah was founded in 1867. The Deobandi ulama spawned a vast network of madrasahs

[50] The Indian Mutiny of 1857 posed a considerable threat to the East India Company and took on the attributes of a patriotic revolt against European presence. The rebellion contributed to the decline of the East India Company, and the British Crown took full control over the Company and eventually over all of India under the Government of India Act of 1858.

working to revitalise Islamic traditions. The traditionalist Deobandi movement with its various offspring, including the Tablighi Jamaat and the Jamaat i Islami, shaped the standards of doctrinal purity concerning Islamic practices, beliefs and piety (tabligh) of common (ajlaf, mainly Barelvi) Muslims by proclaiming an inward-looking jihad (Hansen 2000, Metcalf 2004, 2005). In doing so, the Deobandi ulama ensured that they alone could preserve the Islamic tradition under British rule. Robinson (2007) noted that, despite the ulama's reduced power and status in colonial India, they used the absence of a lay Muslim leadership to become the key defenders of Muslim identity and the protectors of Islamic culture. Robinson (1997, 2007) has further argued that this focus on the inner, individual Muslim 'self' from the mid-nineteenth century can be seen as an effective resistance and survival strategy, first against the colonial authorities and later against the post-colonial and occasionally hostile Hindu majority.

The foundation of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) under Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1937, along with other reformist influences, and demands for a separate electorate helped to create a Muslim political identity. The IUML's foundation was influenced by Syed Ahmad Khan, the Aligharh movement, and its reformist ideology. Muslim elites accepted the socio-economic marginalisation of Muslims in colonial India and acknowledged the critical importance of modern education, science and concepts of progress to their future (see also Schimmel 1980, Shah 2004, Metcalf 2006). However, Syed Ahmad Khan, the Aligarh movement and later the IUML were frequently accused of being political lobbies created to help elite Muslims (ashrafs) obtain well-paying jobs in the British administration (Schimmel 1980, Engineer 2011). In addition, the ulama leadership claimed that the Aligarh movement's positivistic attitude towards the relationship between Islam and modernity ignores the mystical side of Islam, which caused considerable harm to central Islamic doctrines (Metcalf 2005, Rodrigues 2011). Gill (2008) stressed that the message of the

reformers and Muslim elites, including Syed Ahmad Khan, had a limited reach, as only the educated middle class read their work. Thus, the outlook of the masses was and is still shaped by the ulama in the mosques, madrasahs and mohallas. In summary, colonial rule enormously increased the power of the ulama and their role in society, when Islam, the community and Muslim identity were under threat from assimilative pressures and modernising forces.

3.3.1. Muslim Politics in India since 1947

After Partition in 1947, the ulama's direct influence on politics was reduced (although its sway over the masses has by no means disappeared) because of its weak political and civil society representation and the all-embracing INC patronage; other prominent Muslim politicians, apart from a few exceptions, ceased to play a prominent role. Assayag (2004: 46) argued that the approximately 35 million Muslims who remained in India faced a leadership vacuum, becoming a disadvantaged and impoverished community, because almost the entire leadership of the IUML as well as the majority of intellectuals and business elites moved to Pakistan. Such an outflow of human resources (more from the urban than the rural regions and more from North than from South India) deprived the Indian Muslim community of its industrial, business and professional elites, weakened its economic status, reduced its political role and disrupted its social structures. The remaining Muslims were looked upon with suspicion and distrust by their fellow Indians (Shahabuddin and Wright 1987, Rai 1993, Hansen 1999, Assayag 2004). For example, India's first Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, expressed his suspicion in a speech in Lucknow in 1948:

> "I want to tell them [Muslims] frankly those mere declarations of loyalty to the Indian Union will not help them at this critical juncture. They must give practical proof of their declaration" (cited in The Hindu 2015).

Confronted with few alternatives, Muslim politicians joined the INC, which managed to promote the well-known Muslim freedom fighter and scholar, Abul Kalam Azad, as a symbol of Muslim leadership. He became India's first Education Minister, who focused on modern science and founded the first Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in 1951. After Jawaharlal Nehru took over the INC leadership in 1951, followed by his daughter Indira Gandhi in 1959, no appealing Muslim leaders emerged. Most Muslim leaders in the INC built political vote banks for personal reward without tangible socio-economic results for the Muslim community (Hasan 2001, Alam 2006). From the late 1960s, reliance on the INC slowly began to fade because of increased violence against Muslims and the community's stagnating socio-economic conditions. Meanwhile, secularism became a thin ideology under Indira Gandhi's rule, during which the state neglected and denied minority rights. The increased violence against minorities commenced during the secular crisis of 1975-1977, when Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency to fight oppositional forces. The INC turned increasingly more to popular, muscle and anti-minority politics in order to preserve its political hegemony (Bayly 1999, Bajpai 2010).

By the late 1970s, many Muslims had started to join the INC opposition that merged into the Janata Party. One of Janata's charismatic leaders was Syed Shahabuddin, who became popular through his stance against the INC and Hindu nationalists (such as during the Moradabad riots in 1980), his promotion of reservations for Muslims as well as for his key role during the Shah Bano case, in which he spoke up against the 1985 Supreme Court judgement (Shahabuddin 2004, Ahmad 2008a). The Shah Bano Case and the symbolic meaning for Indian Muslims will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Shahabuddin was seen as capable of uniting Indian Muslims, but after a disagreement over how to respond to the demolition of the Babri Masjid he lost his appeal as an all-Indian Muslim leader. Non-elite Muslims also started to support the various emerging regional and

lower caste-based parties, such as Samajwadi Party (SP), and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), because of their use of vernacular languages, discourses of protection and elite oppression, and their support during the Babri Masjid dispute (Hansen 2000, Jaffrelot 2001, Jodhka 2007, Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012, Verma and Gupta 2016).

In summary, Indian Muslims lacked confidence and so abstained from launching and leading their own political projects[51]. This is partially due to their fear of communal violence, resulting from the traumatic experience of partition when at least a million Hindus and Muslims lost their lives, and the sustained myth of the violent Muslim invader (Pandey 1993, Hasan 2007, Alam 2008). Rai (1993:231) has argued that

> "the mere presence [of Indian Muslims], even minimally asserted is an affront, an invasion. Being thus burdened with an inherited and so-called historical guilt, which involves both bad history and bad ethics, Indian Muslims are increasingly being forced into a sullen and ominous silence".

The next section will illustrate how the ulama filled the leadership void for Indian Muslims at the local level in post-colonial India.

3.3.2. Persistence of the Ulama in Contemporary India

The dearth of political representation and heightened sense of insecurity felt by Indian Muslims can partially explain the persistent influence of the local ulama, which is widely seen to have hampered the modernisation process of the Islamic population (Hasan 2007a, 2009). After Partition, the ulama leadership continued to focus its energy on patrolling community boundaries, addressing threats to Islam via offensive articles and books, and

[51] The IUML in Kerala and AIMI in Hyderabad are notable exceptions. However, both parties are by now perceived as part of the wider Muslim dilemma for being dynastic and clan based elite parties, which failed to deliver sustained development and social justice in the context of an assertive Hindu nationalist movement since the late 1980s.

defending the Muslim personal law and Islamic rituals. In other words, the ulama fought against assimilation into mainstream culture and harshly criticised Muslim elites and secularists who spoke in favour of relegating Islam to the private sphere and integrating into the majority culture (Hansen 2000, Metcalf 2004, Robinson 2007, Hasan 2009). In this context, the ulama served as legitimate leaders of the community, wielding the ability to mobilise the masses and control local regional and national Muslim organisations (Ahmad 2003, Ahmad 2008a). In particular, the impact of popular Muslim piety movements such as Tablighi Jamaat, Darul Uloom Deoband and many other regional Deobandi actors has been persistent (Shahabuddin and Wright 1987, Metcalf 2004, 2009), as signified by the prominent Shah Bano Case (1986).

Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim woman from Madhya Pradesh, claimed maintenance from her husband Mohammed Ahmad Khan after their divorce 1978. Under section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (1973), he was legally obliged to pay alimony. The husband filed a petition to the Supreme Court, arguing that the Muslim personal law only required payment for a limited amount of time (iddat). As a result, the Supreme Court interpreted the Islamic law, stating that there was no conflict between Muslim personal law and Section 125, upholding the previous judgement. This caused unprecedented nation-wide Muslim protests led by the ulama to whom the judgement was a threat to the constitutional guarantees of Muslims' cultural and religious freedom. While Rajiv Gandhi and the INC initially tried to defend the Supreme Court's ruling, they eventually surrendered to public pressure and overruled it. Secular, women's rights and Hindu nationalist groups regarded the decision as a capitulation by the government and judiciary to Islamic orthodoxy and an infringement of universal women's rights (see Engineer 1987, Das 1995, Hansen 1999, Bajpai 2002).

Twenty-five years after the Shah Bano case, the ulama's role is still enormously influential in activating the Muslim masses, especially if religious sentiments are offended. This was illustrated by the recent Salman Rushdie debate, when the Deobandi ulama demanded Rushdie to be banned from attending the 2011 Jaipur Literature Festival, due to his controversial 1988 novel "The Satanic Verses" and the resulting fatwa proclaimed by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. Despite various protests by secularists and liberal Muslim elites, Rushdie's visa was eventually cancelled because of the ulama's threats. Various Deobandi ulama urged ordinary Muslims to protest against Rushdie's appearance at the festival, making threats such as "rivers of blood will flow here if they show Rushdie" and "we will not allow Rushdie to speak here in any form. There will be violent protests if he speaks" (The Hindu 2011). As the Rushdie debate coincided with a key election in Uttar Pradesh, secular INC politicians were reluctant to welcome Rushdie because they wished to avoid provoking Muslim voters. Hence, ulama-led movements have frequently regarded the protection of religious and cultural rights (e.g. marriage, adoption, succession, divorce and other legal issues), and Islamic boundaries and rituals as more important than the socio-economic empowerment of the community. Scholars have argued that the concentration on the former has increased communal fear and political isolation (Shahabuddin and Wright 1987, Assayag 2004, Metcalf 2004, Sikand 2004a, Hasan 2007a, 2009), while the police and other government agencies fear that the community's development deficit will intensify radicalisation and political instability (see also Duffield 2002, 2007).

3.3.3. The New Trend of Muslim Citizenship Politics

This section will reconsider the causal argument that the ulama's promotion of conservative religiosity, social mores and Islamic boundary framing constitutes a threat to the social

development and democratic participation of Indian Muslims. Mahmood (2005), for instance, argued that the various "geopolitical and neo-liberal formations" are much stronger explanations of why democracies and development processes are undermined than the power of religious authorities. Hence, the conservative ulama in India and its propagation of an Islamic morality cannot alone explain Muslim deprivation. Other reasons may be equally or even more important such as India's neo-liberal economy, geo-political alliance with the US, its domestic war on terror, and the rise of Hindu nationalism. I will argue that the widely held assumption of Muslim politics being politically passive, self-serving, inward looking and predominately controlled by the local Islamic clergy class has to be revised. Although the influence of the ulama is still strong, Muslim minority politics has been transforming over the last two decades towards increasingly more confident and democratic participation.

As argued at the beginning of this chapter, this confident and democratic participation is due to Muslim lay leaders, local businessmen and social activists from the emerging Muslim middle class as well as the arrival of new Muslim groups, including the PFI, that have promoted the notion of Muslim citizenship politics since the late 1980s. However, it is misleading to conceptualise Muslim citizenship politics with its practically oriented Muslim lay leaders as being in opposition to the traditional ulama-led movements and Muslim elites. Over the last 20 years, the need for new Muslim parties and assertive social movements that can speak on behalf of Indian Muslims has increased because of the secular crisis and the emergence of aggressive Hindu nationalist politics. This has resulted in the formation of new political outfits including the All India United Democratic Front in Assam, the Peace Party of India and Rashtriya Ulama Council in Uttar Pradesh, the Social Democratic Party of India, the People's Democratic Party in Kerala, and Welfare Party of India as well as progressive Muslim movements such as the PFI, Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz (a Muslim lower caste

movement) in Bihar, the Solidarity Youth Movement in Kerala, and the Women Personal Law Board. These new groups (as well as established Muslim parties including AIMI, IUML and Muslim INC elites, and identity focused piety groups such as Darul Uloom Deoband, Jamaat i Islami Hind, the Student Islamic Organisation and Tablighi Jamaat) have partially adopted a secular language, started to promote inclusive socio-economic development and assertively pronounced the need for Indian Muslim unity within national politics.

However, this new trend of Muslim citizenship politics is not circumventing or criticising the ulama, but is instead trying to motivate the Islamic establishment to move towards the socio-economic inclusion of the Muslim minority. This mirrors Pathan's (2009) study on social mobility in Karnataka, which found that public perception among Muslims in respect of community development is rapidly changing and emphasis is now on modern education and employment, especially for women. Similarity, a 2014 election survey illustrated that socio-economic concerns such as employment, development and corruption were the most pressing influences on the voting decisions of Indian Muslims (Verma and Gupta 2016, FirstPost 2017). Over the last two decades, various Muslim parties and organisations along with some local ulama entered India's political landscape with the objective of appealing to ordinary Muslim. They used religious resources, including piety and self-discipline, invoked the notion of protection from the assertions of secular politics and Hindu nationalism, and focused on anti-elite and citizenship politics. Therefore, the thesis will argue that while cultural and religious discourse is still their priority, ulama-led organisations cannot ignore the current political discourse centred on development, electoral politics, gender rights and the socio-economic inclusion of the Muslim masses in contemporary India (Mahajan 2001, Alam 2008, Vatuk 2008, Ahmad 2009, Haykel 2017). These claims are contested and will be further analysed in the empirical chapters of this thesis. The next section will scrutinise how

the INC-initiated social policies have contributed to the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics.

3.3.4. The Sachar Report and the Discourse of Muslim Marginalisation

With six decades of communal tensions that were intensified by the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the Gujarat carnage in 2002 resulting in 10,000, mainly Muslim, victims (Brass 2003), it became necessary for the INC government and other secular parties to create an atmosphere of trust and a sense of security for religious minorities (Sheth 2009). However, in the Indian political context, the use of the category 'religious minority'[52] is a complex and controversial issue that has been contested in the public domain. For a long time, secular politicians remained silent on the pressing socio-economic and political grievances faced by religious minorities. This delay was partially a result of the constraints imposed by the INC's ideological commitment to secularism, including the fear that religious identities will divide society, and partially the political conviction among secular elites that growth and development will reduce social conflicts rooted in religious and caste differences (Inden 1990, Jodhka 2007, Verma 2012). While cultural concessions were granted (e.g. the personal law) in many instances, affirmative economic policies were largely denied, leaving religious minorities feeling disadvantaged in comparison to their lower caste counterparts (Bayly 1999). However, Muslims as a minority category was problematic in the political sphere, since the community was perceived as reluctant to integrate and disloyal to the state (Hansen 1999, Alam 2008). This was exacerbated by a negative public perception of higher birth rates and a rapidly increasing Muslim population in India (Pandey 1999). In this context, the former Minister of Minority Affairs, Najma Heptulla, has said that "Muslims are too large in number to call themselves a minority" (Aljazeera 2014, Indian Express 2014d).

[52]Bhargava (2010: 153) provides a comprehensive definition of the term "minority" in the Indian context.

The INC-led government coalition between 2004 and 2014 was proactive in addressing the problems faced by Muslim citizens, mainly because of an enhanced understanding and public pressure in respect of the alienation of Indian Muslims and the party's need to regain the electoral support of religious minorities after the defeat of the BJP in the 2004 elections. Evidence suggests that Indian Muslims returned to the INC and its regional allies, which contributed to the INC's success in the 2009 general election (Alam 2009, Jaffrelot and Verniers 2009). One essential governmental step to alleviate the challenges faced by the Muslim community was the creation of the Prime Minister's Committee on the Social, Economic, and Educational Status of Muslims in India. The Committee published the Sachar Report in 2006, the result of an official government investigation initiated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh together with Judge Rajindar Sachar, to address the abject human development status of the Indian Muslim population. The Report, and related studies, helped to produce a better understanding of the socio-economic realities confronting India's Muslim minority. Muslims in contemporary India are more likely to be illiterate, have lower incomes and living standards, and suffer from higher rates of poverty and unemployment than other low caste groups. These trends are especially true in rural areas, where Muslims perform comparatively worse than Hindus. Muslims are also underrepresented in politics, the police, and defence services, banking institutions, and the leading positions in the private sector[53] (Razzack and Gumber 2002, Ansari 2006, Basant and Sahriff 2010, Jaffrelot and Kumar 2012). In addition, the 2007 Ranganath Mishra Report was published by the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which was established by the INC government after winning the election in 2004. It has prescribed policy interventions

[53] Sixty-eight per cent of Indian Muslims work in the informal sector and only about 8% in the formal job sector, while 6.26% of Muslims are High Court judges, 2.95% are in the Indian administrative service, and 4.02% are in the Indian Police Service. 1% of Muslims are employed by the Indian railroad, and around 3% are in the Indian Armed Forces. Muslims are also underrepresented in the lower parliamentary house (5.5%), while various major states (e.g. Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and since 2017 Uttar Pradesh) have not a single Muslim MP (Khalidi 2006, Basant and Sahriff 2010, Jaffrelot 2012).

such as extending a scheme of positive discrimination aimed at low caste Hindus to Muslims, which would reserve 10% of public sector jobs. The report emphasised that this patronage would be dispensed not simply based on religion, which the constitution forbids, but because India's religious minorities are by definition economically and politically deprived.

The language of these recent government reports on the status of Indian Muslim was celebrated by various scholars and political commentators for viewing Muslims not through the lens of religion and cultural identity, but as a neutral socio-economic population or, in the words of Chatterjee (2004: 136), "empirical categories of people with specific social or economic attributes that are relevant for the administration of developmental or welfare policies". Some researchers have argued that this new discourse and group classification of these reports have enabled Muslims to engage and negotiate with the state and demand government policy focused on equal representation, economic inclusion and development (see Hansen 2000, Jodhka 2007, Alam 2007, Alam 2008). In his study of Muslim politics in West Bengal, Nielsen (2011: 363), building on Chatterjee's (2004) notion of the political society[54], noted that Muslim groups in the post-Sachar era have successfully used secular discourses of marginalisation and socio-economic interests in combination with their electoral strength to pressure the state to implement reservations and other empowerment initiatives. The Sachar Report has therefore become a legitimate reference point when Muslim community leaders and activists are articulating political demands. In his essay "Turning Point", Alam (2006) goes even further, describing the new trend as an unprecedented paradigm shift for minority politics:

[54] Chatterjee (2004: 138) argued that unlike in a civil society that encompasses mainly citizen-state relations, in a political society, population groups, which activate the moral solidarity of a specific community, will enter strategic negotiations with the state to advance the group's socio-economic standing.

> "India is entering a phase, in which Muslim communities once again face the prospect of widespread social churning and protracted political contestations. The Rajinder Sachar Committee report is going to, at the level of mass politics, give rise to something akin to the upsurges the country saw in the wake of the Mandal and Masjid controversies".

The continuing secular crisis since the 1990s, including the ongoing violence against Muslims and the failure of secular parties to protect religious minorities (Sumit 2003, Madan 2010), and the more recent debate around the Sachar Report, including the political rhetoric of social justice, gave an unprecedented impetus to the democratic assertion and political participation of Indian Muslims. Muslim politicians and activists now use themes of political under-representation and socio-economic deprivation as vital arguments to raise demands for affirmative action and inclusive politics. Other researchers have argued that the global penetration of human rights' discourses has empowered religious minorities to challenge and hold states accountable, mobilise beyond sectarian or caste affiliations and align with other like-minded movements (Gorringe 2005).

The final section of this Chapter will briefly discuss how the new Muslim citizenship discourse that was partially shaped through the Sachar Report and other INC initiatives between 2004 and 2014 has contributed to the promotion of a pan-Indian Muslim unity in national politics.

3.3.5. Pan-Indian Muslim Unity

Unlike Hindu nationalism that is manifested in different organisations, which unite as Sangh Parivar, Muslim minority politics in India never had a single, all-India ideology or supra-organisation. Arguably, Muslims in Kerala, for example, have more in common with their Christian or Hindu neighbours in terms of culture, language, socio-economic opportunities and political affiliations than their co-religionists in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh or West Bengal.

Studies have argued that this absence of organisational uniformity and the lack of a common ideological foundation in Muslim politics may have hampered the socio-economic development of Indian Muslims (Punathil 2013, Ahmad 2015).

However, the emerging Muslim citizenship politics is trying to change this lack of uniformity by promoting a movement across India that underplays the manifold regional differences (Shahabuddin 2004, Alam 2008). In the next part of the thesis, I will illustrate that various Muslim groups and politicians advocate for a pan-Indian Muslim unity by arguing that the Muslim minority is under constant threat from increasing Islamophobia and the rise of Hindu nationalism. A PFI activist underpinned the political logic for this in Bangalore 2011: "When violence against Muslims occurs, it becomes part of our collective identity everywhere, and we are reminded of it single every day" (respondent 2[1]). Given this fear psychology and collective memory of Indian Muslims, Alam (2008: 12) has argued that

> "there is naiveté surrounding application of anthropological categories, which are notoriously oblivious of the underlying political process. This is true not only of the anthropological approach to the Muslim problem in India but also in the case of various Adivasi communities undergoing processes of social and political unification. However, ethnic and other diversities, linguistic differences and social differentiation can all coexist with growing political unification or an emergent sense of community".

Moreover, Muslim political elites, including the AIMI and IUML, have also started to support the notion of pan-Indian Muslim unification in order to reduce the socio-economic grievances and political strains of Indian Muslims. The former INC Minister of Minority Affairs, Rahman Khan, reinforced the need for Muslim unity during an interview in Delhi 2012:

> "Muslim organisations have to stop blaming each other and curb their disagreements and ignorance. We are so many Muslims in India. But only through Muslim unity, we can overcome all the challenges our people are facing. That is how the Dalits and other poor communities have overcome their backwardness. Instead of blaming each other and wasting our time and energy, we should focus

> on inclusive welfare politics, development and education through our united efforts" (respondent 38).

In a similar vein, an Imam affiliated with the PFI and President of the All India Imams Council (AIIC), said at a public conference in Delhi that "Allah has bestowed us [Muslims] with the same qualities as he has given to Verma, Sharma, Rao and Pandit [upper caste or Brahmin names]… They utilised their qualities for big activities and we [Muslims] never ever used our qualities" (PFI 2011). In this way Muslim groups and leaders, including the PFI, are following Syed Shahabuddin's political lead in demanding the official recognition of the socio-economic marginalisation and relative deprivation of Indian Muslims as a religious community. Shahabuddin (2007) has argued that "without political empowerment [through quotas] no group, in multi-segmented polity, can participate in governance, or have a finger on the levers of the decision-making process, or even enter the chambers where decisions were made" (cited in Ahmed 2008a). He also critically engaged with the Sachar Report, which gave special attention to the category of the so-called Dalit or lower caste Muslim, since such fragmentation may (deliberately) reduce the political influence of Indian Muslims[55]. During my fieldwork, the majority of Muslim activists affiliated with diverse Islamic groups expressed a firm conviction that the articulation of differences will jeopardise the Muslim cause and help the Hindu nationalists. Lieberman and Singh (2017: 44-45) have argued that the official acknowledgement of intra-community differences, as in Pakistan between Shia and Sunni Muslims, has contributed to large-scale violence and political disputes between these two sects. On the contrary, they noted that "the absence of official data that would facilitate group-based comparisons and perceptions of relative deprivation [in India], such as was the case with Hindus and Muslims, there has not been the same kind of competitive mobilisation". Hence, Muslim groups such as the PFI have occasionally acknowledged the social stratification of Indian Muslims but unanimously consider this

[55] In his book "Islam, Caste and Dalit Muslim Relations in India", Sikand (2004c) has provided a detailed discussion on "Dalit Muslims" and the internal dynamics within Muslim identity politics.

narrative counterproductive as it will divide and therefore weaken the community's political weight[56]. A PFI leader stressed that "we can't limit our backwardness to a particular class of Muslims. All Muslims are backward and need reservations. Dalits managed to come up with reservations through collective pressure and unity" (respondent 11). This drive towards unification and a cohesive Muslim identity bears certain similarities with lower caste and Dalit movements of the 1970s and 1980s, in which "the appeal to caste is for unification of similar jatis [sub-castes] into larger collectives and political mobilisation for power so as to subvert the very relations of the varna [caste] order" (Alam 1999: 759). Therefore, Muslim minority politics has started to resemble the lower caste assertions of the 1980s, claiming democratic inclusion as full Indian citizens, which will be further discussed in the following chapters.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the analytical foundations in order to understand the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics and assertive movements such as the PFI. I started by giving a detailed account of PFI's history and motivation, its leadership, cadre-base and funding structures, and described why the PFI emerged in South India. The second part of the chapter analysed the emergence of Hindu nationalism and how it has increased its political influence in South India. I used the strong assertions of Hindu nationalists in Mangalore and coastal Karnataka after the destruction of the Babri Masjid as a case study, which is

[56] During the PFI's public campaigns, which have demanded reservations, discussions regarding Muslim caste hierarchies or "Dalit Muslims" were largely absent (PFI 2010a). In an interview with the President of the All Indian Imam's Council, he argued that "all are equal in Islam. All Muslims are part of the quam [Muslim community]. Everything else is local and misguided practice (respondent 3). A senior journalist and commentator on Islamic affairs in Bangalore, who has been critical of the trend towards Muslim unification, stressed that "it is easy to be idealistic, when speaking about equality in Islam, but the sociological realities are different. A Maulana would not marry his daughter to a man from a lower Muslim caste. But the existence of OBC [other backward classes] or Dalit Muslims is often denied by the Ulama and the Muslim middle class" (respondent 53[3]). However, lately the PFI supported the recommendation of the Mishra Commission (2009) to "introduce 8.4% sub-quota for OBC belonging to Muslims" (see SDPI 2014a).

important for understanding the PFI and the recent trend of Muslim citizenship politics. Finally, the chapter has provided an historical overview of Muslim minority politics and the role of the identity conscious ulama-led movements in colonial and post-colonial India. I also illustrated that the new Muslim lay middle class leadership of the PFI and other groups in contemporary India slowly developed alternative political solutions for the disadvantaged Muslim community. In addition, the new Muslim movements such as the PFI started to promote pan-Indian Muslim unification during the secular crisis of the early 1990s, which was supported by the INC government between 2004 and 2014 and in the release of the Sachar Report in 2006.

In the rest of the conclusion, I will highlight some pertinent criticisms in respect of the emergence of new Muslim movements and organisations. Political scientists have argued that the new debate on marginalisation in the post-Sachar era bureaucratically categorises Muslim minorities as "totalities in politics and as undifferentiated units of development discourse and policies" (Sheth 2009: 76). Evidence suggests that the practice of ethnic and religious constructions of identity-based differences can harden group boundaries and therefore increase competition, comparison and even violent conflict between different religious, ethnic or caste groups[57] (Cohn 1996, Dirks 2001, Lieberman and Singh 2017). Consequently, the current discourse on a monolithic and disadvantaged Muslim population mitigates the sociological reality that religious minorities in India and especially the Muslim population of over 170 million are extremely heterogeneous in their geography, culture, social life, language, education and societal stratification. Touching upon the literature on caste politics and Dalit movements, interviewees warned about the danger of silencing minorities within minority communities, where the most vulnerable sections are often represented and dominated by established lobbies such as urban middle class based

[57] For a historical overview of the politics of enumeration in India see Lieberman and Singh (2017: 35-46).

activists. Alam (1999: 760) noted that "each community wants to preserve its own internal relations of power and it is here they also take recourse to traditional ways of enforcing compliance; worst result of all this is that the women are systematically excluded from the fight for equality". As with other ethnic and religious groups in India, the Muslim community has reproduced caste-like, sectarian, regional, and gender-based hierarchies (Momin 2004, Alam 2007, Rodrigues 2011). Bayly (1999: 276) has addressed the internal dynamics within disadvantaged communities in the context of affirmative action policies:

> "[Reservations] create incentives for Indians to affirm their caste [and religious] origins, since aid-seekers must proclaim ritually inferior birth in order to qualify. Furthermore, the much-debated theory of 'creamy layer' holds that these quota schemes do not direct aid to those who are truly needy".

Such internal group dynamics of silencing weaker sections within the Indian Muslim minority for collective political gains and therefore its similarity with Dalit politics was a recurrent theme during my fieldwork. Scholars have noted that reservations for Muslims as a single entity will mainly benefit elite Muslim, who are still in control of Islamic institutions, organisations and movements[58] (Ahmad 2003, Ahmad 2008a). Verma (2012: 187) argued that "given the division on caste and class, Muslims cannot be granted reservations only on the basis of religion". Consequently, political campaigns for political unity and cohesion by Muslim leaders have been interpreted as an attempt to maintain privileges, hierarchies and legitimacy within traditional leadership structures and organisations in a highly stratified and gendered Muslim population (Hansen 2000, Alam 2007).

Studies of religious communities have also questioned whether universal claims to "human rights are able to recognise and embrace local realities and needs. Indeed there is a strong suggestion that universal human rights discourses may actually dilute the focus on caste

[58] According to Ahmad (2008a), "all the major Muslim institutions, be they religious seminaries such as the Darul Ulum Deoband and Nadwa or Muslim pressure groups like the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, are mainly governed by upper caste Muslims".

[and intra-community diversification]" (Devine 2015: 17, see also Baxi 2002). The creation of the All Indian Muslim Women Personal Law Board and the recommendation by the Ranganath Mishra Commission (2007) to recognise the category of the "Dalit Muslim" or the Pasmanda (low caste Muslim) movement in Bihar are only two instances that indicate the complexity and contestation of Muslim representation in contemporary India. Consequently, scholars stressed that the socio-economic deprivation of Indian Muslims has to be "de-clustered" (Verma 2012) via a genuine discussion and empirical analysis of internal dynamics within the community (Das 1995).

Sheth (2009) has argued that the emergence of "minoritatian politics" in the wider context of the Sachar Report and the INC's turn towards Muslim empowerment over the last decade is in fact quite dissimilar from previous lower-caste and Dalit assertions in the 1970s and 1980s. He noted that these earlier demands by Dalits for democratic inclusion were genuinely experienced articulations by disgruntled peasant classes and historically disadvantaged groups. In contrast, the current demands of Muslim unification and citizenship politics constitutes the dangerous showcase of an illiberal religious identity movement with severe implications for India's secular democracy. Hence, critical commentators during my fieldwork were reluctant to acknowledge that the assertive shift within Muslim minority politics can be compared to the democratic upsurge by various Dalit movements. Instead the demands for rights and development on the basis of religion and the relative deprivation of Indian Muslims were seen to inevitably reinforce identity politics and religious conflict.

Bhargava (2010: 193) argued that in a highly politicised and religiously divided society such as India, aggressive claims for Muslim reservation schemes might weaken democracy, especially if those reservations are given on religious grounds. Such quotas for religious

communities may even become a threat to national integrity, and not be feasible at the national level (see also Verma 2012). In the recent past, leaders of Muslim organisations have threatened the state with the use of political violence, if demands involving development and reservations are not fully met (see Radiance 2010, Nielsen 2011). Earlier, such threats of political violence were mainly confined to cases where religious sentiments were violated, including the Shah Bano case. The recent threats, which are linked to socio-economic demands, constitute a clear departure from the cultural and identity dominated discourse within Islamic groups. Thereby, in the context of recent Muslim minority assertions, the thesis will critically engage with the overly positive interpretation of the discourse centred on the Sachar Report as an extension of Chatterjee's (2004) notion of political society. Recent scholarship has described the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics as a predominately enabling sign of Muslim empowerment, while ignoring other implications including the potential for increased political polarisation along religious lines, moral vigilantism, and political violence (see for example Jodhka 2007, Alam 2008, Nielsen 2011).

Finally, critics of the Sachar Report and Muslim citizenship politics observed that the two causes of increased Muslim grievances, namely socio-economic deprivation and structural discrimination by the state, police and Hindu nationalism, are heavily conflated and exaggerated (Sheth 2009). According to these studies, it is falsely concluded that Muslim marginalisation is entirely caused by the assertions of Hindu nationalists and the inherent discriminatory bias within the public and private sector and educational institutions. On the contrary, such politics of victimhood regarding external threats has made Muslims defensive and prevented constructive inquires and critical debates on the internal failures of Muslim organisations and community leaders (Sheth 2009, Mahajan and Jodhka 2010). A Muslim lecturer at the Jamia Millia in Delhi 2012 argued that

> "we have to question the data of Muslim marginalisation. Muslim organisations claim that all Muslims are backward, but the majority of Muslims lives in cities, which have experienced rapid growth over the last decades. Therefore, Muslims must have benefitted from this development process and economic openings compared to the rural population… The Sachar discourse is only relevant for Muslims in the North and North East, who suffer from extreme poverty, and the violence of Hindu nationalist attacks. Muslim groups from South India [such as the PFI] have corrupted the discourse of marginalisation. They are not only interested in basic rights and poverty reduction, but are obsessed with political power and revenge, due to the violence against Muslims in Gujarat" (respondent 125, see also Ahmad 2015).

This view is in line with Verma (2012), who stressed that the new discourse of Muslim citizenship politics and social justice is less about reforming traditional community hierarchies to make representation and leadership more inclusive, and more about demanding "greater access to material goods, mainly education, employment and politics".

The next chapter will analyse the PFI's political campaigns to emerge as a unified protest voice, speaking on behalf of the Muslim masses and promoting the politics of Muslim citizenship. Thereby, I will illustrate how the movement generates counter frames defining the Hindu nationalist enemy, invoking notions of collective victimhood and cultural extinction, while offering the protection through muscle politics.

Chapter 4:

Framing Muslim Victimhood: The Politics of Grief and Protection

> "If any person can provide a shadow, the other person who is standing in the hot sun will go to him. There are so many social and political threats for the Muslims in India, but except for us, no other Muslim or secular organisation takes them seriously (PFI leader in Mangalore 2011, respondent 2[3]).

The PFI's district office in Mangalore is in Bundar, the old harbour area, a congested and primarily Muslim lower middle class locality where Muslim residents are vastly sympathetic to the movement. In an office room, in the wooden building next to the Netin Kanna Masjid in Bundar, I interviewed one of the PFI's Executive Council Members. The activist explained to me the metaphor of providing a "shadow" to people in need to outline why an organisation such as the PFI is inevitably required by marginalised Muslim citizenries. He emphasised with considerable determination how the PFI fulfils its role as a social protector in a political context, in which local Hindu nationalist groups together with a complicit state apparatus harass and discriminate against Muslims and other religious minorities. In the scholarship on religious conflict in India, researchers have argued that in times of violence against minority groups their leadership resorts to the invocation of enemy or counter frames to generate notions of political, economic and cultural victimhood in order to mobilise their constituencies (Brass 1997, Assadi 1999, Ahmad 2009, Bhargava 2010). Scholars of social movements have pointed out that such counter frames promote accounts of victimisation and humiliation, as well as fears of cultural extinction and conspiracy theories, such as attempts by secular elites to undermine the strength of Islam and Muslim society (Snow and Bryd 2000). These framing strategies can appear to be a part of a blame game, whereby any attempt to represent and make claims on behalf of a particular community's interests and values will also encourage secular, liberal, conservative and

religious rivals to compete for the same constituencies or use them as scapegoats for political gains. These adversaries will employ counter frames to discredit the opposing movements and to offer their own positions on an identified socio-political problem (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996, Gamson 2007, Murayama 2009). Moreover, in the context of creating victimhood frames, Jensen and Ronsbo (2014) have argued that to represent the victimised or to be represented as a victim is often a first and vital step towards having their suffering and human rights socially and legally recognised. However, self-described claims to victimhood should be empirically investigated and deconstructed in order to identify essentialism and the silence of less vocal members within victimised populations (see also Das 1995, Sheth 2009, Verma 2012).

This chapter will illustrate how the notion of victimhood is constructed, represented, organised and used by the PFI. Through empirical analysis of the varying forms of physical hardship, as well as moral and emotional suffering as experienced by Muslims, which is often ignored by the state and civil society, the chapter will contribute to the neglected field of research on emotions and sentimental hurt in relation to democratic participation in India. Section 4.1. demonstrates how the PFI uses the existing fear psychology of the Muslim community to establish itself as a protector, which – in the absence of perceived state patronage – "sells" the commodity of protection. Thereby, I will engage with accounts of victimisation by the state, police and Hindu nationalist politics and contextualise it within theories of securitisation of politics. Section 4.2. will reconstruct and describe the WHY PFI campaign of 2012, a large-scale public assertion in which the leadership of the PFI actively established the discourse of a Muslim community under siege. Section 4.3. will analyse how the concepts of moral injury (Mahmood 2009) and sentimental hurt (Devji 2005) are taken up by the PFI with tremendous energy, using the Babri Masjid controversy as the main political catalyst. This section also addresses the lack of research on emotional and religious

pain within the social sciences (Goodwin 2007, 2009). The chapter concludes that the articulation of emotional pain and moral injury has been neglected in public discourse and can be understood as a novel type of citizenship politics (Alam 2008) in the increasingly democratic landscape of Indian minority politics over the last 20 years. In addition, I will briefly address some of the democratic implications for Muslim minority politics in the context of the election of a Hindu nationalist government on 16th May 2014.

4.1. Muslim Fear Psychology and the Indian State

This section shall analyse how the PFI comprehends victimhood and marginalisation through the lens of what was often referred to by its cadre-base as "saffron" or "state terrorism" in the name of security, and rent seeking motifs by police officials. In the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, the September 11 attacks**,** the 2008 Mumbai blasts and various other instances of domestic terrorism by the Indian Mujahedeen and the Lashkar e Taiba, the security discourse on the Islamic terrorist threat has entered the centre stage of public attention in India, framing the issue as beyond politics (Agamben 2005). Other authors have argued that what minority and civil society groups have termed "state terror" in the name of security is in fact linked to the crisis of state in handling diverse articulations of citizenship and demand politics (Kothari 2005, Srinivasan 2013). Research on the Indian state has illustrated that political elites have failed to respond to "various awakenings and movements, and [are] unwilling to expand its own social base. Instead [the state] assumes confrontational posture… using repressive measures" through police violence and paramilitary forces linked to established political parties (Kothari 2005: 13).

Consequently, I will show how the PFI includes the feeling of insecurity by minorities into its political agenda and fills an important social void within the affected Muslim communities.

In a conversation in Mangalore with several PFI members in 2011, I provocatively asked "whether carrying a Muslim name makes one automatically a terror suspect and whether Muslims have to be constantly afraid of being a victim of police scrutiny"?[59] One activist in a calm and composed manner, describing the situation for Muslims under the BJP government in Karnataka elected in 2004, argued that

> "we [PFI] can agree with this statement, because no matter what sort of a Muslim you are, if you have a Muslim name in your birth certificate, that's what matters, not your religious beliefs. There have been certain examples after which things became worse under the BJP rule in Karnataka [since 2004]. For example, there is an engineering college, where many Muslims study. Some Muslim students were arrested for riding a scooter. Later, it was projected that they were terrorists, because they were praying in jail. There was no evidence for these allegations" (respondent 1[2]).

On a different occasion, in a third-floor room in the PFI state office in ST Garden, Bangalore, also in 2011, a PFI leader elaborated on the insecurity felt by Muslims in Karnataka:

> "Whenever Hindu nationalist groups want to provoke us for some political controversy, they cut off the head of a pig, which is haram in Islam, and throw it in front of a masjid[60]. This is common procedure in Muslim mohallas. My own family and every other Muslim family in the coastal area [of Karnataka] has been somehow a victim of and badly affect by riots and anti-Muslim aggressions. Common Muslims feel insecure, because they are always afraid what the RSS and the police will do next to them. This insecurity is translated into a feeling of inferiority that makes us feel like we are second class citizens. For these reasons, Muslims prefer now to live in Muslim areas which has led to ghettoisation. You think that only poor people are affected, but so are the Muslim middle classes, whose children are also framed by the police. Understandably, the willingness to do something for the community is reduced. Muslims felt that no one would support them and that they are not yet ready for independent political representation" (respondent 2[2]).

These similar responses by PFI activists resonate with other narratives recorded during my fieldwork, during which I listened to a vast repertoire of grievance-laden anecdotes of ill-treatment, victimisation and humiliation. Sethi (2014: 2-3) described "the dread of being

[59]These questions were inspired by an interview of Kafila (2011) entitled "What does it mean to be a Muslim in India today" with Mahtab Alam, a prominent Indian civil rights activist.

[60] The activist referred to the 2009 Mysore riot, in which a PFI district president was involved. The Mysore riot will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

pursued" as a Muslim in India, "when every knock on the door, every ring of the phone makes your stomach churn… But worst of all, the knowledge that no one may be able to help you from being taken away". Her findings correlate with research on persisting fear psychologies among Indian Muslim and minority traumas going back to the excessive violence of Partition (1947) and the state of emergency (1975-1977) (Wilkinson 2007). For instance, in his office in New Friends Colony in Delhi in 2012, Manzoor Alam, the Director of the Institute for Objective Studies and a sympathiser of the PFI, lengthily explained to me the significance of trauma and fear among Indian Muslims, which has been ignored in public discourse[61]:

> "During the time of independence, Muslims went through a great crisis. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, Muslims suffered from a fear psychosis. None of the Muslim leaders took initiative to remove this fear, and the Congress [INC] government exploited this political vacuum during elections. From Indira Gandhi's government till today, Muslims felt as a threatened and victimised minority. This fear psychosis is very strong, and it will take a lot of time, up to three generations, after it is removed. But it will take even longer, if the government is not helping" (respondent 37[2]).

In this context of Muslim fear psychosis, PFI leaders have claimed to have reduced the feeling of insecurity among Muslims singlehandedly. Since the movement became active in the early 1990s and started to monitor what PFI members have called "harmful activities" and offer various forms of physical, legal and social protection, Muslims feel safer, and police harassment and riots have been decreasing in the coastal parts of Karnataka – such as Mangalore and Udupi[62]. One middle-aged Muslim supporter of the PFI and local business owner in Mangalore in 2012 recalled that "in 1998 Mangalore was burning [referring to communal riots] and innocent Muslims were without any protection from the police and our so-called secular leaders. Alhamdulillah [praise be with God], with the creation of KFD [now

[61] The Institute for Objective Studies is close to the JIH and has provided data for the publication of the Sachar Committee Report in 2006. Manzoor Alam has spoken at several political campaigns organised by the PFI. His attendance has been critiqued by members of the JIH and other political parties.
[62] Such claims are highly contested as Chapter 5 will show.

PFI], attacks by Hindu nationalists have been reduced drastically" (see also Assadi 1999, PUCL 2009, 2010). Other external observers argued that PFI has exacerbated Muslims' sense of victimhood in order to recruit new members and obtain financial resources. A political scientist, who has lived in Mangalore for 10 years, stressed that

> "the PFI is making Muslims paranoid, telling them they are constantly being watched by the state and attacked by Hindu nationalists. So Muslims have to pay them for their own protection… This transactional system has in fact helped the community. Without the PFI, riots and murders would have been taken place in much higher numbers in the coastal district" (respondent 73[1]).

The next section will analyse the PFI's role as a local protection force and police substitute in the context of the state failing to provide sufficient security for religious minorities.

4.1.1. The Commodity of Protection

Violent clashes between Muslim groups and Hindu nationalists over contentious and often symbolic issues such as beef consumption, conversion, moral policing and religious sites are occurring on a regular basis in contemporary India. After Partition in 1947, the INC promised security from communal violence to religious minorities, but seemed less willing or capable of implementing this since the late 1970s (Bose 1998 Hansen 1999, Jaffrelot 2001). Consequently, Muslim lay leaders and groups, including the PFI, started to occupy the public space, especially in states such as Kerala and (coastal) Karnataka, where political violence of different religious and political outfits has been "normalised" (see Assadi 1999, PUCL 2009, 2010, BBC 2016, Caravan 2016b, Hindu 2017). Like the "shadow under the sun" metaphor by a PFI activist at the beginning of this chapter, Tilly (1985: 170) has argued that

> "[the notion of] protection calls up images of the shelter against danger provided by a powerful friend, a large insurance policy, or a sturdy roof. With the other, it evokes the racket in which a local strong man forces merchants to pay tribute in order to avoid damage – damage the strong man himself threatens to deliver".

Shah (2006), building on Tilly's work, noted that under certain socio-political conditions boundaries between so-called extremist groups and state organs tend to become unclear. As the local state exercises its power, which also implies the absence of national state power, non-state groups, including religious movements, can offer protection in various ways in return for loyalty and support, and violence and muscle politics are important indications of its ability to protect its main support base (see also Mitchell 1991, Gambedia 1993, Venkatesh 2009). In other cases, the threat and ability to carry out violent acts has been identified as a useful bargaining tool for negotiations with the state and other groups (Elwert 1999, Nielsen 2011). Studies have shown that muscle politics and the application of strategic violence may repel differing ideological and ethnic groups as well as sections of the middle class, while it will also appeal to target constituencies for recruitment by indicating the capability to protect the community's cultural and economic capital (Byman 2016). In this context, it has been argued that the costs of democratic systems are political violence and disorder, due to the conflicting interests of diverse state and non-state groups (Mitra 1992, Ross 2004, Hansen 2005, Comaroff and Comaroff 2006).

A journalist in Mangalore noted that Muslim groups such as the PFI are committed to the democratic process, however "not in the sense of an ideal type. In India, all political parties have their goondas [rogue or paramilitary forces] and engage in political violence now and then, which is part of the tamasha [political spectacle]. It's like a guerrilla war out there" (respondent (78[2]). During my fieldwork, members of the PFI provided some empirical grounds to believe that the movement is involved in muscle politics and strategic violence, which has revealed the tension between the favoured presentation of the movement as a non-violent pressure group promoted by the upper ranking leadership, and the understanding of it as a physical and religious protection force by the PFI's lower and semi-

literate cadre-base. For instance, during a discussion in Delhi in 2014, a local PFI member emotionally said that

> "the leadership won't encourage any violent action and advises against it, but we know they [PFI leaders] also believe in self-defence. They are there for us, if we are attacked by fascist groups [referring to a violent clash between Muslims and Hindus at Jantar Mantar Road in Delhi 2007]. We are always prepared and ready to fight back [clutching his fist]".

PFI members stressed that supporters of Hindu nationalist organisations are intimidated by the political pressure created by the PFI, which was seen as a symbolic victory and sign of Muslim empowerment (respondents 8[1] and 9[3]). PFI cadres further emphasised that they support each other in times of crisis such as attacks by Hindu nationalists, communal riots, police raids and arrests by mobilising counter protests that affect the morale of their opponents (The Hindu 2017b). A police inspector in Mysore in 2012, who highlighted his "trustworthy relationship" with local PFI leaders, indirectly confirmed that the PFI's collective action has an impact on the police psyche: "We are now more proactive in initiating harmony marches and mohalla meetings with swamijis [Hindu priests], sakaris [government officials], maulanas and bishops on a regular basis to ease the tension" (respondent 72). A Dalit supporter of the PFI in Mangalore in 2011, who has been physically attacked by the RSS in the past for his public stance against Hindu nationalism, also stressed that "these saffron people [Hindu nationalists] think now twice before they attack Muslims…The police doesn't like the PF**I**, but because of PFI's presence, they carefully consider their actions against Muslims now" (respondent 114[1]). The PFI's organisational capability to protect its Muslim constituency has also been critical to ensure the silent support of small and medium sized business owners, who are primarily interested in a safe and market-friendly environment[63] (Hansen 2000, Osella and Osella 2008).

[63] In this context, a semi-literate PFI supporter, who has worked as a street vendor in Mangalore, light-heartedly argued in 2011 that "only because of us [implying PFI's protection], middle class Muslims can now drive around in their fancy AC cars".

Moreover, the PFI has tried to extend its "shadow" or "racket" of protection to other religious minorities such as Christians and Dalits. "In times of church attacks, Christians finally realise that they need us [PFI] now", noted a PFI activist in Mangalore. During an interview with a Dalit politician in Bangalore, who initially voiced his concerns about the militant face of the PFI, later admitted that "on the street, you have to speak and act like that, even if it comes to the prize that secularists and liberals stay away" (respondent 143). Interviewees from the Christian community in Mangalore admired the confidence of the PFI, with one noting: "They [PFI cadres] get beaten up and humiliated all the time, but they are always getting up and fight back" (respondent 73[3]). A Christen human rights activist in Mangalore in 2012, argued that "our community faces the same security issues as Muslims, but Christians are too weak. They stay in the church and follow the bible, but when they are attacked and insulted by the RSS, they offer the other cheek" (respondent 113). When the PFI's Vice President gave me some documents in his office in Calicut in 2014, he opened the door of a cupboard, in which I could see a large poster of Malcom X on the inside of the door[64]. He then justified the assertive public posture of the PFI:

> "There is nothing wrong with being physical. It attracts the youngsters. No other organisation is ready to fight fascism in the way we do it. Our argument is that you cannot fight fascism only through seminars, symposia and conferences. Sometimes, it happens that you have to stop them on the streets like in Gujarat, and other states in India where the RSS started rioting, raping our women and burning our children alive. In a country, where the police and the security forces are not in a position to support and defend you, you are allowed to have private defence, which is not illegal! You cannot take law in your own hands, but at the same time, if your survival is at stake, it is a fundamental right to defend yourself and every other human being" (respondent 8[5]).

[64] Malcom X (2007 [1965]), who became a global figure of identification for social movements, disagreed with the moderate and pacifying attitude of other black activists, in particular with Martin Luther King and the non-violent notion to love your enemy. This agenda of offering the other cheek in times of racist violence was interpreted by Malcom X as betrayal of one's own race. Similarly, in an 1999 interview, a senior PFI leader stressed that "we are not lambs before a jackal. Defending oneself and attacking someone are two different things. If a person attacks me I have the right to hold his hand to prevent it. The law all over the world allows self-defence.… we do convey the message not to be afraid of fascist forces or go down before them quietly. If you do go down, we teach our cadre to do so with their heads held high" (Rediff 1999).

A journalist, who became a victim of PFI intimidation, explained to me the rationale of the PFI's muscle politics: "Similar to gangs or godfathers, the PFI has to prove that they can protect their constituencies beyond the law. [In Mangalore], the PFI understood how fragmented the Hindu community is. They calculated the strength of their opponents [and came to the conclusion that] in the coastal area, there are 13,000 RSS supporters, but only about 250 of them are members of [the militant group] Bajrang Dal. The PFI leadership realised that Muslims can easily match the Bajrang Dal in numbers and train more cadres, who can fight the enemy" (respondent 141). Correspondingly, Hansen (1999: 204) argued that "the myth goes among Muslims [that] Hindus only dare to fight in groups and mobs; on their own they are weak and afraid, whereas Muslims are brave, know how to fight, and never give up even when outnumbered".

In addition, more established social organisations that advocate the empowerment and protection of vulnerable groups struggle to be fully committed to their goals and ideals in cases where their actions would risk relations with the incumbent government or dominant groups (see Bano 2008). In this context, the PFI Chairman voiced his frustration regarding established Islamic leaders and the ulama, "[who] believe the same as we do, but they are afraid by our actions and police responses. But being silent during riots is dangerous as the past has told us" (respondent 18[4]). Moreover, the PFI views these weak Muslim organisations as complicit in the violence against Muslims because of their silence during the atrocities by Hindu nationalists. PFI cadres would frequently use words and expressions such as "fence-sitters", "cowards" "scared" or "no guts" to describe Muslim politicians and elite leaders[65]. They saw the perceived lack of confidence, and failure to protect the community,

[65] PFI's agenda of Muslim self-defence bears some resemblance to the politics of the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Ahmed (2009: 165) interviewed a SIMI member asking him "Why is the Jamaat [JIH] against you"? The young activist replied: "Because we tell the truth. We are not cowardly as they are. We openly say that Muslims must be ready for Jihad against Hindu forces, which are determined to eliminate Islam. Should we not ask Muslims to prepare for Jihad, you tell me, when Hindu forces are committing genocide, against Muslims in

as a sign of betrayal. Among these young activists there was a sense of pride, given that the perceived ability to protect and provide for the community can be a source of self-esteem, social standing and religious responsibility. Chapter 6 will discuss the motivation of PFI members in more detail. The next section will demonstrate that the PFI actively uses the frame of a "Muslim witch hunt" by the state and police, including the prosecution of Muslims under the various terror prevention laws, to advance the movement's agenda and legitimacy.

4.1.2. Fabrication of False Cases

The Karnataka State President of the PFI, who I met for the first time at the conference "Fabrication of False Cases" in Bangalore in July 2011, shared with me his view regarding the creation of a Muslim scapegoat under the BJP government in Karnataka: "The BJP promotes the idea of widespread terrorism in connection with Islam. Most of the time, the suspects are innocent Muslim youths. This is an evil way of administering power over minority citizens" (respondent 1[1]). With the backdrop of Hindu nationalism and a confrontational Indian state, the PFI frames the image of an entire community under threat via a "fascist conspiracy" (PFI 2012). In a public gathering in Bangalore in December 2012, the PFI State President of Karnataka referred to the early Hindu nationalist Madhav Golwalkar (1966), and his book "A Bunch of Thoughts", which outlines the worldview of various Hindu nationalist organisations. The book also praises Adolf Hitler and positively refers to the Nazi's treatment of Jewish minorities in the Third Reich. The PFI leader elaborated that "Muslims and Christians are derogatively called impurities within the Indian society by the followers of Golwalker and only until these impurities are denied any governing power, the country will

Gujarat. Everywhere, they destroyed the Babri mosque. Now they are looting our honour. They are raping our sisters with impunity".

grow again in the eyes of the Hindu nationalists". He goes on to note that "since we [Muslims] are seen as parasitic by the Hindu fascists, it is essential for them that Hindutva becomes the major ideological force, so that the impurities cease to live like the Jews in Nazi Germany". In this speech, the PFI State President aptly conveyed a sense of bitterness and moral pain to the audience, which will be discussed in Section 4.3. Furthermore, for PFI leaders, the current hardship for Muslims is undeniably exacerbated by the application of "terror and sedition laws" against minorities. The PFI Chairman gave me a small pamphlet "UAPA, Terror Law in Disguise", when I interviewed him in Mangalore in 2012. While sitting in the PFI's Media House in Bundar, which is one of PFI's main printing presses for informational material as well as online activities, the Chairman clarified that the PFI is extremely active in rallying against and generating awareness of these laws that seriously affect the daily lives of ordinary Muslims (see Mander 2009). In the pamphlet, the Chairman wrote that

> "when the law enforcement agencies started implementing the laws, it became a story of misuse and extreme prejudice. Nepotism, corruption, communalism, racism and religious leanings of the investigation agencies played a pivotal role in putting innocent youths in prison without bail or timely trial … After 9/11, POTA [Prevention of Terrorism Act] became the major tool in the hands of the rightists and communal BJP to terrorise and demonise the minorities, poor and marginalised" (PFI undated 2).

Such pamphlets are often bolstered with statistics and graphs, quoting research bodies, including the renowned TATA Institute of Social Science in Mumbai. In order to provide an enhanced understanding of how the PFI perceives, mobilises and draws upon narratives of victimisation and portrays itself as a protector of minority interests and security concerns, I shall reconstruct the highly personal case of Naveed, a 35-years old PFI member, who was framed as a terrorist under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and imprisoned for two years.

4.1.3. Being Framed: The Case of Naveed

In late August 2012, I met Naveed (respondent 6) in a roadside village along the busy Manipal to Mangalore highway (50 kilometres from Mangalore) for the first time. The interview was arranged in the house of a local INC politician, who was related to the PFI leader, Aziz (respondent 2[4])[66]. Naveed looked tired, with his dark-ringed eyes, and was initially rather hesitant to speak openly about his life, which he later described as a chain of disappointments and misfortunes. I could sense a strong desire within him to attest that he is innocent and a victim of great injustice.

In 2005, Naveed decided to quit his job in his hometown of Mangalore to work abroad. Given his educational background and organisational skills, a German NGO selected him as a suitable manager for a school project in Indonesia in the wake of the 2004 tsunami[67]. He became a "respected social worker and project manager" and was subsequently transferred by the same NGO to manage a kindergarten project in Dubai. He planned to reinvest the extra money from his new occupation. Naveed fleetingly explained how he accepted "a bad land deal"[68] with a dubious business associate in Mangalore, who informed the police that Naveed is "affiliated with a so-called terror cell" to keep the land as well as the deposit paid by Naveed. While on Ramadan vacation from Dubai in 2009, he was instructed to visit the Mangalore police station in Bundar. After having provided the required paperwork, which documented the purchase of the land, he was eventually asked to pay a bribe of 10,000 rupees in order to "settle the whole matter". However, Naveed refused to pay the undocumented amount, stressing "my reluctance to compensate the police officials together with my Muslim identity got me into prison and ruined my life". Aziz, the PFI

[66] Before the interview, the Congressman proudly showed me pictures of him posing next to Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, while telling me that his grandfather has fasted together with Gandhi against the Raj.
[67] I worked in the tsunami affected area on the Andaman Islands with a New Delhi-based disaster relief organisation in 2006. This shared experience initially helped to build trust with Naveed.
[68] Naveed purchased a sizeable plot of land and handed over a security deposit. He agreed to pay for the land in monthly rates over the span of five years.

leader, intervened in the conversation by adding that what Naveed has just described "is common practise in this area [of coastal Karnataka] where Hindu policemen try to blackmail those Muslims who commute to and from the Gulf [Middle East] to generate an extra income. If these returnees refuse to pay, they are framed as terrorists under the UPDA" (respondent 2[4]). The security of Muslims, working abroad, is part of PFI's agenda. The movement has launched campaigns in the past to increase social and political protection for Indian labour migrants in the Middle East by responding to cases of discrimination in Saudi Arabia (see PFI 2009).

Naveed continued his narrative of victimisation: "As soon as I was put in jail, the police published a statement to the media that they caught me at Mangalore airport as a member of an international terrorist team. I was suspected to be a SIMI member. So many Muslims are in jail because of SIMI allegations, which has never existed in Mangalore. It is only used as a label by the police". He further elaborated on his agony in prison: "The police sent local RSS goondas into jail to beat and harass me". Aziz tried to make Naveed's case of victimisation look even more severe by saying that "such torture practices like finger nail pulling and much worse have occurred repeatedly". Moreover, a Mangalorean judge pronounced at Naveed's court hearing that he deserved to be in jail, which both Naveed and Aziz saw as evidence that the judicial system has relinquished its impartiality due to the impact of the BJP government in the DK District. Aziz reassured me vigorously that "these things do not appear in the media, but the media will portray these human rights abuses as a necessary lesson for Islamic terrorists by honorary Hindu nationalists" (respondent 2[4]). Naveed's narrative relates to the wider issue of significant public acceptance of torture and other repressive means as long as it is used in the name of national security and progress by

some sections of the Indian middles class[69]. An in-depth Caravan (2014) article exposed that there is a prevailing belief within Hindu nationalist organisations affiliated with the BJP that mitigates prosecution for criminal actions against minorities, if it is publicly connected to the Hindutva ideology[70].

Naveed further explained with deep resignation how difficult it was for him to reintegrate into society, while the issue of unemployment weighted heavily on his mind:

> "I came out of jail after two years, and the time in confinement changed me completely. I didn't have a job, no earnings, nothing! You have to start all over again. Can you imagine how difficult that is? I can't even leave Karnataka; can't work. It is a very expensive life, and I can't pay the bills for my family [he is married and has two children], but I can't because of the restrictions. It takes years to process your case after you have been framed as a terrorist under these laws. As soon as they pronounce the charges, you have lost. It does not matter if you are innocent. It is a war against us; a war against the nation!"

Aziz contributed to this rather grim outlook, by emphasising that "his [Naveed's] example is not an isolated case". He explained that by August 2011 "there were 7 such cases in Mangalore under 30 different UDPA charges". When I first met Naveed in 2011, his case was "not yet processed" and the charges against him were still pending. But, when I met him again at the end of 2012, he stressed that with the help of PFI affiliated lawyers his case was cleared, though only after two requests for bail were rejected. But, he was at least legally rehabilitated.

[69] This became visible when an angry public crowd in Delhi and Mumbai demanded torture and death penalties for the four rapists (during the Delhi bus rape case in 2012) and for alleged Muslim terrorists (such as Kasab of the 2008 Mumbai Blast case). Ignatieff (2004, 2005) showed in the context of the 9/11 attacks that majorities in liberal democracies tend to value their own (national) security more than the protection of minority rights.

[70] In the context of the 2008 Malegaon blasts, Caravan (2014) revealed the illegal involvement of hate crimes against Muslims by the Hindu nationalist Guru Swami Aseemanand (now incarcerated in Ambala), who instructed his followers: "Nothing wrong will happen then. Criminalisation nahin hoga (It will not be criminalised). If you do it, then people won't say we did the crime for the sake of committing a crime. It will be connected to the ideology. This is very important for Hindus. Please do this. You have our blessings" (see also Caravan 2016a).

Muslim citizens such as Naveed, who have experienced discrimination at the hands of the state and attacks by Hindu nationalists, are not short of frustration, and have also lost faith in and are tired of the promises of traditional political parties. Therefore, letting victims such as Naveed speak about their experiences can lead to mood changes and increased support rates for a new social movement such as the PFI. Naveed told me that he has spoken in front of large audiences at PFI campaigns, while the PFI has published summaries of Muslim victims of police violence and anti-terror laws (see PFI undated 3). Weiner (2001), referring to the importance of emotional bonds that have provided Dalit movements with social cohesion, argued that in order to increase support, well-educated middle class activists have recounted humiliating experiences at the hands of upper caste members to mobilise support. Similarly, in a study of activist survivors of child abuse, Whittier (2001) shows that activists urged each other to experience and express strong emotions when they participate in movement conferences and meetings such as anger, grief and shame, but also to show pride in overcoming their victimisation to reinforce the movement's agenda. Therefore, the social stigma and victimhood of police violence can be "dramatised" to gain more publicity and recruit new members (see Goffman 1963[71]).

4.1.4. Conspiracy of the Indian Intelligence Bureau

In many ways, Naveed's tragic narrative fits in neatly with scholarly and fact-finding – journalistic work on the fabrication of false cases, and discrimination against Muslims in India (Tehelka 2009, 2014, Mander 2009, Sethi 2014), which PFI uses effectively to frame victimhood. During my attendance at various PFI-led conferences and seminars, I was exposed to a wide range of literature that was disseminated and sold by PFI cadres. The book "Who killed Karkare? – The Real Face of Terrorism in India" by Mushrif (2010), a retired

[71] Goffman (1969 [1963]) understood social stigma as "the phenomenon whereby an individual with an attribute which is deeply discredited by his/her society is rejected as a result of the attribute. Stigma is a process by which the reaction of others spoils normal identity", which is still highly relevant for the Muslim minority in India.

IB officer, was immediately recommended to me as a "must read" in order to understand the motivation of the movement. Over 300-odd pages, the quasi-whistle-blower made a prolific effort to reveal the "indistinguishable character" of Hindu nationalist organisations and the Intelligence Bureau (IB). Mushrif (2010: 25) wrote that

> "as the IB has thus, been virtually taken over by the RSS, it set out to implement the RSS agenda very meticulously, as it was an organ of the RSS and, over the years, has been extremely successful in its objective of glorifying the RSS as a nationalist organisation and condemning the leftist insurgents and Muslims as fundamentalists terrorist and anti-national community".

In order to reinforce the threat to Indian Muslims by the political nexus of the Hindu nationalists and the IB, the book is substantiated by a multitude of case studies, anecdotal evidence from Mushrif's time in the IB system, and various recommendations of how to reform the IB and police apparatus. When discussing the value of this book with PFI cadres, they confirmed that the movement is in entire agreement with Mushrif's assessment, citing his work frequently in public speeches at campaigns, presenting its findings to new recruits at training camps, and using a similar rhetorical style of individual anecdotes of victimhood such as in Naveed's case; thereby generating enemy frames of a hostile state in order to sway an already anxious Muslim constituency.

Moreover, during my fieldwork, I debated the work of Paul Brass and his thesis on the institutional organisation of communal violence. At a human rights conference in Hyderabad in 2012, the Vice President of the PFI told me, that "it is our duty to fight the rise of Hindutva as it is scientifically proven that riots are institutionalised" (respondent 8[3]). Currently, there is a vast canon of academic work, building upon Brass' (2003:9) notion, that communal riots and massacres against Muslims in post-colonial India are often conducted with the knowledge, and even complicity, of the police and other state agencies. Brass has attributed the failure of the state in protecting it citizens as an "endemic" or "institutionalised riot system", in which "the maintenance of communal tensions, accompanied from time to time

by lethal rioting at specific sites, is essential for the maintenance of militant Hindu nationalism, but also has uses for other political parties, organisations, and even the state and central governments".

This knowledge of organised political violence against Muslims has been internalised by the PFI. For example, I met the 29 years old PhD student in political science and President of PFI's student wing[72], Campus Front of India (CFI), in his hostel room in Delhi. On his studious looking desk were many articles and books about minority and Hindu nationalist politics. We started by discussing the structure and agenda of CFI, which, according to him, is numerically still very small compared to the Hindu nationalist student groups such as Bajrang Dal and the ABVP. He highlighted that "the main aim of the CFI is to reach out to minority students and tell them about the brainwashing strategies, how schools and universities are saffronised and how riots are organised by the RSS and BJP" (respondent 7[2]). In our conversation, I sensed a familiar motivation that reminded me on my interview with Naveed. The CFI President was eager to make me understand that Muslims are severely discriminated against and persecuted in India and that the PFI is trying to be the "game changer". Such internalisation regarding the discourse of victimhood and the institutionalised system of riots is used effectively by PFI activists to disseminate a vernacular and emotive version of the Muslim community under threat to the wider Muslim constituency. This will be further discussed in the next section, in which I will analyse the example of the WHY PFI campaign.

4.2. Collective Grief: The WHY Popular Front Campaign

This section will analyse the WHY PFI campaign and how the discourse of marginalisation and victimhood in the Muslim community is conveyed to a mass audience and negotiated in

[72] He studied the politics of borderlands in West Bengal in the context of discrimination against Muslim migrants from Bangladesh.

the public domain. In late 2012, the PFI carried out the WHY PFI campaign in various cities in Karnataka, including Gulbarga, Bangalore, Bijapur, Mysore, and Mangalore, as well as in New Delhi, where it attracted between 10 and 30 thousand Muslims per function. The WHY PFI campaign constituted an ambitious political endeavour to facilitate the notion of a Muslim community under threat to PFI supporters and local urban and semi urban Muslim constituencies. A PFI leader explained the main objective as "to reach the people, introduce the organisation and reveal the interests behind the malicious campaign against the organisation" (respondent 11). Hence, the motivation of the PFI partially resulted from the negative public image and mainstream perception that the movement had to face over the last 5 years. One year before the event, a PFI activist indirectly indicated the need for something akin to the WHY PFI campaign: "Over the last few months, we came up with extensive public relation activities. We have an image problem, but we do whatever we can to change, reach out to the people and tell them the truth" (respondent 1[4]). The PFI Chairman produced a report "How the Media targets the PFI" in Mangalore in 2011. In the report, he argued that "unethical journalists [who are] inclined to the Sangh Parivar" are involved in the creation of rumours such as linking the PFI to al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Further, the report emphasised on the "deep bias ingrained in them [media articles] against the Muslim community and Muslim organisations, which work for the upliftment and protection of the community. This media has brought the whole community to trial in matters of terrorism" (PFI 2012b). Khalidi (1995) and Farouqui (2009) have shown an anti-Muslim bias in Indian mainstream media, disproportional media representation and ownership by Indian Muslims, and a lack of skilled Muslim writers who could advocate the improvement of the community. In this context, a PFI leader supported the idea of "infiltrating the cooperate media with young Muslim students" (respondent 11) to change the negative public image of Indian Muslims. Chapter 6 will show that the PFI manages a

journalist school, employs interns in their media houses, and provides scholarships for students of journalism and law.

On 17 November 2012, I attended the WHY PFI campaign in Mysore. On the actual day of the event, I was still in Bangalore. The PFI State President of Karnataka, who was in Mangalore the night before event, has organised a lift for me with the PFI's Vice State President of Karnataka, who belonged to a well-connected business family in Bangalore. Together with him, the PFI State Secretary, and two other senior PFI members (of whom one worked for an IT company and was soon to visit the University of Cambridge for an IT consultancy project), we drove for four and a half hours from Bangalore to Mysore. Being in the car for a substantial amount of time was an ideal opportunity to see some of the PFI leaders in the "backstage setting" of a social movement (Goffman 1959, Gamson 2007). In a highly interactive, vocal, and unconstrained atmosphere, the PFI leadership negotiated the agenda of the day and the issue of presenting its interpretations or diagnostic frames to a wider local audience (see also Snow and Benford 2000, Gamson 2007).

While on the road, we stopped at chai stalls and masjids, and watched on a tablet computer the organisation of the rasta rucko (or road block) by the PFI in Andhra Pradesh. The IT consultant remarked that this peaceful rally in the city of Kunnar was banned by the Chief Minister, who was suspicious of the PFI. "That is why we expressed our disapproval by organising the rasta rucko," he explained. The State General Secretary explained that "today's campaign will address how the PFI leadership and our cadres are harassed and question by the police", although the State Vice President qualified that "this happens not so often to executive members, because we only interact with the state and district commissioners of the police – rarely with the local police. Common Muslims are mostly suffering from police action".

We stopped at the Bibi Ayesha Milli Hospital on the Old Mysore-Bangalore Road for a namaz break. While I waited outside the masjid, some of the local Muslims approached me and we talked about their expectations of the upcoming campaign and PFI's involvement in social services in the area. When we reached the suburbs of Mysore, we had lunch outside a darbar [a small road side restaurant] close to the campaign ground. Muslim residents greeted us with great hospitality and respect, seemingly flattered by their eminent visitors from Bangalore. The atmosphere was chatty, informal and the leadership appeared accessible and joked with its constituency. Although there was a tangible effort to emphasise an equal standing between the leadership and the local community, a sense of socio-economic disparity, class habitus and language difference was ubiquitous. The local darbar, in a lower income mohalla of Mysore, and the semi-literate darbar customers and staff, who did not speak English, contrasted against the educated and middle class leadership who arrived in an expensive four-wheeler jeep (bystanders were congratulating the car's owner the PFI Vice State President with the religious praise of 'mashallah'), checked their smartphones habitually and were dressed in simple, but fine, clothing. Social movement theorists have argued that for a leadership to mobilise the community, it must comprehend its values and the socio-economic context of its potential constituencies. Benford and Hunt (1992:49) pointed out that "a movement presentation may be too far removed from the experiences of the audience for them to identify with or develop empathy toward the protagonists". Furthermore, spending some time in this Mysore locality, I observed garlands, wall papers and political graffiti with the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI – the political wing of the PFI) slogans, in English and Khannada, as well as cadres waiting with PFI flags to direct the arriving crowds (mainly Muslim men in mini vans, on motor bikes and on foot), unified in collective chanting: "Zindabad, Zindabad!" shouted one side of supporters, "Popular Front, Zindabad" [long live PFI] loudly answered

the other young men. Occasionally, “Allah Akbar” or “Takbir” [God is great] were chanted collectively. In the early afternoon, the PFI leadership gathered under some trees to avoid the mid-day heat in front of the main gate of the venue. Meanwhile, thousands of Muslim men were walking into the stadium, guided to their seats by PFI cadres wearing badges reading “Volunteer”. When cadres and band members in military uniforms began to march and perform, the PFI leadership commenced their slow procession towards the stage. They walked piously with lowered heads, shielded from the crowds by a rope, followed by a group of PFI cadres and further behind the female members of the National Women’s Front (NWF). The campaign itself began with the patriotic PFI anthem (see Appendix 15), the Chairman saluted the band, and verses from the Quran were read aloud by the President of the All India Imam’s Council.



PFI cadres and band members receive last instructions before marching on to the WHY Popular Front Campaign ground, Mysore 2012.

The event was an impressive demonstration of strength and organisational capability with professional cameramen using costly film equipment to upload selected footage onto the

PFI website. Earlier, a PFI leader showed me a meticulous sketch of the Why PFI campaign that was pinned on a wall in the PFI office. The sketch indicated the entrance routes and various seating arrangements for the "public", the "Women's Front" and "VIPs". From my inquiries during the day, approximately 14 to 15 thousand people attended. The majority were semi-literate predominately Kannadha and Urdu speaking Muslim men between 15 and 35 years old. Approximately 10% to 15% of the attendees were women, who were sitting separately in the front right corner of the stage, mostly dressed in traditional black burqas. The local police were present and observed the campaign with distant caution. In many ways, the campaign appeared similar to the RSS and BJP events that I attended in Karnataka and Kerala[73].



Members of the National Women's Front marching on to the Campaign ground in Mysore, 2012.

[73] I attended two large BJP rallies in Mangalore and a RSS campaign at the beach in Calicut in November and December 2012 (see Appendix 11).

4.2.1. The Performance of Victimhood

During five hours of political and emotive speeches at the WHY PFI campaign, speakers told, negotiated, defined, and passed on to the audience various notions of victimhood, referring to police violence, Hindu nationalist politics, the inactive judicial system as well as the occasional invocation of anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism. Before his speech, I talked to the PFI Chairman, who spoke to me in a gentle voice, testing my motivation for attending the event. During his charismatic speech, he started quietly, almost humbly, but he swiftly changed his tone, raising his voice and reaching his emotional tipping point, which the audience reciprocated with slogan chanting and enthusiastic clapping. The Chairman and other PFI speakers have mastered what Wiktorowicz (2004: 164) has described as the rhetorical skill of "highlighting knowledge proficiency, sincerity, and other positive attributes that demonstrate the right and ability of the group to speak on behalf of a cause". During the speech, the PFI Chairman elaborated that

> "the first terror attack by the RSS was no other than the assassination of the father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi by the RSS swayamsevak [volunteer] Nathuram Godse. Banned thrice already, the RSS has been considered as the primary threat to Hindu-Muslim integration, and has been involved in many massacres against Muslim during Partition".

Furthermore, the PFI Chairman kept reminding the audience of the "horrors of the past", and it appeared he was trying to warn people of the "coming dangers" to the Muslim community. He also distinguished ordinary Hindus from Hindu nationalists, noting that "we are not against Hindus, but against the radicals, who exploit Hindutva as a weapon to satisfy their devilish needs".



PFI Leadership saluting while listening to the movement's anthem during the commencement ritual, Mysore 2012[74].

One of the dangers, mentioned in all 10 speeches at the event, was the current police discrimination against the PFI. The speakers utilised the actual WHY PFI campaign as a prime example to reinforce the victimhood frame, employing humour and sarcasm, which the audience found entertaining. For instance, a retired army official and PFI supporter expressed his concerns about police behaviour (provocatively pointing towards the few policemen who were present at the fringes of the campaign ground that day; who – in turn – did not appear to pay any attention to what was said on stage):

> "Are the police afraid that the PFI crowd is radical and is bringing guns and bombs? Are they fearful we are all Naxlites and Bodos[75]? Or are the police afraid

[74] Speakers included leaders from the All India Imams Council (President), National Women's Front (President), the SDPI (State President) as well as from Dalit and Christian groups such as the Karnataka State President of the Bahujana Samaja Party (BSP).

[75] At the time of the campaign, Muslim labour migrants from Assam fled South India, in particular Bangalore, due to rumours regarding their personal safety that were spread by text messages. The PFI was accused for being responsible for these text messages, which has been a topic during various campaign speeches (see Hindu 2012a, Tehelka 2012).

> that the PFI would actually serve justice for change? It seems that even a tsunami or a cyclone could have been the reason to deny permission!"

Kishtainy (2009:53) analysed the positive effects of political humour: "To the politically minded, jokes and satire represent weapons that can be used to denounce, oppose, and resist… [Humour] is even more pliable for venting unpopular or defiant ideas. Once a person laughs, he becomes more relaxed and tends to be more forgiving and indulgent… Humour diverts the tendency toward violence and aggression". In addition, humour can create solidarity, affirmative nodding, and collective laughing about the common enemy (in this case the Indian police), indicating that those who laugh are on the same side (see Luhman 1995 [1984]).

Other charismatic speakers at the Mysore campaign omitted the use of political humour, and conveyed emotional stories of anger and pride. The PFI State President of Karnataka asked the audience: "Is the police envious of our good work"? He shouted proudly into the crowd "you [the police] tried to break the morale of the PFI by lathi [baton] charging us and arresting many of our workers, claiming that you finished us [referring to a recent encounter of PFI cadres with the police in Karnataka]. Now can you see this fearless crowed here in Mysore"? These were powerful rhetorical strokes pointed towards the state, addressing the suspicion of the community and Muslim identity crisis. The content of the speech resonated strongly with the audience, who applauded frenetically. When the crowed calmed, the State President continued, invoking a democratic spirit and India as a great nation: "Can you [the police] see that the people of this great democracy do not care for the shackles of your system? You are shameless, and I promise you that you will pay the price for your crimes". He lengthily reiterated the humiliating process of obtaining permission for the WHY PFI campaigns in various cities, sharing with the audience how the Police Commissioner of Bangalore has dismissed a PFI delegation by saying that "we will not talk to people like you". The PFI leader responded by asking: "Why is there so much disgust and arrogance against us

as an organisation that is fighting for democratic rights"? In her research on Islamist protest rallies in Jordan, Schwedler (2012: 267), building on Mitchell and Staeheli's (2005) observations, noted that "government officials carefully regulate the spaces, in which protests are permitted, so that the contentiousness of events often begins well before the events themselves, when organisers seek to gain permission for the protests they desire". In December 2016, a judge at the Madras High Court ordered the Tamil Nadu state government to disallow a PFI campaign in the city of Dindigul to commemorate the Babri Masjid demolition's 24th anniversary, making the following statement:

> "It is directed that the State Government should not accord permission to any organisation in future irrespective of religions for conduct of such demonstration, rally, protest etc., particularly on the 6th of December, concerning Babri Masjid from the year 2016 so that wastage of public money, time and deployment of forces could very well be avoided and panic among public be restored to bring harmony" (cited in The Hindu 2016b).

The High Court eventually overruled the judge's order on the constitutional grounds of freedom of speech (DNA India 2016). In such cases, when a public campaign is finally granted, the PFI will publically highlight the hard work, legal fights and bureaucratic obstacles of its members and celebrates the permission as a symbolic victory and an assertion of Muslim citizenship, which I will further discuss in Chapter 6.

Emotional expressions of collective anger and hurt, which became an important part of Muslim citizenship politics (Alam 2008) and "Muslim plebeian assertions" (Hansen 2000), are perceived as politically and socially inappropriate, rude and dangerous by other Muslim groups and secular critics of the PFI (respondents 37, 38, 42, 80, and 133). Within politics, verbalised emotions such as anger are generally regarded as a destructive forces resulting in irrational, aggressive, and violent behaviour (Weber 1965 [1919], Averill 1982). The constructive effects of strong emotions such as anger are often ignored in the literature (Halperin 2011). However, a few scholars have argued that genuine anger can have positive

effects on conflict resolution and peace talks (Fischer and Roseman 2007, Halperin 2008), where it can be understood as an articulation of deep care and sincere empathy as well as a natural response to behaviour that violates emotional boundaries (Devji 2005, Mahmood 2009). While PFI activists feel entitled to their deep-rooted anger and hurt, Nussbaum (2014) has challenged the view that anger fulfils a positive function in any given society, arguing that "anger, with all its ugliness, is still a very popular emotion. Many people think it's impossible to care for justice without anger at injustice". However, this is "fatally flawed," along with notions of revenge as a key component of a legal system. For Nussbaum, "a responsible leader has to be a pragmatist, and anger is incompatible with forward-looking pragmatism". At the WHY PFI campaign in Mysore, I occasionally witnessed this type of "forward-looking pragmatism". For instance, at the end of the speech by the PFI State President of Karnataka, he asked the Muslim audience "to take up political responsibility to build this nation on democratic values and to not indulge in violence".

After the campaign, I was invited to have tea with the speakers behind the stage, and later to a dinner, with members of the All Indian Imams Council, in the house of a Maulana, where PFI leaders and cadres were planning upcoming events. The PFI leadership assessed the campaign and stressed that it was pleased by the outcome of the day. During a follow-up interview two days later, the Mysore District President admitted that "15,000 people was a good result, but we wanted 25,000, which was not possible because of only 4 days' notice by the police" (respondent 4[3]).

This section demonstrated how the victimhood frame was brought to larger audiences, showed how the PFI presented itself in the public domain, as well as how it negotiated the notion of victimhood by providing culturally resonate examples and symbols. The final section will engage with the moral component of victimhood and what Mahmood (2009) has

called moral injury and Devji (2005) described as sentimental hurt, which is often ignored within political theory.

4.3. Emotional Pain: Campaigning around the Babri Masjid Destruction

This section will illustrate why the notion of victimhood and a community under threat, as promoted by the PFI, is strongly linked to the destruction of the Babri Masjid on 6th December 1992, which further cemented the fear psychosis and insecurity of the Muslim community (see Appendix 10). As one PFI cadre expressed in Delhi in 2012: "There have been many incidents like the Babri Masjid one, but this particular insult became the symbol of all injustice done to us". In this context, I will analyse fieldwork data from my participation in the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition on how the movement expresses sentiments and emotions of betrayal, anger and humiliation, caused by "the Hindutva approach of disgust and pointless anger towards minorities" as noted by a PFI activist in Mangalore in 2012. Asad (2000: 12) has argued that when thinking about agency in relationship to experienced pain and injustice that

> "there is no agreement among contemporary researchers on what emotions are. Some insist that they are impulses occurring entirely in the part of the body called the brain, others that they are intersubjective, located in the social space individuals inhabit. Sometimes all emotion is equated with desire, at other times desire is regarded as one emotion among others. However many theories stress the unconscious character of emotions. And everyone, regardless of whether they have a theory of emotions or not, knows that some emotions ('passions') can and do disrupt or disguise intentions… [But] emotion is not essentially opposed to reason; all reasoning—and therefore reasoned action—is itself charged with emotion."

Recent sociological and anthropological work has drawn attention to a dearth in the literature with respect to sentiments and emotions such as hurt and humiliation, and the importance of them within social movement organisations (Goodwin 2007, 2009, Mahmood

2009). This section stresses that the political activists of the PFI frequently use emotions strategically to their advantage, to convey information about themselves to other PFI supporters and to outsiders, and to transform the emotional state of the broad public as one of their main strategic goals. According to Hochschild (1975: 79-83) the organisers of social movements "depend on cultural rules about how, when, and where to experience and express different emotions". Mahmood (2009: 848) analyses the symbolic power and significance of emotions in the context of the Danish Cartoon controversy[76], in which many Muslims felt morally injured and hurt:

> "The notion of moral injury I am describing no doubt entails a sense of violation, but this violation emanates not from judgment that the law has been transgressed, but that one's being, grounded as it is being in a relationship of dependency with the Prophet, has been shaken. For many Muslims, the offense the cartoons committed was … against a structure of affect, a habitus, that felt wounded".[77]

In various conversations with social activists, intellectuals, politicians and bystanders in the Muslim community in India, I asked my interviewees what they think and also what they feel. In the process, I could identify strong empathy with the notion of moral injury – in particular about the destruction of the Babri Masjid. So far little scholarly work has been conducted in the Indian context on emotional injuries so vehemently felt by Muslims in the wake of the Babri Masjid destruction and emergence of Hindu nationalism. Such a failure to comprehend the depth and degree of the sustained emotional injury by religious minorities has added to the current crisis in India's secular democracy (Bhargava 2012). Based on my interviews, the emotional pain of Indian Muslims is constituted by (1) the actual destruction

[76] The Danish Cartoon controversy began after 12 editorial cartoons, most of which depicted the Prophet Muhammad, were published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten on 30 September 2005. The newspaper announced that the publication was an attempt to contribute to the debate about criticism of Islam and self-censorship. Muslim groups in Denmark complained, and the issue eventually led to protests around the world, including violent demonstrations and riots in some Muslim countries.

[77] Mahmood (2009: 842) further asked the following rhetorical questions: "why so little thought has been given in academic and public debate to what constitutes moral injury in our secular world today? What are the conditions of intelligibility that render certain moral claims legible and others mute? How can the language of street violence be mapped onto the matrix of racism, blasphemy, and free speech but the claim to what [Tarek] Ali pejoratively calls "religious pain" remain elusive if not incomprehensible?".

of the Babri Masjid, the violent BJP campaign which lead to it, and countless riots against minorities over the last 20 years; (2) the "slow and biased" trials against those being responsible; and (3) mainstream pressure and public demands to "forget about the whole issue and move on".

On 6th December 2012, during the 20th Anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition, I was conducting fieldwork in Bangalore. Unexpectedly, hardly any Muslim organisations were highlighting the symbolic magnitude of the day, which was in line with the (non-) response of the media. The reasons for the avoidance of the Babri issue by different minority representatives constitutes a compelling topic in itself and will be analysed in the following chapters. In contrast to other Muslim organisations, the PFI announced an India-wide awareness campaign in the spirit of "Lest We Forget" in various cities. The main campaign took place at the Jantar Mantar Road in Delhi, where Aziz, the Executive Council member, and the PFI Vice President were speaking[78]. The PFI also launched two campaigns on the 20th Anniversary Day in Bangalore. The main event took place in the Darrus Salam Building on Queens Road and the second function was organised in the Hamid Sha Complex, a local business centre, and the location of the District Waqf [religious endowment] Advisory Committee, near Halsoor Gate. The audience at Darrus Salam consisted of approximately 250 men, mainly dressed in kurta pyjamas and white topis. There was no female presence, which was explained as "they have a separate event elsewhere". According to a PFI cadre at the event, "the day will be used to commemorate the victimised, to provide historical and unbiased accounts, and to highlight the threat of the Sangh Parivar for minorities and India's secular democracy".

[78] Unlike PFI, the JIH in Bangalore did not facilitate any events on the Anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition. Instead, the JIH hosted an event on Islamic morality, where its Ameer (National President) Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Umari gave a speech. However, the Babri Masjid anniversary was not mentioned during the event. Later that night, I also visited the Salaam Centre, which focuses on disseminating Islamic literature to non-Muslims, and is owned by a wealthy Muslim estate agent, who refused to speak about the Babri Masjid (respondent 120).

I was seated next to a PFI-associated lawyer at the first event in Darrus Salam. During our conversation, he showed me a Wikipedia article on his smart phone, explaining the historical debate about the mosque and how it escalated after centuries of peace. He then strongly encouraged me to "study the issue in-depth" in order to be able to comprehend the victimhood of Indian Muslims (respondent 21). In the spacious but full event room, the PFI had organised an exhibition and displayed several banners, informational charts, images and posters in English, Urdu and Khannada, which highlighted the scale of the BJP campaign against the Babri Masjid. Some gruesome pictures of Muslim riot victims and a poster with names and photos of Hindu nationalist culprits were displayed, and underpinned by political slogans such as "Denied Justice, Punish the Culprits, Rebuild the Babri Mosque". The PFI framed the delay of justice with respect to the trials of the culprits as one of the key reasons why so many Indian Muslims feel humiliated, unrecognised, and deeply injured (PFI 2010c). For instance, the PFI State President of Karnataka is a major authority on the history and socio-political context of Babri issue within the organisation. Within PFI circles, he is widely admired for his work and commitment to the group and for his ability to articulate and represent the collective grief of the community. In his 20 minute speech, he conveyed his bitterness and disappointment but also his historical expertise to the Darrus Salam audience:

> "Babri Masjid wasn't demolished because of religious sentiments. It was a completely political move. For 300 years, there wasn't a question of friction between Hindu and Muslims over the location and symbolic meaning. Muslims could practise Islam without interference. Only after the destruction, we were surprised to see that among the 68 accused were many central ministers and government officials, who escaped legal punishment[79]".

The State President of Karnataka concluded his speech by stressing that the PFI has tried several times to bring the issue to the Supreme Court, but "the Court has already received

[79] The speaker has referred to the Liberhan Commission of Inquiry. The commission has taken 17 years to complete its investigation on the Babri Masjid, which has cost more than 65 million rupees (BBC 2009).

too many petitions of this kind". Furthermore, the PFI critically frames certain public expectations to forget about the entire episode from both within the community, and the urban middle classes, which has added to the psychological damage and emotional hurt of the minority. The PFI activist, Aziz, was upset about his non-Muslim middle class colleagues at work and their view on the Babri Masjid. He has worked with many upper castes Hindus at an IT company in Bangalore: "Though they are nice and friendly about my feelings regarding the Babri Masjid, there is some latent racism in their reaction, a weak form of Hindutva, you can say. Usually my colleagues don't want to talk about the Babri Masjid or religion at all" (respondent 2[6]). In a follow-up interview in Bangalore in 2014, Aziz referred again to his Hindu IT colleagues: "They are not anti-Muslim, but they are also not against the RSS and Hindu nationalism. Speaking up against the RSS today, is being anti-national and against progress, which is the biggest achievement by the BJP government. Whoever says anything against Hindu nationalism is branded as pseudo secularist, or terrorist. It's a similar strategy to brainwash people that Hitler has used" (respondent 2[9]).

During the speeches, PFI cadres distributed pamphlets entitled "6. December 1992: Lest we forget". Its content firmly stated that:

> "asking Muslims to forget about Babri Masjid is adding insult to injury. Not a single citizen of this great nation, let alone Muslims, will forget about Babri. Forgetting an unspeakable tragedy would only help the growth of communalism and fascism" (see PFI undated 4).

This brief excerpt mirrors the campaign's objective for the PFI. PFI members used phrases such as "whoever is fighting for the cause of Babri Masjid will receive support and help by the PFI"; "we will ensure that even a new born child will know about the story of the Mosque"; "the history of Babri will be imparted into generation after generation, until we get justice"; or the PFI makes sure to reach "every nook and corner of the country, educating the masses about the Babri issues". By reminding Muslims of the traumatic Babri Masjid

destruction and the violent political context in which it occurred, groups such as the PFI contribute to what researchers of the Holocaust have called a "post memory" that is "a generational structure of transmission embedded in multiple forms of mediation" (Hirsch 2012: 35). Often, these highly individual and emotional accounts carry sentiments of personal loss and severe humiliation by the actual destruction of the mosque (given the symbolic meaning as a house of God and the Prophet), but also by the public demand to forget and forgive. These fieldwork narratives of emotional injury are similar to what Mahmood (2009: 845-846) described in her fieldwork in Cairo after the Danish Carton controversy:

> "I was struck by the sense of many devout Muslims on hearing about or seeing the cartoons. While many of those I interviewed condemned the violent demonstrations, they nonetheless expressed a sense of grief and sorrow". [One of Mahmood's interviewees told her that] "the idea that we should just get over this hurt makes me so mad: if [Christians] don't feel offended by how Jesus is presented, why do they expect us that all of us should feel the same".

These emotions and sentiments of hurt, anger and moral injury with respect to religious symbols such as the Prophet or the mosque are neglected within social science, but can trigger various forms of collective and individual actions. The notion of emotional injury and anger is effectively utilised by the PFI leadership for movement and cadre-based mobilisation in order to reach specific socio-political ends. The final section will briefly discuss how PFI activists responded to the BJP's nomination of Narendra Modi as their candidate for Prime Minster in 2014.

4.3.1. Emotional Injury under the BJP Government

I met Aziz, the PFI leader, three days after the Babri Masjid Anniversary in Bangalore in December 2012. He organised the Delhi campaign for the Anniversary and had just returned from a four months' professional IT training in the USA. After we discussed the nation-wide

Babri Masjid anniversary campaigns, Aziz shifted the conversation to the Prime Minister candidate at that time – Narendra Modi. Aziz explained how Modi's BJP Prime Minister candidature and his "media portrayal as a political hero and a strong leader, because of his economic success in Gujarat" is perpetuating emotional hurt and moral injury for religious minorities in India. He argued that

> "the same media, which glorifies Modi and is fully bought by him today, criticised him ten years back for his involvement in the slaughtering of hundreds of innocent Muslims in Gujarat[80]. Nothing is said now about social exclusion and other flaws of the Modi-style in politics. Foreign delegations are pouring in to praise him as the new economic messiahs and happily host pujas [Hindu prayer rituals] with him[81]. This is a slap in the face for any Muslim living in India. It goes against the constitutional foundation and spirit of this country" (respondent 2[6]).

Aziz's deep-rooted anger towards Narendra Modi and the Hindu nationalists is echoed by the PFI's firm rejection and condemnation of the political manifesto of the BJP in early 2014. The BJP's agenda illustrated its ongoing commitment to Hindu nationalism, praising the ancient Hindu civilisation and promising the reconstruction of the Ram Temple on the Babri Masjid ground in Uttar Pradesh. The PFI responded in a press release, followed by a protest rally, that "the inclusion of the Ram Janmabhoomi issue in the manifesto reaffirms that the BJP did not go a single step back from its fascist agenda" (PFI 2014a).

However, during my fieldwork, Muslim interviewees, including students and middle class professionals, raised various concerns such as "why does the PFI keeps the issue of the Babri mosque burning so badly?"; "what is the fuss about the Babri Masjid, it happened over 20

[80] Human Rights Watch (2012) has noted that "strong evidence links the Modi administration in Gujarat to the carefully orchestrated anti-Muslim attacks… Rioters had detailed lists of Muslim residents and businesses, and violence occurred within view of police stations… Investigations into cases related to the anti-Muslim riots … slowed down or were simply not pursued…. Officials of the Gujarat state government, led by Chief Minister Narendra Modi of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)… failed to conduct serious investigations and obstructed justice. State courts dismissed many cases for lack of evidence after prosecutors effectively acted as defence counsel or witnesses turned hostile after receiving threats".

[81] The governments of UK and the USA, which formerly rejected Modi's visa, have sent diplomatic envoys to praise his leadership and re-establish political ties in the dawn of his PM candidature. In July 2014, on his official visit to India, UK's former Chancellor of the Exchequer, praised Modi and his administration for laying out the trajectory for future growth, even though the UK government had only ended the boycott of the Gujarat regional government in 2012, due to Modi's alleged political involvement in the Gujarat riots in 2002 (Guardian 2014).

years ago?"; or "why can't we move on for our own sake?" (respondents 39, 45, 46, and 89). When I summarised some of these concerns in front of Aziz, he answered in a calm and composed manner:

> "A person, who is 25 years old, will not be able to remember the Babri Masjid destruction, because he is too young. But, even, if the younger generation does not remember the Babri Masjid destruction [in 1992], it will remember the Gujarat riots [in 2002]. Muslim youths will remember the Muzaffarnagar riot [in 2013]. Even if the rioting would stop, the stereotyping and arresting of Muslims will continue. All of this is systematically planned by the RSS".

He continued, arguing that "there are strong forces to make Muslims forget these past crimes, which is very dangerous. The government is saying Muslims should go ahead and forget it all, but the violence against Muslims will continue" (respondent 2[9]). Around the time that I started to write this chapter, Narenda Modi and the Hindu nationalist party, BJP, were elected with an absolute majority on 16th May 2014. Promptly after Modi's election, the Hindu nationalist and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat proclaimed that "Hindustan is a Hindu nation [while] Hindutva is the identity of our nation and [Hinduism] can incorporate other [religions] in itself" (India Today 2014). I thought about the leadership and supporters of the PFI and how they would feel, in terms of emotional hurt, since Modi, who is the political symbol of the Gujarat carnage and constitutional injustice – at least for Muslim minorities – is currently leading the country after a landslide victory. This new political context and opportunity structures for minorities raises certain questions: Will the PFI and other Muslim organisations and parties change tactics, given the new degree of intimidation and fear psychology within minority communities? Will democratic space be reduced and Muslim citizenship politics fostered under the 10 years of INC rule be abandoned? I will revisit these questions in the following chapters and conclusion of the thesis, in which I link it to the notion of political pragmatism.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the PFI is generating and mobilising around culturally resonant frames of being "a community under threat" from Hindu nationalist groups and parties and an often complicit local state and police apparatus by analysing (1) the case of Naveed as a narrative of victimhood and the fabrication of false cases of terrorism in Mangalore; (2) the WHY PFI campaign in Mysore as an example of a self-confident mass assertion of collective grievances in the public domain; and (3) the 20th Babri Masjid Anniversary to highlight the PFI's firm and persistent articulations of the anger and moral injury suffered by Muslims, which has been so far neglected in the academic literature. In addition, I provided an account of the diligent effort and organisational energy availed and invested by the PFI leadership, which has used a mixture of historical and current anecdotal references to extreme cases of discrimination and wrongdoing in order to reinforce and commemorate various acts of injustice experienced by Indian Muslims. In summation, Islamic groups such as the PFI and their assertive and at times confrontational approach enjoy sympathy from the Muslim masses and the silent support of the Muslim middle classes and business communities in the context of perceived moral injury after the Babri Masjid destruction, domestic Islamophobia and state discrimination.

So far, there are only very few empirical studies on contemporary popular Muslim minority movements of this kind (Sikand 2004, Ahmad 2009) and even fewer scholars have tried to grasp and rationalise the moral pain experienced by Indian Muslims due to structural discrimination and majority driven politics. For South Indian Muslims, including the PFI activists I have interviewed, their experience with discrimination and violence has caused emotional and psychological damage, especially as a result of the various riots and Hindu nationalist agitations in Mangalore, Mysore and many other places. This psychological

trauma, fear psychology and moral hurt felt by minorities have been severely neglected in public debates in India. Devji (2005: 133-134) has pointed out that moral sentiments such as humiliation and degradation as expressed by disadvantaged groups rarely find democratic space or are ignored in "any real politik". Hence, expressions of hurt articulated in a sentimental language by Muslim activists can be understood as an important component of Muslim citizenship politics (Alam 2008), a democratic quest for recognition and even love (Devji 2005) and as a novel feeling of entitlement (Bhargava 2014) by a new generation of Muslim lay leaders, who feel strongly that they should benefit from sustained democratic inclusion. Hence, new assertive movements, which are represented among various others by the PFI, want their physical and more importantly moral struggle and emotional injuries to be respected and recognised in the public sphere. Thereby, Muslim groups such as the PFI can function as judges and evaluators of and counter-powers to the state and media, which can improve the quality of democracy, but can also unleash their destructive potential through aggressive identity politics and political violence (Taylor 1993, Plummer 2003).

Various concerns and implications have been raised by members of the civil society, the state, police and Hindu nationalists as to what extent the PFI's approach to addressing the grievances of Muslims can be classified as scaremongering, sensationalism and exclusive identity politics. Chapter 5 will engage with how the PFI is vilified and publically defined as a terrorist and fundamentalist group, which is linked to fears of an Islamising and ever increasing Muslim population that continues to impose itself on the historically discriminated Hindu natives and therefore poses a threat to India's national security and socio-economic progress.

Chapter 5:
Hindu Self-Defence against Muslim "Troublemakers" and Citizenship Politics of the Popular Front of India[82]

"The Popular Front is becoming like the Indian Taliban"
[Intelligence Bureau, Bangalore 2011, respondent 70]

"You have to be very careful with the Popular Front of India. They throw stones at Hindu family houses, and cow heads into temples".
[College teacher, Mangalore 2012, respondent 97]

While working with the Popular Front of India (PFI), and other Muslim minority organisations, I had various meetings and conversations with representatives of the Indian police and Intelligence Bureau (IB), as well as supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other Hindu nationalist groups, in which their views on the PFI and Muslim citizenship politics were expressed. The aim of these conversations was to understand the rationale and mindset of these adversaries of the PFI. During these interviews of police and IB officials, politicians, and middle class and upper caste milieus affiliated to the Hindu nationalist party, the BJP, Hinduism was repeatedly presented as a peace-promoting and hospitable religion, whereas Islam and Christianity were seen as violent and hostile, driven by agendas of conquest and conversion (see also Hansen 1999, Sethi 2014, Sharma 2016).

The previous chapter has illustrated that the PFI promotes the notion of Muslim victimhood and has politically mobilised around concerns about Hindu nationalism, police violence and

[82] The expression "troublemakers" with respect to Muslims in India was often used during my fieldwork to describe the PFI and other Muslim groups (see also Appendix 22).

institutional discrimination. The focus of this chapter is on those groups who oppose the PFI and contend that foreign researchers, human rights groups, and the INC through its policy of Muslim appeasement and pseudo-secularism, have created an anti-Hindu discourse and a threat to the majority Hindu population. In other words, secular and minority groups are seen to have painted the BJP and Hindu nationalist organisations in such a negative light that it has harmed India's international reputation and offended the religious sentiments of the Hindu community. Therefore, this chapter will show that the sense of Hindu victimhood among my interviewees provided the rationale for violence against Muslims and other minority groups, and such violence was portrayed as a natural response in self-defence of Hindu culture and values.

Section 5.1. will analyse various accounts and Hindu nationalist campaigns collected during my fieldwork, which highlights that Indian Muslims are regarded as troublemakers and as dangerous to society by adherents of the BJP. In particular, I will closely describe the notion of love jihad, the fear of a rising Muslim population and how the PFI is accused of being involved in vigilante attacks to demark religious and gender boundaries. Section 5.2. will show to what extent such fears and strong sentiments of hurt within sections of the Hindu population are used to rationalise violence and self-defense. I will analyse Hindu nationalist campaigns such as the "saffronisation" (purification) of education and "ghar vapsi" (home coming), which aimed to reconvert Muslims and Christians to their original faith of Hinduism. Section 5.3. will demonstrate how the state and the police have dealt with the minority assertions of the PFI and how such a movement is seen as a constant terrorist threat. In the concluding Section 5.4., I will critically engage with the notion of human rights and minority protection and why the promotion of universal human rights is seen as an insult by segments of the Hindu majority population.

5.1. Politics of Rumour: The Case of Love Jihad

In January 2015, I was sitting with Manosh (respondent 97), a 46 year old law teacher from a Konkani Brahmin family, who occasionally eats chicken, in the staff office of his college. He had his hair dyed dark red, a large red tilaka was beaming on his forehand and he was wearing a light orange kaki shirt. As a devoted BJP supporter with a brief history as a RSS member, he explained proudly that his college had neither Muslim staff members ("we wouldn't allow that") nor Muslim pupils ("they never study so high"). I had met Manosh for the first time in 2012 at a conference entitled "Rethinking Religion in India", organised by the orientalist scholar S. N. Balagangadhara[83]. Panels included presentations on the protection of Hinduism, dharma [righteous way of living for Hindus], and on the "myth and reality of Dalit atrocities". The conference coincided with a statement by the Dalai Lama, the leader of the Tibetan community and member of the Hindu nationalist organisation, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), who has lived in exile in India since 1959. The Dalai Lama publicly warned "Muslims and Christians should not indulge in conversion" (Deccan Herald 2012). In our conversation in the dining hall of his college, Manosh referred to the Dalai Lama's remark as proof that Hindus are endangered by religious minorities within India. Now in January 2015, Manosh was telling me about his formal studies in Mumbai between 1991 and 1993 as a young student, and his personal experiences of curfews and social unrest during the riots after the destruction of the Babri Masjid. In this context, he voiced his concerns regarding the imminent threat by the Muslim minority and in particular the PFI in Mangalore:

[83] S. N. Balagangadhara (or Balu), a researcher at the University of Ghent, and the author of "The Heathen in his Blindness: Asia, the West and the Dynamic of Religion" (1994), had organised the conference at the law college in Mangalore. He belongs to a group of international scholars, who are affiliated with the orientalist work of Koenraad Elst, trying to improve the public standing of Hindu nationalism through academia and deny the existence of the caste system in India. Gopal (1993) and Hansen (1999) have criticised Elst and his followers for their anti-Muslim views and for providing academic-pseudo ammunition for the Hindu nationalist movement (see for instance Ramaswamy and De Nicolas' (2007) "Invading the sacred" or Malhotra's (2016) Academic Hinduphobia).

> "The Popular Front of India and its followers aim to turn the entire country into an Islamic country in the next 25 years. Our girls are forcibly converted to Islam through love jihad every day and they use the Friday prayers for their Islamic propaganda. The biggest danger to Hindu culture is through Islamic conversion and terrorism. Muslims only became so powerful, because of these demographic changes. They produce too many babies and will soon outnumber us" (respondent 97[3]).

Manosh's narrative bears some resemblance to Karkar's (1995:219-220) reflections on his childhood associations with Indian Muslims. He recalled "the mullah as the wild-eyed man with a flowing beard, who spewed fire and brimstone every Friday afternoon in the mosque with an intent to transform his congregation into a raging mob baying for the blood of the Hindu infidel". Closely linked to the sociological literature of moral panic and rumour (Karkar 1995, Das 1998, Venugopal 2015), the love jihad affair, which Manosh referred to in our interview, initially "disturbed" the people in the region between Karsagod (North Kerala) and Mangalore[84] (Kanchana 2012). Later, cases of alleged love jihad practices were widely publicised by local and national media and gained renewed prominence in the 2014 BJP election campaign that contributed to the Muzaffarnagar riots in Utter Pradesh in 2013 (Frontline 2014a). Hindu nationalists accused local Muslims youths, some of which were among the PFI activists within my research, of romantically deceiving Hindu women, so that they convert to Islam. During our interview, Manosh claimed that the PFI cadres roam around on motorbikes and scooters in front of schools and colleges, gathering information, and making false promises to Hindu women. He maintained that if the "romantic conquest" is successful, the love jihadist receives financial and spiritual rewards from the PFI. This

[84] In the section "Marad, Love Jihad, Terrorism Expose Cleavages" in the chapter on Muslims in Kerala that is part of the edited volume "Muslims in Indian Cities" by Gayer and Jaffrelot (2012), Kanchana (2012) argued that the PFI is a violent Islamic extremist organisation, and its members are involved in communal clashes and love jihad. Highly disappointed by such claims, a student and PFI Campus Front activist voiced his deep rooted discontent in our interview in Calicut in 2014: "It was proven by the courts that the referred incident was a clash between the Muslim League and the Communists. The truth is that the entire section was written by a lawyer from Hyderabad, who did not know our city [Calicut]". PFI members have approached one of the editors of the book in Delhi to complain about the section, who had promised to correct it in the next issue. The PFI activist was not only upset about the factual errors, but also concerned about the reputation of the movement: "People like you will read this and refer to the book, which leads to false conclusions about our kind of politics" (respondent 31).

feeling of anxiety and panic over Muslim predators stealing and seducing Hindu girls is widely promoted, became the subject of public meetings, discussed on social media platforms, and cases are even brought to the courts by Hindu nationalists. Various websites, Facebook and WhatsApp groups, chat rooms, blogs and video posts have been created, such as "Anti Love Jihad Helpline"; "Beware of Love Jihad"; or "LOVE JIHAD: A Sinister Design to Convert Young Hindu and Non-Muslim Girls to Islam by Fake Love". These online platforms provide images, statistics and narratives with the objective of "spreading awareness about well-planned conversion of non-Muslim women into Islam". Udupa (2014:15), who has studied such online activism against religious minorities, has argued that

> "'Internet Hindus' or 'Cyber Hindus', the self-styled right-wing Hindu activists, are a highly visible group of social media users in India and in diasporic locations. The allure of anonymity in new media and the promise of trumping organised media's symbolic power have encouraged a large number of technologically alert Hindutva sympathizers to present themselves as ideological entrepreneurs, taking up right-wing ideology in their own hands".

Moreover, a court file from the Kerala High Court (2009) documented the case of an alleged PFI member and his involvement in love jihad. The court file that rejected the PFI activist's formal request for bail noted that

> "from the inception [of their inter-religious relationship] onwards, it is alleged that [the PFI activist] spoke ill about Hindu religion and its tenets, beliefs and traditions. The Hindu girl was taken to [his] house. She was taught the custom of the Muslim community, the mode of prayers and what should be done by a person in the normal life as a Muslim. [The PFI activist's] mother was there in the house and she co-operated with [him]. [The PFI activist] was constantly compelling the girl to convert to Islam. She was in utter confusion. It is alleged that [the PFI activist] stated to the girl that unless she converted into Islam immediately, their relationship would come to an end. At last, she agreed".

Such court files and online campaigns over allegations of love jihad have been utilised by Hindu nationalists to strengthen a unified Hindu identity, create an enemy frame of an

aggressive Muslim community and demarcate religious boundaries[85] (see also Brass 1994). Gupta (2009: 14) has pointed out that the fear of conversion of Hindu girls by violent and "sexually charged, lustful Muslim men" can be traced back to the activities of Arya Samaj and other Hindu revivalist movements in the 1920s. Gupta argued that these Hindu nationalist discourses were antagonistic to notions of female agency and reinforced patriarchy (see also Chatterjee 1993). However, the scholarly origin of love jihad and the image of aggressive Muslim men can also be found in the colonial discourse. Ansari (2005) has reminded his readers that coastal or Malabar Muslims in South India were constructed in colonial documents as religious zealots, violent, anti-national and haters of Hindu idolatry. One reason for such a negative depiction was the constant threat of the Malabar Muslims to the colonial power, especially after the Malabar rebellion of 1921. Similar discourses of predatory and violent Muslim men are still used in contemporary India, and have constituted the basis for effective Hindu nationalist campaigns, including love jihad. For example, a human rights activist and PFI supporter unintentionally reaffirmed such stereotypes in his house in Mangalore in 2012: "I admire them [PFI cadres] for their strength, and strong sex drive. They are very handsome fellas. They enjoy chasing after Hindu and Christian girls. I guess they don't get any [girls] in their own community[86]" (respondent 78[2]).

Even though the fear of love jihad expressed by various respondents has been used to discredit the PFI and Muslims in general, these views were also contested within the same Hindu nationalist circles. The BJP supporter Manosh was commenting while driving past a mosque in Mangalore in 2015 that "Muslims won't dare to do it [love jihad] here. They have

[85] PFI members denied and laughed about these allegations during my interviews, rejecting them as "RSS propaganda". A senior PFI leader joked "love and jihad are both beautiful concepts in Islam. It is a shame that these concepts are currently smeared by certain Hindu groups" (respondent 23[2]).

[86] Hansen (1999: 204) has recorded similar stereotypes of "lecherous" Muslim youth, "always staring at Hindu women who are uncovered by purdah, only await the right moment to abuse and rape them". Additionally, Van der Veer (1994:27) wrote about the hyper-sexualised Muslim male, and the anxieties to outnumber the Hindu population.

to go to the countryside, or they will get crushed [implying that Mangalore is a Hindu nationalist stronghold]" (respondent 97[4]). A local RSS leader also argued in Mangalore that "love jihad is not an issue. Generally, Muslims can't do anything. They are too small in numbers and they would be cornered from all sides". He continued "Muslims have made a lot of money in Mangalore and they don't want to lose their wealth. After every riot, Muslims will again do business with Hindus the next day. These people [Muslims] don't think about tomorrow. They don't fear god" (respondent 112).

5.1.2. Vigilante Attacks and Moral Policing in Mangalore

Chapter 3 illustrated that parts of Karnataka, in particular Mangalore and the coastal area have suffered from political polarisation between different communities, including practices of moral policing and vigilante attacks (Assadi 1999, PUCL 2009, 2010). The Indian newspaper Telegraph (2016) reported that "self-styled vigilante groups – from outfits like the Bajrang Dal, Sri Rama Sene, Hindu Jagarana Vedike and the Popular Front of India… create disturbances in the name of morality, especially when city-bred youngsters come together for celebrations". Tehelka (2010), known for its undercover journalism, has listed various vigilante incidents carried out by the PFI, including how

> "a Muslim school in Kannur that took boys and girls out on a normal school excursion gets attacked. Their bus gets blocked because the NDF [now PFI] does not want boys or girls to mix. Or in Malapurram [PFI cadres] tell Muslim owners of restaurants that they cannot open during Ramadan. Or decades ago in the same region the NDF burnt movie theatres they suspected were showing pornographic films[87]".

[87] Nine days after the Tehelka (2010) article, PFI published a press release refuting the allegations. The PFI statement started by stressing that "it is extremely regretful that a magazine like Tehelka known for its no-nonsense attitude to reporting has adopted the tendentious style of some of our national newspapers which rarely give due respect to truth. The whole report has turned out to be a very successful exercise in suppressing the truth and suggesting the false" (PFI 2013).

Frontline (2013), another investigative magazine, argued that "the PFI and its front organisations have begun to wield considerable influence in many private colleges. In their desire to take forward their understanding of puritanical Islam, they issue diktats against Muslim women who refuse to wear the burqa".

During my fieldwork, members of the PFI provided enough ambiguity to believe that the movement is involved in certain battles over religious and moral boundaries. For instance, the favoured PFI presentation by the leadership as a non-violent social movement and pressure group has been contested by its grassroots activities, providing physical and religious protection through the semi-literate cadre-base. A Muslim interviewee in Calicut, 2014, commented on the PFI's latest vigilante practices:

> "I don't understand the kind of ideas the PFI puts forward. In their language they are modernists, but they often act reactionary in the same way as the RSS. My sister in law was asked by their cadres why she is wearing jeans, that she should wear a veil and not walk alone without a male relative" (respondent 135).

Other Muslim interviewees accused PFI activists of behaving as a "local", "moral", or "Sharia police" (respondents 51, 52, and 94). A PFI cadre in Calicut in 2014 argued that "we would never force anyone to stop these things [such as smoking, drinking or not wearing a veil]. Muslims face much bigger problems, but we are telling our community that some actions and cultural elements are un-Islamic and harmful for us". During my fieldwork, lower-ranking cadres occasionally asked me if I would like to or have converted to Islam. For example, a PFI supporter in his late teens who was sitting on his motorbike during our conversation in Mangalore in 2012, confronted me over why I hadn't converted. He then misinterpreted my reserved reaction to his honest question, asking me almost shyly in surprise if he was the first person who has suggested it. Such encounters were reflected in other discussions with the PFI's lower and youth cadre-base, but were never expressed by the senior leadership, which reveals the reality of a contested and complex movement.

To make this contested issue of the movement's presentation even more explicit, I will discuss one example from my fieldwork in which the PFI was strongly implicated in a vigilante attack. During an interview at the Bangalore Press Club in January 2015, Sunil (respondent 141), who claimed to be the first person to have obtained footage of the PFI's active involvement in moral policing and vigilante attacks, explained to me how he and his wife were threatened after the investigation[88]. In October 2009, a Muslim girl and Hindu boy were travelling 30 kilometres from the small town of Moodabidri to Mangalore "to enjoy some privacy". Sunil, who claimed to have reliable informants within the PFI, recalled how an enraged PFI member conveyed his disapproval of the interreligious couple, and complained about the audacity of Hindu men to harass Muslim girls: "How do they dare to touch our women? They took one of our women, so we trashed the shit out of them". The incident occurred in close proximity to the police commissioner's office, where "a bunch of forty PFI members" went into a restaurant and pulled the couple out from the "family room": "PFI cadres have their eyes and ears everywhere and they know about young couples' dating patterns. They always get outraged, when the girl is a Muslim, otherwise it is seen a conquest", recalled Sunil[89].

The alleged PFI activist told Sunil that after they had "beaten up the boy", they hid the girl in a room in Bandar, where the PFI has its district office, in order to "teach her a lesson and inform her parents". Sunil, who recorded the conversation with the PFI activist, called the police to inform them where the girl was taken by force. In the aftermath, "the PFI member [who had told Sunil about the incident] realised that he botched it and instantly claimed that

[88] Sunil (30), who has worked in Kashmir after several years in Mangalore, claimed to have sources in all communal organisations in Mangalore. He described himself as a "conflict reporter", stressing that "all of these communal outfits thought that I was their friend, which was the ideal position for a journalist. Whenever my phone rang, I answered either with Lal Salam, Jai Ram or Salam Aleikum, depending on who was calling me".

[89] A PFI lawyer, who I interviewed in Madikeri, 2012, denied such practices: "If a Muslim man falls for a Hindu girl, other parties call it love jihad, but if a Hindu man falls for a Muslim girl they call it inter-caste marriage. Can you see the fake-ness?" (respondent 15).

it was not done on the behalf of the PFI", which was followed by an official press release by the PFI leadership, denying any organisational involvement. Towards the end of our interview, Sunil started telling me about the repercussions of his disclosure: "It took on a very sinister turn. I was warned by other Muslim groups that the PFI will attack me". He was informed that PFI cadres were forwarding his photo and asking questions about him in public (e.g. whether his wife was coming to Mangalore, and whether it is true that she was a Muslim). Sunil explained:

> "At that point I became extremely scared and realised how good their networks and information systems are… I started speculating from where they know about my wife. [She was indeed coming to visit him from Bangalore]. I then thought that they are Muslims, so they don't have much influence in the intelligence [IB] agencies like the RSS, which uses the police to tap phones".

There was a time during which Sunil decided to carry an air gun, and later a real gun, which he insisted had saved his life. Olzak (2007: 677), building on earlier work on group solidarity by Hechter (1987), argued that ethnic or religious identity groups "effectively apply systems of monitoring behaviour, insuring loyalty, and sanctioning members" in order to establish a "collective consciousness" (Durkheim 1984 [1893]) and reduce the free rider dilemma to ensure commitment to the group. Such rational choice explanations can partially provide the underlying logic for the alleged vigilante activities by the PFI, as well as love jihad accusations. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 will further highlight the PFI's internal mechanisms of organisational discipline through cadre training and self-cultivation, the movement's rigid gender division and its promotion of value-based politics and practical-oriented moralities.

5.1.3. Disloyal Muslim "Troublemaker" and their Failure to Integrate

Given the rumours and accusations of love jihad and vigilante attacks, many of my non-Muslim BJP affiliated middle class respondents were irritated by the notion of Muslim

citizenship politics, including the kind of assertions represented by the PFI, and the recent emergence of Muslim political parties, including the SDPI. As shown in Chapter 3, some researchers have argued that the new discourse of marginalisation in the post-Sachar era deals with minorities as "totalities in politics and as undifferentiated units of development discourse and policies" that contributed to the rise religious identity movements such as the PFI (Sheth 2009:76). A Delhi-based journalist and researcher, who is known for his pro-BJP views, explained the implication of the Sachar Report to me in his house in 2012:

> "There are dangerous synergies between secular elites and Muslim foot soldiers. Muslim leaders are trying to gain political power and create political parties only for Muslims, [while] the secular establishment of Congress [INC] tries to reward these rogue organisations with reservations for such nonsense" (respondent 128).

During an interview in the almost empty campus cafeteria at the University of Mangalore, Kumar, a researcher and BJP supporter, who belongs to the Dalit community, voiced his concerns regarding Islamic politics and the growing Muslim population in India[90]. He argued that "the PFI gambles on the population card, which is also the reason why so many Muslim parties are emerging. Of course, the SDPI [PFI's political wing] candidate won in Bandar [in Mangalore], where 99% of its residents are Muslims" (respondent 139). Chapter 3 has shown that the argument of a rising Muslim population was voiced during the colonial era, when Hindu nationalists such as U.N. Mukherji (1909), the author of "Hindus: A Dying Race", proclaimed that

> "Hinduism would be erased within a span of 420 years if current trends continued. Conversion to Christianity and Islam was identified as one of the main causes of the Hindu demographic decline, a claim still referred to by Hindu nationalists today" (cited in Vandevelde 2011: 35).

[90] A former colleague characterised Kumar as the "biggest beneficiary of a patronage network" in Mangalore, including "some of the most disgusting BJP leaders, who are best friends with Modi and Advani" (respondent 114[2]). At the BJP event in Mangalore in 2015, where Kumar brought flowers on the stage to welcome the speakers, he also used my presence as a foreign researcher for his own personal gain, introducing me to high profile BJP politicians and Mangalorean business elites.

Consequently, Kumar was convinced that the PFI and other Muslim groups are a threat to India's religious and ethnic diversity: "These organisations are not secular. They force their women to wear burqas. Did you see their children wearing white topis and kurtas on your way to the university? This is how they construct the Muslim identity from a very early age[91]".

Furthermore, Kumar, a Dalit, did not believe in a political alliance between Muslims and Dalits as promoted by the PFI (Chapter 7 will discuss the Dalit/Muslim cooperation in detail): "Muslims don't trust us and we don't trust them. They are closer to Pakistan than to India, whereas Dalits were always with the nation!" In the political context of Islamic terrorism, love jihad campaigns, and India's expanding security state, Muslims appear as a threat to the social order without loyalty to their homeland. Kumar explained further "their [Muslim's] only loyalty is with the ummah, but the ummah is great bullshit. All these different Muslim sects are killing each other everywhere". Hansen (1999: 11) argued that the view of Muslims as disloyal Indians goes back to the beginning of the Hindu nationalist's movement of the 1920s, in which

> "India was always and will remain fundamentally Hindu in a civilisational sense, just as (it implies) Muslims and other non-Hindus always were alien to India and will remain so forever. The secular Indian nation state is in the Hindu nationalists' view a political fiction, that conceals real cultural incommensurabilities or in other words, a culturally alien construction imposed on India by anglicised intellectual".

The Sachar Report (2006: 11) has also noted that

> "Muslims in contemporary India carry a double burden of being labeled as 'anti-national' and as being 'appeased' at the same time. While Muslims need to prove on a daily basis that they are not 'anti-national' and 'terrorists', it is not recognised that the alleged 'appeasement' has not resulted in the desired level of socio-economic development of the community".

[91] Kumar referred to the "Id e Milad" celebration of Prophet Muhammad's birthday on the same day of our interview in early January 2015. Many young Muslims wore white Islamic attire and walked on the street to the University of Mangalore.

These accounts mirrored the assumptions of my interviewees affiliated with the BJP that Muslims are disloyal and cause trouble, whether it be related to terrorism, beef consumption, conversion, the personal law, the noise level of minarets or the growing number of madrasahs created by foreign donors. Respondents noted that whether in India, Sri Lanka, Burma, China or European countries, Muslim minorities are reluctant to integrate and are seen as culturally alienated and aggressive (see Appendix 22). Thomas (2010: 101) stressed that "statistics on civil unrest indicate that once a minority religious group in a given country reaches 10-20% of the population, it can sufficiently resist policies promoting religious harmony and can even sustain struggles for liberation[92]". A Delhi-based political activist and admirer of Prime Minister Modi conveyed his distrust before the Delhi state election in 2014 that "Muslims are the complete opposite to us [Hindus]. We always prevent crimes. They always start it. They lack talim [education] which is a big problem". Manosh, the law teacher in Mangalore, argued similarly: "Muslims can't integrate anywhere. They don't want to assimilate. They have a ghettoisation mentality, unlike Hindus in Australia or the USA. Even Angela Merkel said that multiculturalism has failed and she was right[93]" (respondent 97[3]). Critical studies of multiculturalism have also illustrated that an increase in ethnic and cultural diversity can lead to the erosion of trust and cohesion between groups, and a reduction of trust in government bodies (Putnam 2007, see also Putnam 2000 and Fukuyama 1995). For many decades, religious minorities in India were tolerated and protected by the secular state and the constitution, and many of these communities lived quietly in parallel cultural milieus. With the emergence of Hindu nationalism and the rise of

[92]This was echoed by the recently appointed BJP Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, who has argued that "in places where there are 10 to 20% minorities, stray communal incidents take place. Where there are 20 to 35% of them, serious communal riots take place and where they are more than 35%, there is no place for non-Muslims" (cited in Mander 2017).

[93] In 2010, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed that "the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other... has failed, utterly failed [sic]" (BBC 2010). An activist of the Student Islamic Organisation, SIO, (JIH's student wing), who has studied in Germany complained about Merkel's political statement, remarking with frustration "how can she publicly say that multiculturalism has failed". While PFI and other Muslim activists expressed their disbelief, and questioned Merkel's intentions, adherents of the BJP strongly agreed with and celebrated her statement.

the debate about radical Islam, Islamic terrorism, and illegal immigration from Bangladesh, the secular vision of peaceful coexistence and national unity within diversity has started to crumble and has received a rather negative public reception. During my interviews in various Hindu nationalist inclined milieus, I was often startled that my respondents were openly telling me of their admiration for the 2011 Norway attacks by the far-right terrorist, Anders Breivik, the anti-Islam mass-movement Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, which started in Dresden, Germany) and the French ban of headscarves and turbans. An informant close to the BJP explained to me in Bangalore on the 9 January 2015, two days after the attacks of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris: "Whenever you say something against their religion [Islam], they come after you to kill you. They [Muslims] are all fanatics". He expected my agreement. These observations are also indicative of the enormous power of the global diffusion of Islamophobia, spreading with globalisation, social media and migration, rapidly reaching new audiences (Security 2012, Andersson 2015). The next section will engage with these fundamental sentiments of hurt and a majority under siege, which was manifested in the disbelief and anger that in India only religious minorities have their personal laws, whereas Hindus lack such privileges.

5.2. Historical Injustice and Hurt of Pseudo-Secularism

Terms such as pseudo-secularism, Muslim appeasement, human rights fundamentalism and anti-Hindu scholarship were used interchangeably by my interviewees to indicate a strong sentiment of hurt and injustice, which prevails within the parts of the Hindu population that are affiliated or sympathetic to the Hindu nationalist agenda. An RSS leader conveyed this feeling of historical hurt in a brief statement in Mangalore in 2015: "Hindus are victims of history, but under 'Modi-ji', we will finally get historical justice and the Ram Mandir will be rebuilt" (respondent 112). Menski (2009: 317) has explained this sense of injustice in parts of the Hindu community as a result of the "vitriolic badmouthing of 'Hindu' cultural

elements, even a denial of Hindu roots as some oddly constructed and entirely negative heritage [and] the increasingly powerful agenda of dalitisation" and assertive human rights' and Muslim minority organisations. Reports and agendas by secular, human rights and minority activists, which have been critical of the BJP and Hindu nationalists, have irritated a great number of middle class Hindus I met during my fieldwork. In late August 2011, I was with a group of Indians and French expats in an up-scale restaurant in UB City, a shopping mall complex in Bangalore. When we spoke about Hinduism and politics, the discussion suddenly became agitated when an IT professional and BJP voter from North India in his late 20s, who described himself as a secular Hindu, loosely following the faith of his birth, denied that there are communal riots or religious violence in India: "If at all, Naxalites and Islamic terrorists from Pakistan caused all the suffering". He clarified to the non-Indians that riots are only happening in the West, referring to the 2011 riots in England, which occupied the media discourse at the time (see BBC 2011). In the following discussion, he expressed his scepticism towards subjects such as sociology and the ethnographic accounts of social conflict: "There is no gain from these studies. Only business management and the creation of jobs can solve real live problems and conflict". What became clear from our discussion was that having inquisitive foreigners around who are interested in discussing certain contentious aspects of contemporary India such as communal violence and poverty causes embarrassment and discomfort within certain sections of the urban Hindu middle class. A Mumbai based journalist commented on the urban upper middle class in Mumbai 2009, saying that

> "their [middle class'] uneasiness is truly defined by the export of Indian [communal violence and] poverty. They are not part of it but they were linked to it. So the Indian who goes to London or New York from Bombay, from South Bombay, from Carmichael Road [an upper middle class residential area], he doesn't want to be associated with the guy in Dharavi [an urban slum]. That's not his poverty, but he is been associated with it" (Appendix 12).

Sociological studies have demonstrated that recent economic and political changes and the optimistic future prospects of the new Indian middle class do not match with the violence, and socio-economic disparity on the streets and in politics. Fernandes (2006: 9) argued that "there are fissures between hegemonic representations of the new middle class identity and the contradictory socio-economic realities of those who both constitute and aspire to this group. These fissures produce anxieties". Especially after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the Gujarat riots and more recently the violence during the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riot, which were often portrayed as brutal outbursts of Hindu fanaticism, a politicised version of Hinduism, religion or more specifically Hindu nationalism is seen as incompatible with human rights and international law, which has hurt the feelings of many Indian middle class citizens.

The origins of the anti-Hindu discourse can be located in the early accounts of Christian missionaries and colonialists, but are also observable in the latest cultural productions and Western popular media regarding the portrayal of post-colonial India (Rushdie 1992, Mitra 1999, Sardar 1999, for further discussion see Appendix 12). The colonial interpretation of Christian missionaries and the British Empire has for centuries depicted Hinduism and Hindu culture and practices (such as sati, child marriage and the caste system favouring Brahmins) as inferior, primitive and a "monster of tradition" (Oddie 2006: 23-26). Inden (1990) stressed that India played a crucial role in defining Europe and America as today's superpowers. The subcontinent was essential to the definition of Western identity by separating it from and contrasting it against the Indian other. The Western subject was seen as highly individual, rational and logical. On the contrary, Hindus were described as irrational, violent and collective people. By describing the other as inferior and primitive, the West could present itself as the epitome of the modern civilisation (see also Ludden 1996). Furthermore, Chakrabarty (2000: 5-6) has indirectly contextualised the anger felt by some of my

respondents affiliated to the BJP, regarding the truth and objectivity claims of Western knowledge regimes:

> "One result of European colonial rule in South Asia is that intellectual traditions once unbroken and alive in Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic are now only matters of historical research for most modern social scientists in the region. They treat these traditions as truly dead, as history".

Although unintentionally, post-colonial scholarship, that has critically questioned and meticulously deconstructed Western knowledge regimes and power relations, has provided academic ammunition for the Hindu nationalist movement. Public knowledge of the colonial intervention and religious conversion by Christians and Muslims has been a source of much anger within Hindu nationalist milieus, and also within large parts of the upper middle class Hindu population, which is sympathetic to the BJP.

One afternoon in November 2012, Manosh (respondent 97[1]), the law teacher, took me on his scooter to an informal Hindu nationalist hangout in the centre of Mangalore. It was at a two-story bookshop selling Hindu spiritual, yoga and meditation texts as well as anti-Islamic and anti-Christianity books, DVDs, audio CDs and pamphlets mainly by Hindu nationalist authors in Khannada, Hindi, and English. Manosh remarked that "most of these books are not available in normal bookshops", and showed me the works of authors affiliated to the Voice of India[94]. As a gift, Manosh gave me two books: 'Hindu View of Christianity and Islam' by Ram Swarup (1993), and an edited volume 'Conversion: An Assault on Truth' by Sreenath (2000). These books contained several essays by Hindu nationalist authors, who wrote about historical and contemporary violence and crimes committed in the name of Islam, Christianity and other enemies of idolatry, including the secular INC. For these authors, minority appeasement and pseudo-secularism has resulted in an anti-Hindu sentiment,

[94] The Voice of India is a prominent publishing company in Delhi that promotes Hindu nationalism, founded in 1983 by the well-known Hindu nationalists, Sita Ram Goel and Ram Swarup.

while they accused secular academics of "anti-Hindu" research. In this context, Manosh asked me how Narenda Modi was perceived abroad when he travelled to various countries after the 2014 election. He was concerned that foreigners may think negatively about India's Prime Minister, because of the "propaganda" by human rights' activist and the "influential Muslim lobby". Manosh's friend, a practicing lawyer in Mangalore, asserted that anti-national forces, including the PFI and other Muslim groups, would only depict "Muslims as the victims of state violence, which is untrue". Instead, Modi represents "a proud Hindu, and an impeccable leader of the economy and government, in which even Muslims can become wealthy, if they play according to the rules" (respondent 98).

The degree to which such feelings of Hindu victimhood flourishes and is debated within local Hindutva groups is indicated in another statement by Manosh, in which he revealed his deeply held repugnance and the agony he feels over the violation of Hindu culture and history. He reiterated some of the psychological injuries that have been passed through generations:

> "Rajiv Gandhi started it all by banning the Satanic Verses. He showed these Muslim leaders that if they only make a big fuss, and burn a few cars, they get what they want. I feel so emotional about such issues … I can't show this to my students of course. They will think I am a fanatic but the current history books and the historical understanding by the Congress [INC] and these left wing JNU types makes me really furious! How can they call someone who invades us Great like Akbar and Alexander the Great? Have you heard about all the crimes committed by the Nizam and his bodyguards, and about the massacres by Sultan Tipu and Aurangzeb?" (respondent 97[2]).

Similarly, a leader of the militant Hindu nationalist group, Bajrang Dal, argued that "Christians have become aggressive ever since Sonia Gandhi took over as Congress president. Christians feel they have the perfect protector… to convert Hindus" (cited in Hindu 2015a). This sense of historic violation at the hands of Christians and Muslims has been used effectively to construct the Hindu identity by Hindu nationalists (Rai 1993, Hansen

1999, Gottshalk 2000, Assayag 2004, Narayaṇa 2009). The next section will illustrate that the sense of historical hurt is now actively used to bring Hindu spirituality into the public sphere and to re-write and alter history books and educational syllabi.

5.2.1. Saffronisation and Global Recognition

At the beginning of our conversation in Mangalore in 2012, a local RSS leader pointed towards the issue of "gau hatya" or cow slaughter, claiming that "Muslims steal cows from poor Hindu farmers to indulge themselves while these farmers are deprived of their income". However, he was convinced that "the same awareness people already have about the positive effect of yoga will also happen with beef consumption. People will eventually accept vegetarianism. It'll take 10 to 20 years till beef consumption and gau hatya will stop[95]" (respondent 112). Hansen (1999: 204), building on Kakar's (1995: 138-39) findings on Muslim/Hindu relations in India, has argued that Muslim "stereotypes are fundamentally linked to food habits, that is, to the fact that Muslims eat beef, which Hindus believe contaminates both the body and the mind, and to the corresponding Hindu beliefs in purification through consumption of only the appropriate types of food".

At this point in our conversation, the local RSS leader revealed a deep sense of hurt Hindu pride and religious feelings over the work of secular scholars such as Wendy Doniger (2010)

[95] Muslim merchants have traditionally dominated the slaughter industry, which became even more significant since India's market reforms and rise of the middle class' meat consumption in the early 1990s (Gil 2008). During my fieldwork, PFI activists have reported and mobilised around assaults by Hindu nationalists, extorting and lynching Muslim cattle transporters (Coastal Digest 2013, The Telegraph 2017). A Muslim journalist in Mangalore 2011 has argued that "it is an open secret that 90% Hindus eat beef, but they still attack Muslims for selling it" (respondent 52[3]). He then recounted an incident in which members of the Bajrang Dal tried to close down a Muslim restaurant in Mangalore, which continued to serve meat after several warnings. However, on the day of the planned attack, the Bajrang Dal activists realised that some of their own members were sitting in the restaurant to eat, which caused some embarrassment. Moreover, a PFI leader noted that "although the BJP government knows that bans on gau hatya [cow slaughter] and beef consumption are hurting Muslims and the farming community, it encourages it silently to create anti-Muslim sentiments".

who, in her book *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, argued that "there is no Hindu canon", and that ideas in Hinduism about vegetarianism and non-violence are "subjects of a debate, not a dogma" (BBC 2014, Thapar 2014, Redden 2016). Eventually, the publisher, Penguin, succumbed to growing public pressure and refused to publish Doniger's book in India. Therefore, these sentiments of hurt and aspirations for global recognition of India's ancient heritage and culture are currently reinforced by Hindu nationalist campaigns such as the re-writing of India's history (also known as the saffronisation of education). This can be seen through the introduction of elements from the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other ancient Hindi and Sanskrit texts in colleges[96]. A social activist in Bangalore in 2014 provided me with a definition of the saffronisation of education, through which "the Nehruvian and leftist history is replaced by a more favourable Bharat-centric version of history". A Mangalorean based lawyer and BJP supporter, who called himself a "desh-bhakti" (patriot), and has just published an article about "the appropriate response by Hindus to conversion", argued in 2012 that "saffronisation of education only means purification, like if you eat saffron it purifies the stomach, which can only be good for society" (respondent 98). In this context, the local RSS leader in Mangalore in 2012 articulated the quest for and lack of global recognition of Hindu culture, saying: "Look at India's export of yoga and meditation, now everyone practices it because people see the value of it. Tablas and Bharat Natyam is now taught everywhere" (respondent 112). The BJP government has set up a ministry in charge of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unai, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) (Reuters 2014). The AYUSH Minister, Shripad Naik, organised the first International Yoga Day on 21 June 2015, during which Indian civil servants were obliged to participate. In the Indian context, Yoga is seen as a spiritual remedy to the encroachment and corruption of a

[96]In 2014, BJP's Education Minister, Smriti Irani, suggested "introducing the Vedas, the Upanishads and other ancient Hindu texts in the classroom [and] develop[ing] educational material that would help preserve the memory of ancient Indian culture and heritage" (Frontline 2014b). Additionally, a press release by the Committee for Resisting Saffronisation of Textbooks (CRST 2015) in Karnataka highlighted the trend for the saffronisation of education that "projects Indian history only as a record of suffering of Hindus under non-Hindu rulers [and] continued stereotyping of women, Dalits and other minority groups such as Muslims and Christians".

Western lifestyle, and is accompanied by the chanting of Sanskrit, religious teachings and ideas of purity (Caravan 2015, New York Times 2015). This integration of soft Hindutva and Indic faith elements (including Buddhism and Jainism) into public life can be observed in various instances (Nanda 2009, Gooptu 2015), including the presence of Hindu altars and pujas (Hindu prayer rituals) in police stations in Mangalore (respondent 77) or the propagation of Hinduism as a management philosophy by Delhi Metro Rail Cooperation to its employees. Additionally, the newly build Terminal 3 at New Delhi International Airport welcomes travellers to the arrival hall by greeting them with massive golden mudras [hand gestures] associated with Buddhism, Hinduism, and with yoga and meditation (see Appendix 5). A researcher on Indian law in Mangalore in 2012 described the latest trend of soft Hindutva and saffronisation as "a rejection of Western concepts, models, strategies, and other ways of doing things, not because of 'religion' alone, but simply as a result of the interplay between global and the local forces… I was never comfortable with the flat outsider view that Indians [Hindus] are turning saffron" (respondent 99). Chapter 3 highlighted that the BJP and the Hindu nationalist movement have greatly benefited from the various political and economic changes in India, but in particular from technological advancements and the rise of the new and predominantly urban middle class that emerged largely as a result of the economic liberalisation in the 1980s and 1990s (see also Chapter 3). The obsession with Western products and lifestyles created feelings of displacement and being left behind among the educated classes. This frustration and inferiority complex within the middle classes further diminished the status of the INC and drove more and more members of the Hindu middle class towards the BJP (Hansen 1999). The Hindutva movement promoted a powerful India, which would be recognised by the West and its Asian neighbours as an emerging superpower with deep roots in its "mythical Hindu past" (Corbridge and Harris 2000: 192).

While interacting with Manosh, his middle class colleagues, and the wider Hindu nationalist milieu in Mangalore and beyond, I could observe their emotional responses to the debate on Hindu culture and history. I was baffled by how freely these individuals were in expressing their internal agony and perceived humiliation, often leading to the articulation of politically incorrect sentiments, and the longing for an internationally recognised India. The following section will show that this sense of hurt was used to justify violence against Muslim minorities as long as it was carried out in the name of Hindu self-defence.

5.2.2. Hindu Right to Self-Defence

Throughout my interviews, respondents affiliated with the BJP have often expressed a sense of victimhood and political grief especially in cases where outsiders and non-Hindus such as Muslim PFI activists would accuse Hindu culture, religion and tradition as discriminatory towards other religious communities and as irreconcilable with human rights standards. Political commentators have called the various violent incidents against religious minorities in the name of religious and cultural self-defence by Hindu nationalist groups as "Hindu terrorism", which was generally reserved as a label for Muslim and Maoist groups (Guardian 2011, Caravan 2016a). The notion of a Hindu majority under siege by a violent, proselytising, appeased and increasing Muslim population has been used as a vital argument for the self-defence and self-preservation as well as a justification for violence against Muslims.

For instance, Hindu nationalists have referred to census data, and claims of higher fertility rates for Muslims in colonial and post-colonial India to justify political violence and other anti-minority campaigns (Jones 1981, Datta 1993, Devotta 2002). In this context, the publication of population or census data on Muslims has become a sensitive and controversial topic for any Indian incumbent government, since it has the potential to cause outrage in the majority Hindu population and has been used by opposition parties to

highlight the failure of the government to manage India's minority communities (Kumar 2015). In April 2015, the vice-president of the Hindu nationalist All India Hindu Mahasabha party, Sadhvi Deva Thakur, demanded "mandatory family planning" and "sterilisation" for Muslim minorities in order to prevent their numbers from rising and Islamising the country (Times of India 2015). In this context, an upper-caste BJP supporter in Mangalore in 2012, boldly requested "Hindu resettlements and protected enclaves for Srinagar [Kashmir] to win our land back, which has been successfully done by Israel to control Palestine" (respondent 98). The underlying rationale for such statements is that violence against Muslims has a cleansing as well as harmonising effect for India's democracy. Especially where minority communities (e.g. Muslims in Gujarat or Mangalore) are becoming too assertive and use religious symbolism and language to antagonise the Hindu community, physical or symbolic violence has been regarded by some of my interviewees as an adequate means to re-establish social equilibrium. In the following quote, Menski (2009: 328) tried to explain the violence of the Gujarat in 2002, indirectly invoking notions of the Muslim troublemaker, the fear of an aggressive Islamic expansion and the logic of Hindu self-defence:

> "Hindu (over)reactions to Muslim attempts at religiously motivated stronger assertions of their presence in India may have triggered the wanton violence witnessed in Gujarat in 2002. This does not justify such explosions of violence and the killings that occurred. However, if one seeks to explore in depth what actually happened in 2002 and why, the fact of increasingly aggressive Muslim positioning in India cannot be overlooked. In other words, a pluralist structure such as the Indian state will in certain moments of crisis find that it needs to protect its pluralism against fundamentalist aggressions. At such moments of crisis, the state and its machinery then deliberately fail to protect the aggressive 'other', teaching this 'other' a rather cruel lesson, only to incorporate the survivors of such violence into the post-conflict scenario[97]."

Similarly, the language used during my interviews to justify violence was of a disciplinary and pedagogic nature, in which violence became a means to an end to curb and moderate ethnic

[97] Menski (2009: 328) further noted that even after the Gujarat violence of 2002, which should have had a moderating effect on Indian Muslims, "one still hears loud calls for Muslim prayer in the morning that will upset many Hindu fundamentalists and create an impression that one may have woken up in Pakistan".

and religious minorities. Respondents used expressions such as "to bring them [Muslims] back in line" or "to show them [Muslims] their place". Manosh, the BJP supporter in Mangalore, proudly said "we showed Muslims their place in Gujarat, just as Hitler did with the Jews" (respondent 97[3]). Brass (2003: 312) also argued that in the context of Gujarat atrocity in 2002 Hindus believe they "need to learn from Muslims, especially concerning how they treat their minorities in Islamic countries, where minorities must live according to the wishes of the Islamic state". Hoffman (2011: 36-37), following Appadurai's (1998, 2006) notion of a vivisectionist impulse, argued that

> "[self-preservation in the form of] violence becomes the practice that fixes and verifies social borders by expunging those who trouble an imaginary sense of self. The bodily integrity of a community seems constantly under threat in a world with all manner of porous borders. The surest response is to cut out those whose identities don't fit or are hard to fix".

One such expression of self-preservation was the reconversion or ghar vapsi (return to home) campaign, promoted by various Hindu nationalist groups, that Christians and Muslims should return to their pagan or Hindu roots. I was conducting fieldwork in coastal Karnataka and North Kerala on Christmas Eve 2014 at the height of the ghar vapsi programme. Hindu nationalist groups would regularly announce the number of reconverted or "returned" Hindus, local and national newspapers reported on the contentious issue, and social media platforms debated "ghar vapsi" extensively. A reader from Tamil Nadu wrote in the comment section of the newspaper The Hindu on 23 December 2014:

> "To me, Indians by and large are born Hindus. When a Hindu wishes to convert to Christianity or Islam, he gets converted to the faith of his [or] her choice by undergoing the required rituals. When a Christian or Muslim returns to the religion of his birth, there is no need to undergo any reconversion or re-introduced […]. We can just accept those who 'return' as being one among us and re-assimilate them in society".

The Hindu nationalist's view that Indian citizens are born as Hindus, which is based on the assumption that the majority of India's Muslim and Christian denominations were previously

poor Hindus or pagans (Osella and Osella 2008), has reinforced the ghar vapsi campaign to re-convert them to their original faith. The origin of ghar vapsi can be traced back to the shuddhi (purification) movement of the Hindu revivalist group Arya Samaj in the 1920s (Chandra 2008), and the strong reaction by Hindu nationalists to the 1981 Meenakshipuram conversion, when a village of Dalits in Tamil Nadu converted to Islam to escape caste discrimination[98] (Katju 2003:33). For decades, reconversion campaigns by Hindu nationalist groups have been carried out in tribal and rural areas (Shah 1999), but under the new BJP government, it started spreading throughout the country[99].

In order to make the issues of ghar vapsi and the notion of Hindu self-defence more tangible I will briefly outline my interactions with Shankar, a 65 years old prominent RSS leader, who runs a private school in Mangalore (respondent 112). I have known Shankar since 2011, when he would usually take me to the New Taj Hotel with its popular vegetarian restaurant. Regular customers as well as the manager and staff have known Shankar for a long time, paid him tributes, and were respectful. During one of our meetings in 2015, after our compulsory visit to the New Taj, Shankar introduced me to a local BJP leader (respondent 138), who ran an Ayurvedic medicine business, and started the Namo-Brigade; an initiative to sell large bumper stickers for cars to promote Modi as a Prime Ministerial candidate during the election campaign in 2014 (see also Open Magazine 2013, Bangalore Mirror 2013). The BJP leader, who once met Modi at the Mangalore airport, invited us to his office, where a Hindu altar, including a temple with a sizeable Hanuman deity and a picture of his spiritual mentor, stood out. The BJP politician treated me suspiciously, asking various

[98] Scholars regarded the conversion to Islam or Christianity as sign of upward mobility of socio-economic status and empowerment by lower Hindu castes to escape the rigidity of the caste system, but also stressed that a social stigma remained for those who converted (Assyang 2004, Rao 2010, Ichanglod 2011).

[99] One Muslim interviewee in Bangalore, 2014, noted that he was "puzzled why the RSS and BJP are raising the issue of ghar vapsi now. They don't need it at the moment. Under Modi the RSS has a free reign anyways. Maybe they want to push the anti-conversion law" (respondent 41[4]). While, the central government has remained strategically silent about these cultural and religious campaigns, at the grassroots level such views are often promoted and voiced without constrain.

questions to attain more clarity about my intentions and background. During our discussion of the BJP's success in Mangalore, he grew more sympathetic to me, and dropped his initial hostility. He explained that the BJP succeeded because of a "strong Hindutva-base across castes and classes". Later, Shankar apologised on behalf of the BJP politician, saying that "it appears strange to him that a foreign guy asked about these communal issues…He is not used to that".

The next day, the BJP politician invited Shankar and me to the Mangaluru Initiative for Nationalist Dialogue (MIND), a Hindu nationalist forum, in which 400 local businessmen and other members of the public gathered to welcome the BJP Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sithharama. Like other public functions in Mangalore that I have attended, the RSS displayed its organisational strength. Various references to Hindu gods were made, the unique business environment and regional culture of Mangalore was lengthily praised, and the BJP's policy programme "Made in India" was discussed by the audience[100]. At the entrance, small booklets containing the essence of Swami Vivekannada were sold for five rupees. For a long time, Hindu nationalists have used Vivekannada's message of unity, brotherhood and world peace for their own agendas, especially to expose Muslims and Christians as violent aggressors while Hinduism is a peaceful religion (Gokhale 1964). Before the MIND event, Shankar explained to me his view on ghar vapsi, saying "formerly poor Hindus were converted by Muslims and Christians, in order to receive some financial help. Hindus would have never done such a thing [asking for money in exchange of support]. Muslims are forcefully converting Dalits, only because they are poor and helpless".

[100] On 30 August 2011, I was accompanying a PFI delegation to welcome the General Secretary of Amnesty International, Silal Shetty, who was born in Mangalore, at a function on the Sri Ramakrishna School. Mangalore's business and civil society representatives attended, and Shetty's arrival was complemented by a religious ceremony described by one of the PFI members as a "RSS show case". As soon as Silal Shetty was seated on the stage, the PFI delegation stood up and left the event in disbelief, since one of the main speakers, sitting next to Silal Shetty, was the controversial BJP leader Nagaraja Shetty, who was charged with inciting communal violence on various occasions. A PFI leader remarked that "Nagaraja Shetty has a lot of dirt on his hands".

However, from its inception in 1947, India's Constitution was clear about the issue of religious freedom, in particular with respect to conversion and proselytising. Article 25 of the Constitution states that every citizen has the right to profess, practice and propagate the religion of one's choice. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court of India (1977) decided that the right to practice and propagate a particular religion excludes the right to convert, thereby banning any attempt at coerced conversion.

While theoretically sound, in reality it meant that various Hindu nationalist groups have accused minorities of forcefully converting Hindus and so threatening the survival of the Hindu community. Hence, within Hindu nationalist milieus, ghar vapsi is comprehended and justified as a "social rehabilitation programme for refugees and Modi's silence indicates support from the central government", as noted by a MIND attendee using a standardised NGO language. Another BJP supporter at the MIND event argued that "ghar vapsi is a much better way than rioting and killing Muslims. It finally gives Muslims back a peaceful Hindu spirituality. Otherwise, they would all join IS [Islamic State]". The political scientist, Chopra (2015), commenting on the sensitive topic of leaving Hinduism and converting to Islam or Christianity, argued that "in the Hindu nationalist scheme, Christianity [and] Islam [are] the two alien faiths that compromises the essential Hindu cultural unity of India. A Hindu converting to Buddhism, a so-called 'Indic' faith in the vocabulary of the Hindu Right, is not seen as a betrayal akin to that of a Hindu converting to any denomination of Christianity [and Islam]".

In my interviews, violence against minorities was justified under the name of self-defence for a threatened Hindu culture. Shankar gave me a long account at the car park in front of the New Taj Hotel [where he felt secure and undisturbed] about the "subjectivity of the law" and that occasionally "you have to commit unlawful acts to do the right thing" (respondent

112[2]). Hence, for Shankar and other Hindu nationalists, secular human rights and minority organisations lack an adequate understanding of the cosmic complexity of Hinduism, its customs and religious duties. Unlike the Western post-enlightenment and positivist tradition, in which the emphasis is on individual liberties, in India the group can be prioritised and violence can be justified as righteous action in certain circumstances to protect Hinduism and Hindus (see also Menski 2009). Sharma (2016:20) argued that "Hinduism, therefore, is not pacific in any sense. It takes violence for granted and instead focuses on the question of legitimate violence in a very narrow and highly contextualised context of individual obligation[101]". Accordingly, Menski (2009: 333-334) also noted that Hinduism and Hindu law is compatible with human rights and the notion of equality, except in cases where there is an external threat to Hinduism and the Hindu community: "There are moments in which Hindus may feel a duty to kill to protect what is perceived to be a higher good. [Hence] killing is systemically justifiable for Hindus". In this context, cognitive scientists have described killings and massacres in the name of religion by groups, including the Islamic State or the RSS, as prosocial behaviour, facilitating "success in intergroup competition and conflict" (McKay and Whitehouse 2015, 2016).

One such violent act that falls under Shankar's rubric of subjective law is the 2008 homestay attack in Mangalore, where a group of young men affiliated to the Bajrang Dal and Hindu Jagarana Vedike [youth wings of the RSS] stormed into an apartment where several men and women came together for a birthday celebration. The attackers, who believed that the men were Muslims, harassed and threatened their victims. A spokesperson for the Bajrang Dal later emphasised the duty to protect the dignity of Hindu women and prevent moral decay:

[101] In the Bhagavad Gita, which is arguably the most relevant and concise text of Hindu ethics, Lord Krishna reminded the warrior Arjun, who had doubts about killing his relatives and sacrificing his own soldiers, to fulfil his duty as a custodian of Hinduism: "(33) Therefore, attack, O mighty warrior, conquer your evil doing enemies and win kingdom, wealth, and fame. I have willed to wipe out wickedness and have therefore already slain these warriors. Your actions will only be My outward cause, and you are merely My instrument. (34) Although they are indeed brave, nevertheless smite them, for they are already doomed. Fight and you will win. Killing them is not contrary to dharma (righteousness)[sic]" (Hawley 2001: 104).

"We condemn the assault on women, but such attacks become inevitable to safeguard Hindu culture… [It's] not different from parents disciplining their children or teachers admonishing their students" (PUCL 2012).

In the essay, "These Things Happen Only in India", the Mysore based author Bhyrappa (2000: 22) argued that it comes as no surprise,

> "if a few Hindus reach the conclusion that violence is the only way to safeguard Hindu interests and later go underground to escape the law, who is to blame? When the government and the political parties lack the political will to contain Muslim terrorism, a few people might readily allow themselves to be persuaded that they have to take initiative to protect Indian culture".

Sreenath (2000), the editor of the volume "Conversion: An Assault on Truth", who translated Bhyrappa's essay from Kannada into English, argued that

> "the article received a tremendous response from the general public, and soon Vijya Karnataka [a Kannada daily newspaper] turned it into a debating forum. Hindus felt relieved that at last a mainstream newspaper allowed them an opportunity to express themselves and made full use of this opportunity to vent their anger and frustration, to convey their feelings and to share their thoughts".

During my interviews, in which violence against minorities was justified in the name of Hindu self-defence, BJP leaders and supporters strongly dissociated themselves from any kind of violence and denied responsibility. Instead, these interviewees blamed minority and human rights activists for spreading false information. The last section will illustrate how the discourse of Hindu self-defence, and the threat of Muslim troublemakers, terrorists and love jihadists are taken up by the state and police. Hence, the final section will explore how the question of national security is inevitably mixed up with religious, cultural and gender dimensions, such as having to protect India from Muslim terrorists and Hindu girls from predatory Islamists (Gupta 2009).

5.3. "Talibanisation of Indian Muslims": A View from the State

This section will demonstrate that the narrative of self-defence in Hindu culture, as frequently observed during my fieldwork, correlates with the police and state's response to the perceived threat of Islamic terrorism over the past two decades. The recently appointed BJP Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and popular Hindu priest, Yogi Adityanath, has pronounced on national television that "Hindu atankvadi nahin ho sakta hai, kyon ki uska desh hai [a Hindu can't be a (foreign) terrorist, because India is his [Hindu] country]" (India TV 2014). Sethi (2014: 14) has captured the essence of such attitudes of impunity among Hindu citizens, which is pervasive within large segments of the police and security apparatus:

> "The idea of Hindus as the only true and natural citizens of India has long been elevated to the mythical. As is the binary between a violent Islam and a non-violent Hinduism. These prejudices are the operating codes for those at the apex of investigating agencies".

Therefore, it is not uncommon for politicians and police officials to advocate for tough measures, implying the erosion of human rights and personal liberties, especially against Muslim organisations, in order to prevent terrorism and social unrest (Indian Express 2016g, see also Ignatieff 2005). In the remaining part of the chapter, I will analyse the framing process and how the PFI is frequently accused of anti-national activities by the state and the police.

I will begin with an interview with a politician in Mangalore who was an alleged victim of PFI violence. I stopped taking notes because Javeed (respondent 100), an eloquent and ambitious local BJP politician, gave an emotional account of a homicide attempt. In 2011, PFI activists stormed his office and tried to kill him with a sword, in the exact place we were sitting for our conversation. The attackers chopped off two fingers, cut the back of his skull wide open, leaving a deep scar, and deformed and paralysed his other arm. Mangalorean

newspapers reported his survival and Javeed had placed copies with sensitive photographs of the crime on his desk, ready for distribution. Since the incident, two policemen guard his office. Javeed, a practicing Muslim, defended and praised the BJP and RSS for being protectors of religion and in favour of a strong country. He gave me a straightforward reason for the attack on him: "I spoke against the leadership of the PFI". During our interview, he frequently referred to the PFI leadership as terrorists, who operated from the underground, noting that

> "when the organisation was founded in the 1990s, radical fundamentalists with the same outlook from all over India joined. They have an ideological team, the All India Imams Council, which is in each district of Karnataka. These maulanas will meet in secret courts, speak out fatwas, and decide, who they take out [kill] next" (respondent 100).

Another victim of alleged PFI attacks confirmed Javeed's accusations, arguing that PFI leaders have hired hitmen in the past: "The PFI knows how to get into the minds of their constituency and take on political opponents". In an almost admiring fashion, he stated that "they are pretty good. They bump off [kill] in a very targeted style, which mainly hits the bad guys from the police or RSS[102]" (respondent 141). Accusations that the PFI tries to hire hitmen for political murders have also been highlighted by the local media. For instance, Mangalore Today (2006) reported that "the underworld operative Madoor Isubbu has alleged that some office-bearers of the Popular Front of India (PFI) and Karnataka Forum for Dignity (KFD) are prompting him to execute criminal acts". After the recent murders of various Hindu nationalist supporters, in which PFI activists were accused of being the main culprits, a BJP politician warned publically that "members of KFD and Popular Front of India, who are trained in Kerala, are planning to systematically eliminate key BJP workers" (Indian Express 2016a). During our interviews, former PFI members claimed that punishment and

[102] During my fieldwork, I learned that Javeed's version of the story was highly contested. The PFI leadership was convinced that it was an internal dispute within the power structure of the BJP. Two other neutral informants claimed that Javeed was caught up in mediating various political and financial disputes between different Muslim families. The question remains open to interpretation as to why Javeed vehemently insisted on blaming the PFI.

violence, including cutting off the hands of political or religious enemies, is silently accepted among PFI supporters (respondents 25 and 26). The PFI has been most frequently associated with the infamous hand-chopping case of a Christian teacher in Cochin in 2006, when PFI cadres were alleged to have cut off the hand of a teacher who insulted the Prophet Muhammad. Although the PFI leadership instantly expelled the alleged members, refused to provide legal support to them during their trials, and condemned the act by calling it "a freak incident" by misguided individuals, doubts remained and the PFI's public image became heavily tarnished. In December 2014, an ex -PFI member has argued in Calicut that the PFI cadres involved

> "have been instructed to carry out the attack by the leadership to promote the organisation. Muslim youths are attracted when an organisation like PFI shows muscle power, and demonstrates its ability to protect the community and their faith. The leaders know very well that when you act in love of the Prophet, you will win the hearts and minds of the community".

In this context, a Christian interviewee, who was originally from Mangalore, noted that

> "in large parts of the Islamic society [referring to Kerala and Karnataka], the belief that punishment is righteous, if the Prophet is insulted, is persistent. Secularists are naïve in their thinking that the great bulk of the Muslim society wants to get away from this tradition and become more liberal like during the Arab spring. This is not true. It is Western wishful thinking… and does not represent the larger psyche of the majority of Indian Muslims" (respondent 151).

Some interviewees argued that the PFI practices the politics of revenge by proving to be able to retaliate in cases where the police or RSS killed or harassed Muslim families and youths or threatened aspects of Islamic culture (respondents 41 [4], 84[4] and 133). Javeed's narrative of the PFI as a violent terrorist aggressor mirrored my interactions with police officials during my fieldwork. During several meetings with Ramakrishna, a senior intelligence bureau (IB) agent, close to retirement, in Bangalore between 2011 and 2012, we discussed the politics of the PFI from "a national security angle" (respondent 70). Ramakrishna was recommended to me by the Assistant Police Commissioner of Law and Order in Bangalore in 2011, who

asserted that “Ramakrishna is the right man to talk to about these issues! He has worked on the Popular Front of India and other Islamic terrorist groups for a long time” (respondent 69). After a few meetings with Ramakrishna, who liked to wear black patent leather boots, he asked me to assist him with research for a book on “the origin of terrorism in India”.

When I met Ramakrishna in his spacious office, which had several rows of chairs in front of his desk to receive large groups and hold staff briefings, the TV next to his desk was showing the Anna Hazare led anti-corruption footage in Khannada. He explained to me that he was in charge during communal clashes in Mysore in 2009. Media reports criticised the PFI for “inciting violence and preventing the police from discharging their duties” (Deccan Herald 2009). The BJP State Minister, Yeddyurappa, stressed that “the Mysore incident was a conspiracy by the KFD and the PFI to tarnish the image of the ‘pro-development’ government” (Deccan Herald 2009a). Ramakrishna admitted that until the incident in July 2009, he thought the PFI “had good intentions”, but after the Mysore riot he changed his mind: “I hammered them in Mysore and many of their leaders were thrown in jail”. The police used “heavy lathi charges” and tear gas against protestors, and arrested more than 400 mainly PFI supporters (TwoCircles 2009). The cause for the escalation was the desecration of a local mosque in Udayagiri, when a carcass of a piglet was thrown into the compound on 2 July 2009. The subsequent riots left three people dead, including a 14-year old teenager allegedly hit by police fire. Due to political pressure by the BJP, the PFI leadership was arrested for three months, and large parts of the media singled out the PFI as the main instigator. Chapter 6 will discuss how the PFI negotiated with the police and the state, and took the issue to court.

During an interview at the Udayagiri Police Station in Mysore with a police inspector, who was stationed in Mangalore from 2004 until 2007, dealing with clashes between the Bajrang Dal and PFI, he highlighted the criminal character of the PFI members:

> "During Ramadan 2008, I was informed that PFI members were collecting forcefully zakat [Islamic alms] in front of a mosque. I caught one of them, and formally recorded that he was a member of PFI. It turned out that he was the same person, who escaped police custody a couple of months later, because of his involvement in the kidnapping and murder of two teenage girls. He still is on the run. The PFI leadership denied that he was an official member, despite our formal record" (respondent 72).

The police inspector also showed me pictures of the suspect's crying father, other images of alleged PFI criminals, police evidence of weapons such as knives and catapults, and "incriminating letters against communal harmony", which had led to the arrest of seventeen PFI members. Finally, during my fieldwork, frequent accusations and political rumours were expressed by police officials and journalists against Muslim groups such as that the PFI were "co-opted" or "bought" by the BJP, cooperate with Hindu nationalists in panchayats (village councils) or appear with RSS activists on the same platform in order to weaken the INC (respondent 141, see also Times of India 2012, TwoCircles 2015). In the conclusion of this thesis, I will illustrate that it is the INC and other secular parties that are seen as the main political competitors to the PFI and other Muslim groups.

5.3.1. A Foreign Hand and the Ghost of SIMI

In my conversations with the senior IB officer, Ramakrishna, he often avoided speaking about any alleged police violence against PFI activists. Instead, the IB officer expressed his concerns about the security of the nation:

> "The PFI appears like a social justice driven movement, and has linkages with secular organisations but it is dangerous and anti-national below the surface level. The leaders are old SIMI [Student Islamic Movement of India] members and they

> have many extreme Islamic elements […]. PFI cadres go to villages, schools and mosques to train and exercise the youth. Later, the leadership picks three or four strong boys, who they will use for their terror activities" (respondent 70[3]).

In the recent context of the government's ban of an Islamic Research Foundation in Mumbai, the New Indian Express (2017), citing an IB informant, reported that "a majority of PFI members are actually from SIMI. Since SIMI is banned, the members work in different outfits". A Muslim scholar of counter-terrorism, who explained to me why the BJP is not a fascist party and the Gujarat carnage should not be called genocide, shared similar concerns about the PFI in our interview in Delhi in 2012. The PFI is a" two-faced organisation". On the one hand it is "a mass based movement, mobilising around grievances and security issues" and on the other hand, "leaders are old SIMI Islamists, who are carrying out parallel activities" (respondent 125).

Through my IB contacts in Bangalore, I was able to collect and discuss various confidential reports with subject headings such as "PFI activists' information submitted in the interest of national security[103]". A 2012 IB report highlighted several publications in which the PFI "promotes terrorist activities for the consumption terror inclined readers". According to the report, the PFI advocates that "unity and revolution will bring victory in all spheres. The advice is that people should rise in revolt and take up weapons to achieve ends, when it becomes necessary… Marxism, anarchism and terrorism have been glorified, indirectly suggesting adoption of any one of those mechanism to achieve ends". A second 2011 IB report has stressed that the PFI leadership promoted an "armed struggle aiming at assassinating individual chiefs and subordinates in army and police". In a third report from 2012, a PFI owned hospital was mentioned, in which "terror related activities are going on in full swing". These reports, which have framed the PFI as being a terrorist inclined and

[103] These reports and official police statements are mainly compiled through intercepted emails, postal correspondence, magazines and pamphlets but also through infiltrators as well as (alleged) torture, and coercion of witnesses and activists in custody (respondent 72, see also Sethi 2014).

facilitating group, were reinforced by the PFI itself. For instance, in an interview entitled "A Professor Praises Terrorism" with the Washington Post (2007), a senior leader and founding father of the PFI, who has been a former SIMI activist, confessed that

> "I was very happy, excited, on September 11th. Someone called me to switch on BBC and I saw the aircraft crashing into the World Trade Centre and I saw it crumbling down – down like the United States and I was laughing… Osama Bin Laden gave Americans back what they had done to the world. It was a wonderful thing! What else can a helpless people do? There should be more of it [terrorism] in U.S. Why not?[104]"

In her analysis of police reports, Sethi (2014) has argued that certain geographies and features of banned organisations are publically mentioned by the police and media, which "merge into the label of India's home grown terrorist networks". Sethi's observation corresponds with my own research, in which SIMI, which was banned after the September 11 attacks, is currently used as the most powerful "terror label and stigma against Muslim organisations". A Bangalore based journalist, who has covered the activities of the PFI, assured me that "in the likely case that the PFI gets banned, the state is trying really hard, PFI will become the new SIMI label and terror tag in the media. After every terror related or communal incident, every second journalist is already asking, if the PFI has done it or was somehow involved in it[105] (respondent 141). An ex-PFI member argued in Calicut in 2014 that "the ghost of SIMI still haunts the PFI which is why the Muslim middle class stays away

[104] In 2014, I confronted the cited PFI leader, asking him what he thought about the content of the article in the Washington Post? He answered that "it is interesting that you ask me this question. Some people told me that I should not have made such a statement, but I said that I have made this statement as an individual. The PFI has never passed such a resolution. I was telling him [the journalist from the Washington Post] that the biggest threat to world peace is the USA… [He recounts war crimes and casualties, starting with Vietnam and Korea, to Iraq and Afghanistan]. In that context I told the journalist, that seeing the planes crashing in the WTC was the happiest moment in my life…. Most of the people were not honest, but I am sure that hundreds of thousands of people [he wanted to say Muslims but then rephrased] not only Muslims, but thousands of Latin Americans, thousands of Indo-Chinese, would have been celebrating the attack on the Pentagon and the twin towers [he was emotional, his voice became much more vocal, and his speech much voluminous, compared to the beginning of our interview, then he starts laughing] I think even some Germans would have celebrated that. So I was happy to tell all that to the Washington Post. You can say that it is inhuman to kill innocent people, and really it is! But the question is how many people were killed by American imperialism" (respondent 8[5]).

[105] A police officer in Mysore in 2011 however argued that: "we won't ban them". The PFI is an "above ground organisation and we should not exaggerate the danger coming from them… There is also no evidence that the PFI is connected to groups in Kashmir or Pakistan" (respondent 72). The IB officer, Ramakrishna, who showed me the confidential reports also told me that "we cannot ban them now, it would attract too much media attention and public criticism, and it will take at least one or two more years to achieve that" (respondent 70).

from the movement" (respondent 26). Chapter 3 has shown that some of the current leaders and founding members of the PFI were former SIMI activists. During my interviews with the PFI leaders, their SIMI past was a highly sensitive topic of which they often tried to avoid any discussion. Conversations slowed down and became awkward as interviewees did not feel at ease, being well aware that the name SIMI was entirely reserved as a label for terrorist activities in contemporary India (see Appendix 18). For example, during a walk with a Muslim interviewee along the crowded beach promenade in Calicut at night, talking about Muslim politics and SIMI, he suddenly shuddered, looked around, and uttered that "we can't say SIMI openly. It's a loaded term" (respondent 24). On another occasion, during a night train journey to Bangalore, I was in a conversation with a young Muslim student. After explaining my research to him, and my interest in SIMI, he nervously requested that I lower my voice, explaining that "we don't know, who is sitting around us and listens to our conversation". The public commentator, M.N. Karasseri, who has known the PFI leadership for more than 30 years[106], argued during our interview in Calicut in 2014, that

> "the PFI leaders are still stuck up in the SIMI mindset. Deep down, they want to impose the Sharia to subjugate the entire society. These old SIMI fellows [referring to the current PFI leadership] were obsessed with Maududi, and their confidence was boosted, when the fanatics won in Iran in 1979. They also wanted an Islamic state for all of India. Nothing has changed today" (respondent 140).

SIMI's foundation in the late 1970s coincided with Ayatollah Khomeini coming to power in Iran and the military dictator Zia ul Haq commencing the "Islamisation policy" by imposing Sharia law in Pakistan. Both events were publically welcomed by SIMI activists as a first step for the revival of Islam in India (Sikand 2003: 339).

[106] Karasseri worked with one PFI leader, who was with SIMI, for two years back in the 1980s. He emphasised that "even today we are friends, not very close but we talk". For Karasseri, "the Muslim youth today are looking for idealism and adventure. They are being misguided by the proponents of Maududism that espouses a do-or-die battle for ensuring hukumathe ilahi (the rule of Allah). The SDPI (Socialist Democratic Party of India), Jamaat (Jamaat i Islami Hind) and several other outfits subscribe to this philosophy. If the rest of society does not realise the inherent danger, more Taliban-model reprisals will follow" (cited in Outlook 2010).

Last but not least, accusations of foreign influence and funding were frequently voiced during my interviews. In a 2012 IB report, allegations were made against the PFI including organisational connections with Bengali, Kashmiri, and Pakistani terror groups such as the Maoist movement and the Lashkar e Taiba. In an interview with a local BJP politician in Calicut in 2014, who claimed to speak with all Muslim groups except the PFI, he indicated that the PFI receives money from the Middle East, where it also builds various networks with Islamic terrorists (respondents 137, also 77). Javeed, the BJP politician in Mangalore who was attacked in 2011, had no doubt that "the PFI sustains offices in Saudi Arabia, where they collect money. You just have to look up the commentary section in Coastal Digest [an online newspaper from Mangalore] and you can see that most of their supporters are from Saudi Arabia" (respondent 100). A leader of the Communist Party (CPIM) in Kerala also stated that "PFI is a rich organisation. We are jealous of their financial resources. I wish that we had so much money from abroad" (respondent 117[2]). Police officials and various political commentators reinforced such views that the PFI and other Islamic organisations are mainly funded via donations from businessmen and sheiks abroad, using hawala routes (informal remittance networks) and following a religious agenda to undermine India's democracy[107]. In 2008, after the Mumbai blasts, the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was

[107] The PFI has various activities in Middle East. It has an informal office in Saudi Arabia as well as a newspaper branch to inform and network the various Indian labour migrants (PFI 2009, Daiji World 2016). Tehelka (2013) stated that "the coastal belt benefits from remittances to Kerala via legal channels [which] shows a 135 percent growth in the past five years. In 2003, remittance from the Gulf [Middle East] was $38 billion. In 2008 it was $90 billion. It is well known that funds transferred through hawala are 300 times the officially documented remittance". Nonetheless, Manzor Alam, the Director of the Institute for Objective Studies, disagreed with the prominent terrorism and media narrative that a foreign power is trying to expand its religious outreach through Islamic education, indoctrination and radicalisation of Muslim youths. Instead, Alam, who is a supporter of the PFI, shared his pragmatic view with me in his office in Jamia Nagar, Delhi in 2012: "For hundreds of years, India's coastal population had links with the Gulf [Middle East], and it has always contributed to the development of these regions. Those Muslims, who go abroad to work, will do so to support their families. This will increase household education, and income. If there is a great cause such as a social justice movement [implying the PFI], family members may support it. But that does not mean that Muslims are working abroad, only to support the PFI and other organisations. If it happens, it is mainly a side effect. The bottom line is that those who have education understand the cause of injustice and support those who fight against it. Such commitment has nothing to do with Arab influence" (respondent 37[2]).

modified and the "Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act" added, through which funding from abroad could be criminalised[108].

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated that the perception of Indian Muslims, in particular PFI activists, as aggressive and anti-national troublemakers, who convert and harass Hindu women, has provided the rationale for violence against the Muslim community by Hindu nationalists, who have portrayed such acts as a natural defence of Hindu culture and values. I have highlighted how the police, the state, segments of the Hindu nationalist milieu as well as the wider Hindu public regard the PFI and other Muslim organisations as a threat to national security and progress. The chapter has also analysed the links between the discourse of a majority under threat and the right to cultural and Hindu self-defence with current debates on counter-terrorism and the securitisation of Muslim minority activists in a post 9/11 framework. Feelings and sentiments of hurt, historical injustice and political grievances by Hindu nationalist supporters are essential for the rationalisation of campaigns centred on Hindu self-preservation and violence against minorities. This is expressed in accusations of love jihad, campaigns such as ghar vapsi and other types of communal boundary framing, as well as the constant terrorist allegations against Muslims.

The prominent Hindu nationalist Rakesh Sinha, for example, described Indian Muslims, in the context of minority appeasement and constant fear of the next terrorist attack, as "a section of the population that is treated as more equal than others, [but] is never quite satisfied with the magnitude of doles coming its way. [Therefore] the [Hindu] section that is treated as merely equal accuses the state of step-motherly treatment" (cited in Bharata

[108] The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act helped "to harass NGOs and civil society organisations that received funding [for terrorist training camps] from abroad" (Amnesty International 2015).

Bharati Wordpress 2015). Other interviewees, who were close to the BJP, have also accused minority organisations and human rights groups as "alarmists", "crooks" and being responsible for India's negative international reputation (respondents 97, 98, 112, and 139). Sethi (2014: 185) argued that Indian human rights and minority activists "are the objects of ridicule, derision, and pure hatred – the perfect antithesis of the policemen and the security agencies, which put their life in danger to secure the country". In the context of the 2015 Greenpeace ban, Prime Minister Modi, articulated his deep-rooted reservations towards grassroots movements and organisations, discrediting them as "five star activists". For the BJP and in Modi's words, these activists have "prejudicially affected the country's public and economic interests" (Caravan 2015a).

Hence, disagreement, critique and deviation from the government's position on policy and social justice by social movements is progressively less tolerated in public discourse, while the upwardly mobile Hindu middle classes indicate a sense of "growing amnesia" towards social inequality and poverty and strongly disapprove of the reservation system (Kothari 1993). Instead, many privileged middle class BJP adherents share a value system largely based on merit and hard work (Hansen 1999). Hence, the BJP agenda in which India's democracy needs to be disciplined as well as purified is highly appealing to these groups, who long for an orderly public life in which they can pursue their professional business ventures. Thereby, many middle class BJP constituencies approve a more authoritarian style of government with a strong technocratic leadership (Jaffrelot 2001). In this context, Ignatieff (2005: 55-81) contends that democracies constantly overreact in the name of national security, because "majorities care less about their own liberty that harm minorities than they do about their own security". This historical tendency to "value majority interests over individual rights" has weakened liberal democracies, and strengthened the "secret government at the expense of open adversarial review".

During my fieldwork, the universal application of liberal democratic norms and globally standardised human rights' discourses were seen as interfering in the culturally specific understanding of India's management of diversity and domestic affairs. Baxi (2002: vi) reminded his readers that "human rights are not the gifts of the West to the Rest; the dominant discourse is diversionary when it locates the origins of human rights in Euro-American tradition and experience … when it pursues endless debates over universality and relativism of human rights". For scholars such as Menski (2012: 73-77), who have promoted the perspective of legal pluralism, "human rights theorising must be culture-specific, because everywhere law and culture are intrinsically linked, and law remains a culture specific phenomenon in all its various manifestations". Otherwise, "powerful [anti-religious] discourses about human rights [are] dismissing Hinduism and other non-Western traditions". Consequently, secular human rights activists and state elites, being largely dismissive of religious traditions, may have indirectly contributed to the rise of Hindu nationalism in India (Madan 1997, 1998, Sharma 2016). It is this context of Hindu victimhood and perceived humiliation by minority groups such as the PFI, other Muslim groups, and human rights organisations, as well as aspirations by the Hindu middle class for global recognition, that has rendered violence against religious minorities acceptable by segments of BJP supporters as long as it is framed in the name of security and national interests.

The following chapter will illustrate the appeal of the PFI movement to members and supporters. Thereby, I will go beyond the grievance frame and explore how the PFI has activated resources by using various social and legal services, and ethical codes of self-discipline and hard work, which are highly appealing to its Muslim constituency.

Chapter 6:

The Appeal of the Popular Front of India

"The Quran spells it out clearly: Spread iqra [to read] and kalam [to write]. In other words spread education, literacy and development, which is PFI's main agenda"
(PFI supporter and researcher, Delhi 2015, respondent 37).

"A true Muslim dies with pasina [sweat] on his forehead"
(Senior PFI Leader, President of Rehab Foundation Delhi, January 2015, respondent 36)

Chapters 4 and 5 have analysed the grievance frames that are used by PFI and its adversaries to promote the agenda of collective victimhood and to mobilise support. This chapter will specifically look at the active members and supporters of the PFI to explain the appeal of the movement. I will illustrate that a specific Islamic ideology, the notion of self-cultivation and moral discipline, plays an important role in recruiting supporters, which indicates that Islamic frames are still relevant for collective action. The chapter will also engage with the PFI's practically oriented work ethic, which is greatly valued by its followers. Thereby, I will demonstrate that the movement promotes professionalism and worldly skills, and highlights its tangible results for the Muslim community through legal aid, political education, social service provision, disaster and riot relief as well as material compensation.

The chapter will speak directly to some of the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 2, including the study of resource mobilisation within social movement theory. By doing so, I will critically analyse the PFI's objective of achieving a new mindset and value change among its members, by promoting political education and religious awareness, facilitating engagement in welfare activities and applying an effective sanctioning and vigilante system among its members and supporters to create political citizens and practising Muslims. Section 6.1. will provide an account of the PFI's practise of moral vigilance in order to generate resonance and social cohesion among its cadre-base. Section 6.2. will illustrate

how the movement provides political education and promotes legal pragmatism to generate a feeling of agency for those young PFI members and supporters with lower middle class backgrounds, who are frustrated in the current political system. Section 6.3. analyses the importance of religious ideology and shows how the organisation promotes a discourse of Islamic pragmatism and practical morality. The second part of the section will analyse the PFI's alignment with religious authorities (ulama), in order to build the social influence and cultural capital for the movement's agenda. Finally, Section 6.4. will show how the PFI appeals to Muslim youths by facilitating religiously inspired welfare activism and social service provision that aims to enhance community bonds and commitment to the movement.

6.1. Moral Vigilance, Self-Discipline and Punishment

Religious groups can provide a sense of belonging and social integration (Durkheim 1951 [1897], Berger 1967). However, access to these groups is often conditioned by obeying socio-religious norms, regarding particular lifestyle, moral and health behaviour, to enhance the physical and mental well-being of members and to increase solidarity among participants (Hechter 1987, Umberson 1987, Levin and Vanderpool 1987, Ellison 1991, Olzak 2007). Pratten (2006: 711) has argued in his study of youth groups in Southern Nigeria that "vigilance concerns the definition of cognitive, temporal and spatial boundaries. It concerns the protection and care of the community encompassed within these boundaries, and it involves maintaining surveillance and taking action against threats to this community". Newly recruited PFI members enter a system of mutual vigilance, in which misconduct and transgression is socially monitored and internally punished, in extreme cases with exclusion from the organisation. The "Rules and Regulations" section of the PFI (2014) Constitution states that the movement "functions strictly within the parameters of morality,

accountability, honesty, and public order and sticks on to the interests of social harmony, national integrity and unity". The section further stressed that members "must abstain from vices like alcohol and drugs and keep away from prejudices and schisms". My findings suggest that the social behaviour of members changed after they joined the PFI. Interviewees emphasised that their behavioural transformation has been less pronounced in terms of dress code or rituals, but instead concentrated on intrinsic changes of moral behaviour and motivational outlook. Cadres noted how they have stopped "smoking", "chasing after girls", "flirting", "hanging out in shopping malls" or "wasting money" on conspicuous consumption. Hansen (2000: 259) argued that "most Islamic organisations [in India] demand that activists lead pious, ascetic and exemplary lifestyles, just as the sincerity of social reformers is judged on the basis of their personal lifestyle and lack of mundane belongings". Chapter 7 will provide an in-depth analysis of this value-based and normative approach to politics promoted by the PFI and other Islamic groups.

This turn towards moral behaviour by those who decide to join the movement is reinforced by a vigilante system between members. In a discussion with four PFI cadres from low-income backgrounds, only Kabir, 28, was still unmarried. During our conversation in January 2015, we discussed the possibility of having a girlfriend as a PFI member. I observed how the group members looked at each other awkwardly; two of them smiled, but were unsure what to say in my presence. After a while, Kabir clarified: "Having a girlfriend is not possible. The organisation becomes your family and only married couples are permitted. There are no secrets among PFI members. Everyone knows everything about the other person". Members explained that dating or premarital sex is not allowed for practising Muslims and hence for PFI members. Moreover, the group agreed that women are becoming increasingly more materialistic, which exceeds their financial capacities and contrasts with the PFI's promotion of modesty and restraint (Chapter 7 will address the role of female cadres within the PFI).

Another PFI activist, 30, who joined the movement in 2009, paraphrased what it means to be part of the vigilante system: "When you are late, miss a deadline or misbehave, you will be punished". Being aware of the negative connotation of the word "punished", he added:

> "It is more constructive to see it as a form of teaching by the leadership, which decides upon the punishment. They use these sanctions to teach us how to talk and to write. Sometimes we have to prepare a presentation of the land bill or recite a Surah from the Quran, and explain it to other members the next day. The focus is on helping us with our personal development. There is also physical punishment like push-ups and running around the stadium or along the ring road".

Before joining the PFI, current members revealed that they had a clear understanding of what was morally permissible, but knew how to "get away with it[109]". Interviewees claimed that their attitude of "getting away" with immoral behaviour changed after joining the movement with its effective system of monitoring and sanctioning, in which members are "warned" by others if they transgress the moral codes set out by the leadership. Further evidence from my research suggests that PFI cadres approach the wider Muslim community of non-PFI members in cases where they observe anything morally impermissible or un-Islamic in their social behaviour. Most PFI respondents expressed strong agreement with respect to the monitoring of social behaviour and sanctioning transgressions in order to discipline the cadre-base. The PFI Campus Front President argued that these vigilance practises have "morally positive effects on the cadre-base and society in general" (respondent 7[4]). A young activist in his early 20s noted in the PFI office in Mangalore in 2011 that "the PFI makes me feel good about myself and gives me confidence; it [membership] makes me a righteous human being and a hard working student" (respondent 34).

Furthermore, the leadership often stressed the positive outcome of abstaining from so-called social evils such as drinking and smoking on health. Studies have indicated that being

[109] This expression was used by several PFI activists during my fieldwork.

a member of a religious group with a strong moral code and monitoring system can enhance general wellbeing and reduce health risks (Gardner and Lyon 1982, Dwyer 1990). Such awareness by the PFI leadership is also reflected in the creation of the social development organisation "Rehab India Foundation" in 2008, as well as in the movement's manifold sporting activities and health initiatives, including physical exercise, yoga classes, mini-marathons, football games, medical and blood donation camps offering free health check-ups, and the cleaning of public premises[110]. These activities are promoted during the PFI's annual campaign "Healthy People, Healthy Nation", which has the objective of improving mental and physical wellbeing as prescribed in the Quran. During PFI's book release, "Yoga and Exercise for the Daily Practice", the PFI State President of Karnataka argued in Mangalore in 2013 that "health is a big gift of the Almighty. In current days, we do not have access to healthy food due to rampant use of chemicals. People should stay away from all types of intoxicants to build a healthy body. We have to build a healthy society to become the voice for oppressed people in the society" (PFI 2013a). For the PFI and other Muslim groups, social development, including sport and diet, has been as much about health concerns as about disciplining the cadre-base and the wider Muslim community.

[110] According to the financial report of 2013-2014, the movement spent 15 lakhs (£15,000) on health initiatives (PFI 2014d). Between 2011 and 2012, the PFI was running 14 different health camps in Karnataka alone, covering the costs of various treatments, surgeries, medications, optical instruments and wheelchairs (PFI 2012c). For a detailed overview of the movement's health campaigns and other social development initiatives see the annual report of the Rehab India Foundation (Rehab 2014).



PFI cadres ran to Parliament during the "Healthy People, Healthy Nation" campaign, Delhi 2014.

However, during my fieldwork, the ideal of moral conduct and behavioural compliance among PFI members is also ambiguous and contested. PFI cadres were aware of what was socially impermissible or considered a "social evil" as well as the formal and informal organisational rules outlined by their superiors. Still, interviewees admitted to several moral grey areas, in which they felt safe to challenge these ethical codes and collective expectations. During a discussion in Bangalore in 2011 about "Western films", PFI members agreed that they were enjoyable to watch, but promoted questionable values and lifestyles as well as negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims as violent (see also PFI 2014e). "Iranian movies" were deemed by PFI members as morally permissible, while watching television was also allowed in the collective judgment of the cadre-base. One of the PFI

activists in Bangalore stressed that "TV, internet and smartphones are like kitchen knives. You can use them to prepare your dinner or you can stab someone with it. It depends how you use this technology. Watching TV or surfing the internet for news and education is okay… but porn, gambling or too much online shopping is not allowed". On several occasions during my fieldwork, I watched American wrestling and scenes from James Bond and other Hollywood movies with PFI members, which they admired. Members also discussed and laughed about the depiction of Brahmins in the Hindi film "PK"[111], which was released during my fieldwork in 2014. Cadres were also aware that the senior leadership, who promoted a strict moral code, could also act in a morally ambiguous or transgressive manner, including vices such as smoking or other consumption habits. For instance, a PFI leader in Bangalore forgot about our interview because he was watching the American TV show "House of Cards" at his home. He later confessed "I am addicted to the series. It's genius"! When he eventually arrived on his yellow Vespa, he told me that his daughter is a fan of Cristiano Ronaldo, the football player, constantly following him online on her iPad. He also told me that he was planning a trip to Spain with his work colleagues at a Bangalore based IT company. After our interview, we ran into another senior activist in the PFI office. They both casually chatted about the new Adidas jacket one of them had purchased online and was wearing it that day. After checking the material, they agreed that it was a bargain for the price, while the office staff and lower-ranking cadres in the reception area watched the conversation curiously.

Although the PFI leadership expects financial austerity and restrained consumption as part of a pious and moderate lifestyle from its cadre-base, the same leaders transgressed such moral imperatives themselves. Given this ambiguity within the PFI of what constitutes moral

[111] The film "PK" caused some controversy because Hindu nationalist groups protested that Hindu culture was degraded and religious sentiments hurt (through mockery of Hindu gods in the film), and as a result cinemas were vandalised (Times of India 2014b).

conduct and obedience, members were manoeuvring and testing for themselves what they can do and cannot do in the eyes of their superiors. While the PFI invests substantial resources to make the movement appear disciplined and homogeneous, my findings suggest that there is no moral coherence among members or leaders, but rather an accumulation of different behaviours negotiated through the social context and the politics of everyday life.

6.2. Rights Consciousness and Political Education

Muslim organisations and movements such as the PFI invest considerable effort in the distribution of political and rights based education via dense associational networks such as student and youth groups, women association, humanitarian, human rights and legal aid organisations, while they organise conferences, workshops, seminars, private consultations, and house to house visits (Rosenblum 2003, Bano 2012). One of their main objectives is to foster a political rights consciousness, namely "a dynamic process of constituting one's understanding of and relationship to the social world through the use of legal conventions and discourses" (McCann 1994: 7). This mirrors O'Brien and Li's (2006:3) study on "rightful resistance" movements in China, which implies "the innovative use of laws, policies, and other officially promoted values to defy disloyal political and economic elites". During my fieldwork, the PFI viewed political and legal education as a crucial driver for social change and collective action since it can generate confidence among marginalised sections and may increase the demand for affirmative action and institutional protection. Studies have illustrated that state and non-state actors often regard their constituencies as too ill equipped and unprepared for democratic participation and assertions of civic rights to effectively navigate within democratic frameworks (Dean 1999, Hindess 2002). In 1948, the eminent Dalit leader, Ambedkar, argued during a Constituent Assembly debate that

"constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic" (cited in Frontline 2001). Hence, this section will show how the PFI has indirectly followed Ambedkar's reasoning by promoting political education and legal expertise to its members and supporters.

The PFI's decentralised organisational structure relies upon a strong and well-trained cadre-base. Respondents have highlighted the importance of educating cadres and drawing a clear distinction between the PFI and other mass- based Muslim organisations. A senior PFI leader in Calicut argued that "we are not interested in simply mobilising the masses like the kinds of Qwaisi and Madani [two popular Muslim politicians]. It's not difficult to bring 25 thousand people on the street to protest. We are only interested to produce smart and politically trained cadres" (respondent 30). During the PFI's recruitment process, candidates are required to attend a two-day training camp that involves political awareness classes. The PFI Chairman argued in Mangalore in 2015 that "it's crucial in this early phase to observe the reaction of those who want to join the movement. Only after we checked their response to our agenda, we are accepting them as members. It's like an examination of character and aptitude" (respondent 18[4]). During these training sessions, senior activists will deliver speeches, explain the political system and interpret the history of Indian Muslims. Members are urged to internalise the current and historical state of Muslim marginalisation and victimhood through reports on literacy rates and educational status, and statistics on Muslim representation in the police and the Indian administration. Thereby, the leadership reinforces the notion that Muslims are socio-economically disadvantaged compared to other religious groups. Moreover, the PFI has sponsored students in the fields of law and journalism with the underlying rationale of "infiltrating" and changing the balance within the media, government and bureaucratic institutions, in which Muslims are underrepresented

(respondent 11[1], PFI 2009b, PFI 2015a). Members were also trained to go to deprived Muslim neighbourhoods and rural areas, where cadres directly approached individual households or used public spaces to disseminate the movement's agenda to the wider Muslim population. For example, during the 2011 "Village March", three PFI vehicles "toured" throughout Karnataka, delivering political and legal education classes to Indian Muslims (respondent 1[3]).

At public events such as the WHY PFI campaign (see Chapter 4), young cadres often wore uniforms and marched in a military-style, which corresponds with the movement's agenda of discipline – making them into hardworking students and practicing Muslims[112]. The PFI Chairman explained to me in Mangalore in 2012 that "we have to show that the PFI is a disciplinary force with an orderly and cadre-based movement. The community and Muslim families are very impressed to see their teenagers in uniforms, marching in orderly fashion" (respondent 18). The PFI's focus on discipline and physical conditioning shares some similarities with Hindu nationalist organisations such as the RSS and Bajrang Dal. For instance, a 1993 Bajrang Dal training manual stated that "whether it is an individual or a nation, the entire society or an organisation, only one who knows discipline can achieve success, awareness and excellence. Without discipline there can be no success. Discipline comes from training and exercise. And if a disciplined man is also brave, what more can you ask for?" (cited in The Hindu 2015b). Mitchell (1991) and Shah (2006) have both argued that while different ideological organisations and state agencies may frame each other in antagonistic terms, at the grassroots level these actors frequently appear similar and can be driven by mutual interest among the lower-ranking cadres such as material rewards and

[112] One PFI activist and professional lawyer pointed out that "cadre-based mobilisation has a long tradition among social movements in South India as you can see in the case of DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; anti-upper-caste party in Tamil Nadu], or the Communist Party [in Kerala]" (respondent 15). However, due to increasing public concerns about the paramilitary appearance of non-state groups, the central government has followed the Tamil Nadu state government that "has enacted amendments to its law to ban drills with or without arms particularly when wearing uniform or dress which can create confusion that such groups are members of police or paramilitary or armed forces of the Union" (Indian Express 2014a).

feelings of belonging and solidarity. Moreover, the PFI's aim to politically educate and discipline its members and supporters, changing their perception of India's political system, is motivated by its leaders belief that the Muslim masses are not yet fit for democratic engagement, and "not ready for the Indian mainstream". In this context, PFI members described the senor leadership in (a metaphorical sense) as being "modern" and "urban" while the cadre-base and Muslim masses were considered "rural" and "traditional". A PFI supporter argued that the rural and semi-literate PFI members and supporters will only require a minimum of political "campus education" in order to make them receptive to ideas of social justice, human rights, and therefore supportive of PFI's agenda (respondent 132).

Furthermore, PFI leaders explained the need for legal education due to the increasing public anxieties about youth radicalisation and Islamic terrorism. In particular, Muslim youths have been under constant scrutiny in contemporary India over the last two decades (Srinivasan 2013). A PFI leader in Mangalore 2015 pointed out that

> "most of our members are between 15 and 35 years old [males]. That age group is the most depressed and receptive to radical ideas. After the destruction of the Babri Mosque, some youth segments started to turn to extremist ideas, because they lost hope in the political system. But when people feel insecure and lose faith in the government and the judicative system, they are easily tempted by radical forces. We are a very big barrier between them [extremist groups]. We never allow the Muslim youth to speak against the nation. That is why we try to organise and politically educate them. People have to know what they are fighting for and how do to it" (respondent 2[9]).

During my fieldwork, PFI adherents believe that the movement is able to "absorb" and "channel destructive elements" among anxious and frustrated Muslims and guide them to the "right path" into "the mainstream" by providing a feeling of agency[113] (respondents 25,

[113] In the recent context of recruitment attempts by the Islamic State (IS), the PFI leadership has spoken explicitly against it and handed out informational circulars that warned about the potential infiltration of the cadre-base. In a public statement, a senior PFI leader stressed that "utmost care should be exercised while inviting new members to the organisation. The person's family, job, connections, personality and character should be scrutinised. If there is any suspicion about a person's connections he should not be entertained even if he possesses good qualities… This issue [of internal radicalisation] was discussed at length at our mandatory primary

26, 36 and 75). In other words, movements such as the PFI are able to provide a sense of "system accessibility" by showing disenfranchised Muslim youths that they are not powerless, but in fact have a stake in politics, legal procedures, and the job market (Wiktorowicz 2004: 66-67, see also Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

6.2.1. A Portrait of a PFI Member

In what follows, I will use a brief portrait of one of my key informants and current PFI leader, Aziz (respondent 2), who became attracted to the PFI's promotion of rights consciousness and political education. When I met Aziz, aged 35, in December 2012, he has just returned from a 4-month work related training course in the USA. His employer offered Aziz the option to stay permanently in the USA, but he declined, explaining to me that "activism is too static and boring in the States. I love India for its dynamic activist scene", though he was excited about the "Occupy Wall Street" campaign that happened during his trip. Aziz, who works for an IT company in Bangalore, which is a "big client of Microsoft", is a well-respected social activist, now working mainly in public relations for the PFI.

Aziz elaborated why he joined the movement in 2003. Born and raised in a lower middle class family in South India, his childhood was defined by "growing up in a religiously mixed neighbourhood". Only when he enrolled for an IT degree at the prestigious Manipal University in Udupi, close to Mangalore, from 2000 to 2003, did his sense of security and belonging change. Chapter 3 provided a detailed account of the rise of Hindu nationalism in this part of coastal Karnataka. He recalled his formative, though highly troublesome

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camps for the cadres. Central and state level leaders had appraised us of the threat posed by the IS at the all-members camp. Some individuals may have strayed, but our cadres as whole are well-aware of the reality" (Times of India 2016a). Moreover, the former PFI Vice President "questioned the legitimacy of IS [Islamic State] leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and his 'caliphate'… such fake caliphates had appeared and later vanished subsequently over time". He was subsequently threatened by online supporters of IS for his comments (Times of India 2016b).

experience at college, far away from his family, when his religious beliefs and culture became a major identity marker. “For the first time in my life, I felt what it means when others map out your identity because of your religion and for being a Muslim. Before that I was never asked about my religious identity. Only because of that experience, I became interested in the study of politics and started reading magazines such as Dalit Voice and Outlook”, he told me. During my fieldwork, PFI activists often linked their current political and group consciousness to an initial phase of autodidactic learning and self-study, which was accompanied by experiences of grievances, encounters with discrimination, and outrage over Muslim suffering in Kashmir, Palestine and other parts of the world (see also Portes and Rumbaut 2001, Diehl and Koenig 2009). This mirrors Wickham’s (2013: 15) study on the Muslim Brotherhood, who argued that Muslims’ experience in Egypt and Jordan of police harassment and awareness of the plight of their fellow Muslims in Palestine and Iraq increased the appeal of Islamist movements that vocally address these issues. Aziz further linked the awakening of the Muslim political consciousness in India to the Babri Masjid destruction, the Gujarat carnage and subsequent riots throughout the country.

In such a scenario of experienced alienation, studies have shown that faith-based groups, which show empathy and provide scope for emotional expression, become appealing for young Muslims such as Aziz, who suffer hardships and feel constrained by a perceived discriminatory system (see Berger 1967, Kotarba 1983, Mattlin 1990, Ellison 1991, Aydin 2010, Ysseldyk 2010). Neuman and Rogers (2007: 25), researching Islamic groups in Europe, have argued that

> “there can be no doubt that universities have always been ‘hotbeds’ for radical thought, and that – like prisons and asylum reception centres – they are places in which individuals are prone to experience feelings of isolation and vulnerability. In fact, the pattern is very similar to what happens in mosques and prisons”.

Therefore, by becoming a member and taking part in political and religious activities facilitated by organisations such as the PFI, individuals experience a sense of belonging and solidarity (respondents 33 and 34). Before joining the PFI, Aziz became a member of an Islamic reformist organisation. In retrospect, he concluded that "these purely religious organisations are doing an excellent job in spreading Islam, but when the police talks to them, they are shivering and don't know how to respond". This experience was echoed by other PFI members, including an activist in the PFI Campus Front in Kerala, who explained to me the dilemma for young Muslim students:

> "Right wing campus groups like the ABVP [the student wing of the BJP] are very well organised, and are trying to divide the communities. We are nervous of being Muslims, because we are their prime targets. Before I came in touch with the PFI, I had no idea about legal help and other support we could get. The PFI taught us that we can also organise, file court cases and petitions or even hire lawyers[114]" (respondent 32).

These young PFI respondents specified that increased political and legal education reduced their sense of insecurity, as well as enhanced their confidence in a context of regular intimidation by Hindu nationalist groups, police harassment and racial profiling of the Muslim community. For these reasons, Aziz joined the KFD (now PFI) in 2003, and started to work "full-time" after he finished his degree in the lower administration of the movement. Since Aziz was a talented and eloquent speaker due to his interest in theatre during his degree, he quickly rose in the organisational hierarchy and soon started to train new recruits in politics and human rights. He reflected on that time as a young PFI member, stating that

> "I was mighty impressed by the new language of human rights and the constitutional approach by the PFI. Other organisations were mostly occupied with local grievances and Islam-related issues, but the PFI emphasised national

[114] The Delhi-based academic Bhattacharjee (2017) has described the increasingly tense atmosphere at Indian universities in the context of the recent assertions by BJP's student wing ABVP and other Hindu nationalist groups which try to "establish a culture of idolatry, where students profess uncritical love of the nation. They seek to stifle the questioning of state excess or actions by right-wing vigilante groups. Dissenters face intimidation and violence".

> issues for minorities. Especially the concept of legal and political empowerment and the leaders' sense of professionalism, almost like an international cooperation, were very appealing for young Muslims like me".

The modern and legal language of empowerment, self-respect and professionalism resonated more strongly with young Muslims than the obedient and inward-looking approach to politics of their parents' generation and the ulama (Ahmad 2009). Aziz remembered that "like many Muslim families whose children study technical degrees, my parents wanted me to stay away from these political activities. Working in such a field [of political activism] was seen as dangerous". Aziz's narrative corresponds with research on collective action that indicated that the choice of personal and collective strategies to participate in a social movement are affected by personal background, including age, gender, education and occupational status (Wickham 2002, Wong 2011, Bendixsen 2013). Hence, assertive movements such as the PFI are highly responsive to the younger generation of Indian Muslims, who are demanding a fairer share of power, policy making, and education. The senior leadership of the PFI expressed their delight that so many young activists are positively responding to the movement's agenda and that talented and well-educated members such as Aziz are proactively seeking opportunities to fulfil their social and political responsibilities (respondents 3 and 23).

6.2.2. The Mysore Riot: Legal Pragmatism and Rightful Resistance

During my fieldwork, the PFI negotiated with police commissioners about the viability of politically rallies, pressed legal charges against police inspectors and politicians for violent conduct or hate speeches. The movement has also provided legal aid to victims of riots and discrimination through legal teams consisting of lawyers, political activists, and so-called

"AWDs" ("advocates without degree")[115]. In addition, the PFI organised workshops, seminars and counselling sessions related to legal education, and circulated manifold advisory manuals, including the booklet "Media Intervention – A User's Manual", which offered practical advice on dealing with media defamation, and writing reports about human rights violations (PFI 2009c).

This section will give an example of the PFI's approach to legal pragmatism and how the movement demonstrates expertise in legal and human rights discourses in order to appeal to members and Muslim constituencies. In the morning of our appointment, Iqbal, the PFI District President of Mysore[116], sent me a text message apologising for his delay: "Brother, as it happens, I am still in court. As soon as I am done here, I will pick you up". To learn more about PFI's management of legal cases, I met Iqbal in 2011 and 2012 (respondent 4). He has faced continued trials and was charged for instigating the Mysore riot (discussed in Chapter 5). The Mysore riot started due to the desecration of a mosque in Udayagiri, a neighbourhood in Mysore, when a carcass of a piglet was thrown into the compound on 2 July 2009. The subsequent violence caused three fatalities, including a 14-year old teenager allegedly hit by police fire. In our interviews, Iqbal recounted discussions with the police commissioner of Mysore. Because of Iqbal's public acceptance and social standing as a community leader, the police called him on the morning of the riot in order to appease an irritated and angry group of young Muslim men. Iqbal recalled the situation during our conversation: "A huge crowd was gathering to relieve their anger, but it didn't turn into violence, because I managed to contain and manipulated the mob. Only later the mob

[115] The movement has spent 32 lakhs (£33,000) on legal aid in 2013 and 2014 (PFI 2014d). In the wake of a violent clash between PFI and BJP supporters in Shimoga, Karnataka in February 2015, the PFI wrote on its website that it "provided legal assistance to the victims of communal violence… Nearly 130 innocents falsely implicated into various cases were released due to the collective efforts of Popular Front of India... Shakif, State President, Popular Front of India, reiterated that, 'Popular Front will stand with them till they all are acquitted Inshallah'" (PFI 2015).

[116] Iqbal has worked in the Middle East for several years and has an MBA degree (distance learning) from the University of Manchester.

became uncontrollable and violent as the police failed to remove the swine carcass from the masjid". Iqbal's usage of the word "mob", which implied potentially violent misconduct by a large crowd, underlined the paternalistic view of PFI leaders that the Muslim masses are unfit to act as democratic citizens and therefore have to be politically cultivated.

In the aftermath, Iqbal and other PFI leaders were put in police custody for the alleged instigation of the riot. Despite an imposed curfew under Section 144, the PFI organised a jail bharo[117] of around 200 PFI members and adherents including activists of the National Women's Front (NWF) four days later. They gathered around the Fountain Circle demanding the release of the prisoners. Police forces started to charge with batons and used tear gas against the protestors to end the demonstration, which led to a mass panic and left many people injured (see The Hindu 2009). Other news and police sources claimed that PFI members were armed and started to throw stones at the police, causing the escalation (Chapter 5 has highlighted the police's view on the Mysore riot). At first, the police commissioner promised to hold Iqbal in custody for only two days, until public attention decreased. However, for political reasons, Iqbal remained in jail for more than three months, during which his family suffered the repercussions[118]. Despite this hardships, Iqbal spoke kindly about the police during our conversations, apart from his critical remark that the Police Commissioner was under the sway of the BJP and eager to prove his loyalty to the new state government, as "the BJP had to protect its face". With a sense of deeper understanding, Iqbal noted that the police treated him with decency while in prison, because the PFI claimed to have won the legal battle against the police. Iqbal clarified that "we didn't compromise and went all the way to the High Court. Our lawyers booked several

[117] Jail bharo means to fill up the jail. A form of civic protest whereby PFI members were offering to be voluntarily arrested.

[118] A PFI leader added later that "after our District President was put in jail, they took his mother, who was a heart patient, and sister to the police station for inquiry. Then without escorting them back to their house at night, they let them walk home alone. Their landlord has also kicked them out of the house as a result of the investigation" (respondent 1[5]).

cases against the police commissioner, other police inspectors and against the home minister. The court gave us a favourable decision and the police had to pay 45,000 rupees compensation to each of the victims". Such "favourable" judgements are symbolically celebrated by the PFI. Iqbal has addressed the incident in front of several thousand PFI supporters at political rallies in 2012, proudly proclaiming that "the police promised that they would ban us after the Mysore riot and we [PFI] would disappear, but three years later we are stronger and have more supporters than before". Additionally, the PFI published a press statement with graphic pictures of individuals with various severe injuries. The press release, which was published in the Mille Gazette (2009), addressed the riot and its mismanaged by the state:

> "We need not go to hospital records to count the number of injured. We learn that local hospitals, perhaps due to external influence, were not ready to admit even the seriously injured persons. They were just given first aid and they had to flee from hospital under the threat of police custody. The video footages that have been shown in television channels and photographs (both published and unpublished) are available for scrutiny".

The statement also stressed the positive and deescalating role of PFI members: "The local MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] was in constant touch with me [PFI Chairman], and helped the district administration in peacefully burying the deceased". PFI activists revealed their conviction that fighting public court cases, going through the legal process and spreading political education enhances confidence among Muslims and increases the appeal of the organisation. A PFI member argued that "since we have lawyers, the police won't dare to torture our members anymore" (respondent 22). Another PFI activist in Calicut in 2014 assured me that members support each other in times of crisis: "When one of us gets arrested, we can quickly mobilise 300 or more supporters, who will protest in front of the police station or town hall, which will affect the morale of the police and political opponents" (see also The Hindu 2017). Consequently, beyond the politics of muscle

(see Chapter 4), the PFI has defended itself publicly and in courtrooms, which can be interpreted as a sign of organisational maturity. A PFI activist argued that

> "If you are a weak group without legal support, you stop working after a while. We saw organisations vanish in so many cases because of police and state propaganda and RSS intimidation. Muslims think they don't have rights, and that nobody supports them. That's why legal education is so important. We are getting very good results from our workshops and seminars, because many Muslims have never heard about these legal issues before" (respondent 2[1]).

The PFI's emphasis on legal pragmatism can be regarded as part of a wider trend within Muslim citizenship politics (see Alam 2008) and as an outcome of a long dialectic process, through which Muslims have learned to respond legally within the norms of civic protests and rightful resistance. The following section will show how the PFI uses religious frames and promotes a re-orientation towards self-cultivation in order to enhance the appeal of the movement.

6.3. The Appeal of Islamic Pragmatism and Religious Frames

Studies have emphasised the functional role of religion for purposes outside the divine sphere. Accordingly, Waardenburg (1985: 24) has argued that "Islam, like any other religion, can be used to mobilise the believers for aims, which are not derived from religion alone and sometimes have nothing to do with it. Islam is then used functionally to reach certain goals which are not derived from Islam itself". Consequently, religious and cultural embeddedness can often play a key role in political parties and movements to mobilise and recruit new members, and constitutes a significant source of motivation for the leadership and cadre-base. In other words, religion can constitute an important resource for social movements, including social and cultural capital, as it facilitates various forms of networks, social bonds and support systems (Taylor and Chatters 1988, Ellison 1991, Schwedler 2004, Devine 2015). In addition, framing certain kinds of grievances and other life experiences in religious terms

may appeal to lower income and less educated individuals (Pollner 1989, Aydin 2010), which is partially mirrored in the demography of PFI supporters. Chapter 7 will highlight that secular critics and non-Muslim groups have viewed the social activities and Islamic discourses promoted by the PFI as anti-modern or traditionalist, but it will illustrate that religious frames can also be seen as an effective strategy for cultural resistance and piety politics, including self-preservation, and providing a sense of direction for a politically and economically marginalised Muslim support base.

This notion of religion as social capital is echoed by the PFI leadership. In his office in in Calicut in early 2015, the PFI Vice President explained to me why Islam has been an important asset for the movement:

> "Whenever you mobilise, you should have some common areas, which you share with your supporters such as symbols, belief systems, basically something that is easy to communicate. In our case, our core supporters are Muslims, and instead of wiping out and ignoring their racial and cultural identity like secular groups or the state have tried to do it in the past, we are using Islam to our advantage" (respondent 8[5]).

This approach is mirrored in a PFI pamphlet: "It is true that National Development Front [PFI's predecessor] used Islamic vocabulary, because their primary audience was Muslims. Common cultural terms make communication easier" (PFI 2012a). Therefore, the PFI has generated Islamic frames to create and activate solidarity among its members, with the understanding that religious identities and cultural frameworks are as relevant as membership lists, organisational rules, and secular and legal discourses (Melucci 1996). During my fieldwork, the PFI leadership affirmed its expertise in Islamic theology at various public gatherings, identifying with the life of the Prophet, reciting verses from the Quran, calling adversaries 'kuffar', and displaying Islamic piety through their choice of attire and

gestures[119]. Studies of social movements have highlighted that successful leaders have to personify the moral ideals of their constituencies (Melucci 1996, Snow and Benford 2000, Wiktorowicz 2004, Goodwin 2009). Hence, senior PFI respondents strongly emphasised the importance of practical Islamic morals propagated by the movement, including honesty, social justice, hard work, diligence, pragmatism and merit[120]. The PFI Vice President argued that

> "Islam says that you will attain jannah [Islamic concept of paradise] for the good you have done on earth. On average human beings have 40 to 50 years of an active working period, if you subtract childhood and old age. These 40 to 50 years are very crucial, as crucial as the 100 of 1000 years you will spend in heaven" (respondent 8[5]).

Such an understanding of a practically applied Islam is mirrored in the membership section of the PFI's (2014) Constitution, noting that new recruits must display "qualities of compassion, courage, discipline, obedience, sincerity and commitment", while PFI activists emphasised virtues such as compassion, modesty, and gratitude as key characteristics of the movement. By stressing that their positions and ranks within the PFI structure are only for a limited amount of time, leaders also underlined their humility and a strong desire to "give back" to the community, rather than being self-interested and rent seeking. A senior activist described half-jokingly: "My wife is always angry with me, because I am never at home, always traveling". He also said that "I struggle to read when I travel these days, because of my permanent exhaustion. In the car or the plane, I usually fall asleep straight away". During my fieldwork, cadres have also acknowledged the sacrifices made by their superiors and mentors.

[119] PFI leaders would stop their speeches during events when the azan (call to prayer) was heard from a local mosque near the campaign ground. I could observe the reactions from the local audience at mass events in Mysore, and Bangalore in 2012. Muslim attendees were confused and asked each other why the speakers had interrupted their speeches. Soon, the noise level rose among the audience and people started to talk about their own business until the speakers resumed.

[120] Schimmel (1980: 194) coined the term practical Islamic morality, when she described how Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh movement in colonial India agitated the ritual focused and inward-looking Deobandi ulama, by promoting a practical and worldly, rather than a spiritual Islamic morality.

The promotion of a practical Islamic morality by movements such as the PFI resembles the Weberian Protestant work ethic. Weber (2002 [1905]) has linked the Calvinist work ethic with the rise of modern day capitalism. He argued that the particular religious outlook, the practice of rationally reinvesting profit, the suppression of emotions, as well as belief in worldly success as a sign of entering paradise gave these Protestant communities a comparative advantage over their Catholic competitors. Moreover, Weber highlighted the social transformation from ritualistic virtues and the focus on tradition and the afterlife, towards the Protestant emphasis on worldliness and the individual self. A similar change happened to Indian Muslims in the colonial era, when the ulama circumvented the infidel or jahiliyyah state by promoting individual consciousness and piety. Even though the ulama and conservative Deobandis are currently seen as hampering the socio-economic progress of Indian Muslims, it can be argued that they laid the foundation for the new phenomenon of Muslim citizenship politics by focussing on individualistic virtues and self-improvement[121] (Robinson 1997, 2007).

The PFI runs various Islamic schools for "religious propagation and education" (PFI 2011d), and offers workshops and campaigns such as "Beloved Prophet" or "Know Islam", while the movement teaches Islamic formulas to improve the "self", "family" and "to build a society based on values and ethics" (PFI 2011b, PFI 2011c). According to senior activists, the PFI has taught its members and ordinary Muslims "the social and political message of the Quran". The PFI's objective is to promote Islam as a social force and eradicate social and cultural evils, thereby promoting an agenda of self-cultivation to its members. Moreover, the PFI's

[121] Robinson (1997, 2007) has argued that the colonial context was enormously important for the development of new ideas, such as the inner jihad, and to the ideological reconciliation of Islam and modernity. From the 19th century to the present day, the awareness of European dominance has released vast amounts of creative energy among Muslims in India. Muslim intellectuals have developed a new historical consciousness that has enabled them to foster an alternative understanding of Islam that moves beyond the traditional teachings of the ulama. These Islamic scholars have laid out the individual virtues and characteristics of good Muslims, such as hard work, diligence, humility and frugality, which resonated with social movements such as the PFI and its middle class leadership.

leadership, largely from South India, has promoted a specific version of Islam and Islamic practice to Muslims in other parts of the country. According to a PFI leader in Cochin in 2015, the PFI's commitment to a disciplined and trained cadre-base stems from the inspiration of the "prophetic movement that came to Kerala in the early days of Islam" (respondent 23). The President of the Rehab India Foundation (PFI's development wing) and scholar of Arabic, who just returned from a trip to Dubai, elaborated that

> "Islam in Kerala came from Yemen with the arrival of Arab traders, who were close to the Prophet. In North India, Islam came with kings and saints much later, when the true Islamic message was already corrupted, and Islamic practice became contaminated with caste and dowry habits[122]" (respondent 36).

A researcher from Mangalore noted that Muslims from Kerala are convinced that "they are closer to Mecca and the teachings of the Prophet compared to the rest of Indian Muslims, because of their regional history of Islam and their long cultural exchange with Arab countries" (respondent 139). In addition, various PFI leaders and senior members have spent substantial time in the Middle East (see Chapter 3), where religion is a strong identity marker. During my research, political commentators have argued that these Muslims may have distanced themselves from the more quotidian Islam in India and started to feel morally superior by having "lived in the heart land of Islam" (respondents 80, 96 and 151). Consequently, like other reformists such as the Salafists, the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Deoband and Tablighi Jamaat movements, the PFI is trying to purify Islam from certain prevailing un-Islamic and syncretic religious practices, including saint worship. For example, members stressed that the PFI teaches the dangers of Islamic practice being tainted by elements of Hindu culture and customs – in particular in North India. A rank-and-file cadre of the PFI in Delhi, 2015, recalled that

[122] Sikand (2005: 123) argued "India's first contact with Islam was in Kerala, where for centuries before the rise of Islam Arab traders visited local ports to trade. Legend has it that a group of Muhammad's companions visited Kerala… whatever the truth of the story may be, ample evidence exists of Muslim merchants from Arabia settling along the Malabar coast not long after the Prophet's death".

> "at my dada's [grandfather's] house, they are still practicing the Agni [holy fire] ritual at weddings. Muslims from North India are still following the caste system and accept dowries. But the PFI demands to abolish these un-Islamic costumes and supports members who reject monetary gifts at weddings[123]".

This agenda is similar to other Islamic movements in South Asia. Hansen (2000:263) has stressed that various Deobandi movements promote "doctrinal purity and a pedagogical effort to displace and refine the Islam practised by the common ajlaf [non-elite] Muslim". The PFI offers supporting funds for bridegrooms in order to compensate those who decline a dowry from the bride's family (PFI 2012c), and leaders regard such impure practices as harmful to the community's socio-economic and spiritual advancement. Returning to the theoretical argument on the compatibility of Islam and human rights in Chapter 2, the President of the All Indian Imam's Council explained to me that "violations of human rights occur only through misguided, local, and impure practises of Islam. We are teaching common Muslims about the value of pure faith in order to overcome these violations and empower the community" (respondent 3). Women's rights activists have also highlighted the negative repercussions of the Muslim personal law being "uncodified" and "customary practices have superseded Quranic law", which has weakened the status of Muslim women (Inside Islam 2012).

In this context, during my fieldwork PFI cadres stressed that membership equates with becoming a "better" Muslim. New cadres emphasised how they have started to regularly practice "namaz" and "roza during Ramzan", become disciplined and studious, and participate in social welfare activities, after they joined the PFI. In a conversation with two Campus Front of India (CFI) activists in Bangalore, one of them, aged 23, argued that "after I joined the movement I learned about Islam and what it really means. PFI taught me how to

[123] Agni is the most important ritual of Hindu weddings. The ritual represents the legal part of a Hindu marriage, in which the couple has to complete seven circuits of the Holy Fire (Agni).

put Islam into practice" (respondent 33). The other member, aged 27, who was with the Tablighi Jamaat before he joined the PFI, noted that

> "Islam was always important to me. I was born and socialised in a Muslim family, and studied Islam in seminars and the mosque. But only when I became a member of the PFI, I learned from the leadership and in training camps how to put this knowledge in practice, and fulfil my social responsibility and duty towards insaniyat [humanity]" (respondent 34).

The notion of "serving humanity" or "insaniyat" was often expressed by my interviewees. A CFI member in Calicut told me that "as a Muslim you have the duty to take care of insaniyat. By working for PFI, you are working for the cause of insaniyat, and you will reach jannah [paradise]. Also when you work for us, you will get good satisfaction in this world" (respondent 32). This was the prescribed formula of the PFI: political work combined with religious motivation will lead to paradise or jannah. The importance of spiritual rewards and paradise through membership is also indicated in a memorial note by the PFI: "Let us remember 46 brothers from five states who departed from us during the report period. May Almighty Allah bestow them and make them join with us and their beloveds in His paradise" (PFI 2014c). PFI leaders viewed martyrdom as legitimate form of self-defence, but not explicitly to kill enemies. To fight and even die for god in the context of protecting the community is seen as the highest virtue (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.1.1.). Lower-ranking PFI cadres were convinced that "confident Muslims", who are "familiar with Islam will join the movement quite naturally". Research on Islamic movements has suggested that Islamic activists often frame protest participation and recruitment issues as "a religious obligation by subjecting the political situation to religious definitions and interpretations" (Saheli 1996: 51). In the PFI offices, political banners and posters were displayed with slogans such as "remember in your dua [prayer], the innocent victims of Gaza" or "give your udhiyya [blood sacrifice or meat donation] to the most deserving" underlined with pictures of crying, blood drenched or starved children (see also Rehab 2016). An expert on political Islam in India, and

a former PFI supporter, noted in his office in Delhi in 2015, that PFI leaders and cadres "believe that they are 'tehreeki' or 'people of the movement', who share a similar vision of Islam with Islamic movements such as Hamas or the Muslim Brotherhood" (respondent 84, also respondent 140). Correspondingly, in the PFI Media House in Mangalore in 2012, the PFI Chairman advised me to study "what kind of Islam has influenced our movement: Why are we not like the Tabilghi Jamaat or the Salafists [he asked rhetorically]? We are more like Hamas, a religiously inspired community organisation" (respondent 18[2]). Robinson (2004: 126) has indicated that Islamic groups such as Hamas are first and foremost institutional and cadre-based movements, which rely to a lesser extent on charismatic leaders or piety politics. For example, Hamas was able to mobilise support in the West Bank and Gaza through its vast institutional networks and various types of social services, while Hezbollah has used a similar institutional approach in various Shia neighbourhoods in Southern Beirut (Norton 2007). In interviews and publications, the PFI leadership often expressed solidarity with Islamic groups including Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood under Mohamed Morsi, describing them as notable resistance forces and organisational role models. Therefore, PFI leaders have propagated to its members and supporters that in order to be a "good" or "real" Muslim, one needs to be politically active[124]. Critics contend that there are very few Muslim organisations in India that would subscribe to the PFI's understanding of Islam, because of their minority status and anxieties not to offend and "get crushed" by Hindu nationalists (respondents 42, 58, 59 and 75).

Even though these spiritual incentives and Islamic frames propagated by the PFI were significant reasons why individuals would join the movement, some cadres also indicated

[124] Political observers have argued that PFI leaders were influenced by the Islamic theorist Maududi and his understanding of Jihad (respondent 140). Maududi himself argued that Jihad is "part of the overall defence of Islam. Jihad means to struggle to the utmost of one's capacity… If however, a section of Muslims offer themselves for Jihad, the whole community as a whole is absolved of its responsibility. But if none comes forward, everyone is guilty… Jihad is as much a primary duty of the Muslims concerned as are the daily prayers or fasting. One who shirks it is a sinner. His very claim to being a Muslim is doubtful. He is a hypocrite whose Ibadah [Worship] and prayers are a sham, a worthless, hollow show of devotion" (Maududi 1960: 118)".

their hopes for material rewards such as jobs and monetary returns. Such aspirations were expressed by members regarding the PFI's ability to provide scholarships to individuals who have served and proved their commitment to the movement. In a conversation in Delhi in 2015, a PFI activist explained that he could only finish 12th grade in school and was unable to pursue a degree in higher education because of financial and family constraints. He was concerned that he would turn 30 very soon, and regarded the PFI as his last chance to "get into the mainstream", expressing his hope of starting a degree in law or journalism with the PFI's financial support. The PFI also offered a variety of manual and low skilled jobs, and internships. Office staff and lower-ranking cadres confirmed that they have received "some pocket money" or "a place to sleep for free", when they emphasised non-spiritual rewards such as employment and education.

6.3.1. Social Capital and the Role of the Ulama

This section will highlight the impact on social movements when they align with religious authorities (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, Nepstad 2015). The PFI is investing major organisational energy into aligning with religious authorities, including the training and recruitment of the ulama, in order to gain access to the ulama's social capital and religious networks. While such alliances with religious authorities are taking place, PFI activists have expressed strong reservations about the ulama's approach to politics. The PFI Vice Chairman argued that

> "these maulanas who think the Sharia should be followed to the last letter without any changes, have zero understanding of the universal value of Islam. [He continued by arguing that] some ulama are against music and instruments. We have debated that in the PFI, and came to the conclusion that it is perfectly Islamic. So we have a movement's anthem and use bands. We would never speak out such fatwas. It's not our business" (respondent 8[5], see PFI anthem, Appendix 15).

In a similar vein, a senior PFI spokesperson became careful in choosing his words when we spoke about faith in his office in Cochin: “Islam always combines theory and practice. Let the ulama disagree with our message. We live in a democracy without a monopoly on Islamic interpretations, even though the mullahs like to think that it’s their private property” (respondent 23[3]). In this context, the Islamic understanding of PFI leaders correspond with a growing number of liberal Muslims, including Asghar Ali Engineer or Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, who assert that modern, educated and well informed lay Muslims have the right to speak about and advise on religious matters, as there is no formal clerical hierarchy in Islam (Engineer 2004, Nasr 2009, Wahiduddin 2010, Ramadan 2010).This outlook resonated with the PFI’s cadre-base, among whom I observed a critical stance towards the ritual-focused ulama. One member, aged 30, who is originally from West Bengal, praised the increasingly more modern interpretation of Islamic practice by PFI leaders:

> “I disagree with the inward-looking approach of the ulama. Why should we only focus on micro issues and personal matters? The ulama tells us that we should rectify ourselves first, then the family and only after that we are allowed to focus on the society. These micro issues should go hand in hand with macro issues” (respondent 7[3]).

A female Muslim counsellor in Bangalore similarly argued that “the new generation is unable to communicate with the ulama. My boys cannot look up to them. The language is a problem, and the ulama don’t know what is happening in the teenage world. So I think there is a communication gap that we have to bridge” (respondent 46). Therefore, the PFI’s modern interpretation of the Quran and its focus on worldly and political issues such as social justice is highly appealing among the young Muslim cadre-base.

However, Chapter 3 has already illustrated that despite the influence of modernist movements and the rise of the Muslim middle class, the ulama and traditional Islamic movements are still very influential in contemporary India, serving as the legitimate leaders

of the community and wielding the ability to mobilise the masses. As a result, the PFI leadership has restrained from publically undermining and criticising the ulama, since the PFI has benefitted from the networks of the ulama and its Islamic resources. A Bangalore based PFI activist said in 2011 that "if you go against the ulama, the whole community will turn against you! All these secular organisations that are attacking the ulama for being the root cause of Muslim backwardness, are a bunch of fools by ignoring this psychological fact" (respondent 1[2]). Studies of Islamic movements have placed substantial emphasis on the role of organisational resources, such as the mosque, religious schools, Islamic NGOs and civil society organisations (e.g. professional and student associations). For example, the mosque is a crucial space for mobilisation and is widely used by Islamic groups to recruit new members (Wiktorowicz 2004b, 2006). For the PFI, mosque and mohalla networks are still more important than social media to mobilise and recruit members, despite the PFI's large proportion of youth supporters[125] (respondents 9, 11, and 19). During a conversation about community mobilisation with a PFI activist in Calicut in 2015, he pointed out that "as Muslims we have a wonderful system of communication. Every Friday during the jumuah [mid-day prayer] and khutbah [sermon], we can pass down our messages and activities to the people… It enormously helps to hear and see the Imams in the masjid to spread our message" (respondents 32, also 45). The PFI State President of Karnataka echoed this in 2011, by critically remarking that "traditionally, Muslims were not allowed to talk about dunya in the masjid. In the eyes of the Imams, Islam could not be political, but had to remain a private matter" (respondent 1[5]). However, the PFI was able to expand its trust-base within parts of the ulama, who slowly started to promote PFI's message and invited PFI activists to speak in the mosques about social justice and political obligations within Islam. A

[125] Della Porta (2015) has argued that the influence of social media for the planning of collective action is often overrated. Instead, successful social movements gain momentum through steady cadre-based mobilisation and door-to-door campaigning, in which Instagram photos, Facebook videos or WhatsApp messages only play a limited, though not insignificant role. In addition, the Indian state has used the internet increasingly for surveillance, while it restricts online activities of potential adversaries and dissenters (Freedom House 2015).

PFI leader noted that “over the past 20 years, we have seen a highly conservative ulama becoming more liberal in terms of Islamic rituals, which started to cooperate with us in many areas” (respondent 30).

Inquiring further about the role of the ulama for the PFI, I interviewed one of the PFI’s leading Islamic authorities, the President of the All India Imams Council (AIIC), in his house in a lower middle class neighbourhood in the outskirts of Bangalore in 2011. The Imam, aged 60, is originally from Rajasthan, and described himself as a “learner” and “student”. He argued that "our slogan is Imams for social change! An Imam should not confine himself to religious prayers and his duties in masjids. We should become leaders outside of our spiritual comfort zone, participate in out of mosque activities and lead the community in social, political and legal matters[126]” (respondent 3). In an excerpt of his speech, the AIIC President provided an example of the PFI political message, by stressing that “in my sermons in the masjid, I asked the people who are the real terrorists and explain that it is the state and the so-called secular parties. They created the [terrorist] label and fake encounters” (PFI 2011). In the past, the AIIC has organised legal awareness programmes and political training in local mosques for Imams, madrasah students and local Muslim politicians. Consequently, the PFI has invested considerable efforts to “reform the ulama, and use the reformed ulama to reform society”, as noted by a PFI activist in Bangalore (respondent 22). The last section will show how the PFI leadership has established the movement as a respected social service provider, while it has facilitated engagement in welfare activities to its cadre-base.

[126] Another senior PFI leader and Islamic authority within the PFI conveyed a similar repugnance that “they [ulama] have built and travel in their madrasah empire”, which he ironically termed “Maulana Raj” (respondent 36).

6.4. Social Services, Welfare Activism and Riot Relief

In the office of the Rehab India Foundation in Delhi, a senior PFI leader read out from his iPad an excerpt of a speech he has recently given at a human rights related conference: "We [the PFI] are getting our motivation from the earth [constitution] and from the heavens [Quran]". He continued without looking at the iPad: "In our understanding of Islam, if you are a Muslim, it is your religious duty to help your community and your nation. The first thing God asked Adam was '*bugh se asadi milna hai*' [are you free from hunger]?" (respondent 36). In other words, community development and religious motivation are inseparable for PFI activists. Candland (2000: 356) has argued that

> "many social scientists see in religious conviction an eclipse of reason and in religious motivation a constraint on the enlightened social behaviour. Buttressing these perspectives is the observation that religious identity and religious differences are often seemingly the sources of prejudges and violence… Thus, in much social science literature there is an aversion to treating religion as the basis for progressive social solidarity".

This argument is consistent with the current view of secular humanitarianism that has become so dominant that religiously motivated organisations will drop their religious identity to emulate secular groups. By doing so, these religious actors may avoid being branded as exclusivist or anti-national organisations, revealing the incompatibility between religion and "modern secular interpretations of professionalism" (Ager and El-Naik 2015: 18). Scholars have argued that such pressure to obey secular norms has often harmed the emotional and physical needs of beneficiaries such as riot victims, religious or ethnic minorities and refugees by ignoring their beliefs, values and traditions (FitzGibbon 2014, Kidwai 2017). In developing countries in particular, religion is often less confined to the private sphere, and can yield "enormous influence on development and political mobilisation" (Bano and Deneulin 2009: 94). Research on religious organisations has illustrated that Islamist groups are involved in and have demonstrated the organisational

capacities to carry out manifold social service and disaster relief projects. "[Such] investment in welfare work […] gives members a sense of achievement and keeps their morale high" as Bano (2012: 86) argued: "Given the high emphasis placed within Islam on engaging in welfare work, the members get a sense of personal religious gain by engaging in welfare activities [and] they are contributing towards the main goal of establishing social justice". Moreover, De Cordier (2010: 479), in his research on Islamist welfare work in India, reminds his readers that "while social work and charity by Islamic faith-based organisations in majority Muslim contexts has been relatively well-documented over the last few years, less attention is being paid to areas where Muslims form a minority and, as such, face particular challenges of both social uplifting and definition of identity". In order to address this research gap within a Muslim minority context, the final section will highlight how the PFI facilitates engagement with welfare activities, which constitute an important source of commitment and (spiritual) motivation for its support base.

An important organisational focus of PFI's welfare agenda has been its disaster and riot relief work – such as the provision of medicine, food, clothes and housing as well as surveys, documentation and fact finding missions. The PFI's financial report of 2013-2014 stated that the organisation has spent more than 60 lakhs (£62,000) on disaster and riot relief (PFI 2014d), while the Rehab India Foundation has listed annual expenditures of 2 cores (£250,000) in its financial report (Rehab 2014). I have interviewed various PFI cadres who have been active during various relief missions such as during the floods in Bihar and Kashmir, the Mangalore flight accident, the Assam and Muzaffarnagar riots, and the Tsunami of 2004. According to a Muslim journalist who has covered humanitarian interventions in the past, the PFI has acquired a reputation for effective disaster relief work. He further noted in the context of a riot in Tamil Nadu in 2012: "PFI activists were the first who reached the place to provide basic amenities for the affected Dalit villages" (respondent

51 [4]). Moreover, the Hindu (2014) reported in the context of the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots that “the Popular Front’s medical and legal aid team from Kerala is cited [by Muslim survivors] as a notable exception [from the] haphazard humanitarian relief efforts by the government, sakari [government] doctors and other relief organisations, factoring in the local needs of the [Muslim] victims”. Chandhoke (2007, 2009), however, has highlighted some of the negative effects of Islamic relief work in her civil society study of the aftermath of the communal violence in Ahmadabad in 2002. While Islamic organisations helped victims to resettle and provided for their basic needs, their exclusive faith-based development approach may have contributed to increased isolation and ghettoisation of the affected Muslim community (see also Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012). This could also be seen in the wake of the above-mentioned Muzaffarnagar riots, during which increased ghettoisation through state failure and religious polarisation has been effectively used by the Hindu nationalists to consolidate the Hindu vote in the latest Uttar Pradesh election (Mander 2016, Indian Express 2017).

In conversations with the PFI cadre-base, I observed their passion and enthusiasm when they spoke about their participation in welfare activities and travel experiences. These young, mainly South Indian, PFI cadres revealed a sense of pride in their work, as well as a sentiment of hurt regarding the concerning socio-economic conditions of Muslims in North India. Several PFI members from South India who recalled their travel experiences to villages in Bihar, Haryana or Uttar Pradesh, argued that “people reside with religion in these places. You won’t find that in Kerala”; “in Bihar there is still child labour, can you imagine?”; or “North Indian Muslims are suffering from the absence of political protection and security”. A 25 years old CFI member from Kerala elaborated in Calicut in 2014 how his formative travel and work experiences have shaped his understanding and political outlook. He spent three months in Kashmir in the wake for the earthquake and two months in Muzaffarnagar after

the riots in 2013. He stressed how he carried out a survey (as part of PFI's fact finding mission in Muzaffarnagar) of female rape victims in order to help them to obtain legal assistance and compensation[127]. In Kashmir, the activist recalled how he stayed with local Muslim families: "It is the best way to get to know the local needs. I was so impressed with the coping strategies of Kashmiris. They know how to survive[128]" (respondent 32). Other PFI interviewees reported their engagement in welfare activities and travel experiences in relation to their own social standing. "We gained a lot of respect by going on these relief missions" noted a CFI activist, while showing me pictures on his smart phone –like trophies – of where he slept and what kind of work he had done. Another CFI member reassured me that traveling and working for the PFI has not negatively impacted his degree: "I always carry my books on these trips". Through engagement in welfare activities, the PFI facilitates meaningful life experiences that are very appealing for a segment of its predominately young adult cadre-base. By participating in relief work, PFI members are provided with an opportunity to gratify their desire to fulfil religious duty and their yearnings for travel, adventure, camaraderie and prestige in ways that contrast with the inward-looking and passive approach to politics of the traditional Islamic authorities. Meanwhile, these cadres have learned more about their own country, fellow Muslims and other communities from different regions. Hence, Islamic movements, including the PFI, are not only appealing to their young Muslim cadre-base, "because they offer modes of being and belonging, but also

[127]A PFI activists gave me a campaign brochure "Popular Front of India – Responding to Muzaffernagar: A Brief Report of Relief Activities" (PFI 2014b), in which he proudly pointed toward a picture showing him participating in some relief activities. The brochure listed various accomplishments: "At Muzaffarnagar Popular Front Volunteers have started spot surveys among victims and made assessment of their basic needs. During the first phase, 7 teams worked for 8 days and 14 camps were covered. The details of 10989 persons belonging to 2141 families were recorded on the prescribed data sheet. The second phase of the survey was carried out by a team constituted by 10 members. The survey lasted 7 days and was able to record the details of 14337 persons of 2717 families in 23 camps. The tabulation of the collected data continues".

[128] The PFI has highlighted the modesty and hospitality of its Muslims constituency, illustrated in this brief excerpt of a campaign summary in Delhi: "Taqreed, a middle aged gentleman, who was hearing about the Popular Front, and the conference [in Delhi] for the first time, cordially received the PFI activists. He was insisting that food should be taken from his house… He said to the activists who were trying to avoid his compulsion: 'This is our Muslim pride… You shouldn't look for another room to stay'" (PFI 2011f).

because they construct new imaginations of the community and the individual" (Diouf 2003:7).

The last section will show that through these tangible welfare activities, the PFI is able to build local rapport with its Muslim target constituency in cases where PFI members go from house to house, reach out to rural or semi-urban areas, inquire about local needs and grievances, and offer advice, legal aid and material support to marginalised Muslim communities. In this way, I will follow Norton's (2007: 112) study on Hezbollah, in which he emphasised that "it is impossible to appreciate the striking durability and loyalty that [modern Islamic movements] generate, unless one understands that their strength derives from the strong social fabric that they have woven over the years".

6.4.1. Office Activities and Ramadan Distributions

> "Either we come to the people or the people come to us with financial requests or medical problems. We will try to help them. We also go to people's homes, pay for their children's school money and offer them small loans. For those reasons, people like us" (PFI State President, Bangalore 2011 respondent 1[2]).

During my fieldwork, I could closely observe how the PFI engaged with the wider local Muslim constituency in diverse social settings in South India. The movement has frequently organised educational programmes such as school chalo [lets go to school] that included the provision of loans for school fees (PFI 2013e). PFI affiliated social workers, teachers, lawyers and Imams have provided counselling and advice for career management, family and financial planning and settled neighbourhood disputes. The PFI has managed health awareness programmes, sporting events and taught how to eradicate social evils (e.g. alcohol, drugs). Leaders also emphasised institution building such as the movement's training centres and workshops for journalism and legal practise. By providing welfare and social services, Islamic groups are able to advance their agenda and social rapport within

vulnerable communities, while "its creation of a vast network of parallel structures and institutions constitutes a form of nonviolent intervention" in the context of an unreliable public service (Husseini 2009: 237).

The PFI's most prominent social service and welfare activities occur annually during the month of Ramadan. I was conducting fieldwork in Bangalore, Mysore and Mangalore during that month in August 2011, and observed and participated in various social programmes. Such Ramadan activities are important for Islamic organisations and the motivation of their cadre-base. Members presented photo albums, lists of expenses, and took me on tours of local butcheries and bakeries. Welfare activities were meticulously documented, and published on websites and in local newspapers. The PFI distributed various "aid-" or "Qurbani-kits" in front of mosques, garages, and in street stalls with large organisational banners in the background. Women, mainly dressed in black burkas (from "poor social backgrounds" as a PFI member explained to me), queued to collect aid packages in front of local PFI offices[129]. Such local PFI offices are predominately located in lower middle class mohallas, which indicates social proximity to their core supporters. These offices resemble community centres, in which individuals and groups can freely walk in and out, spend time, express their concerns, local grievances and petitions unconstrained and often without appointment; spaces in which social activities, support and the dissemination of public information is organised. I observed auto-rickshaws being loaded and leaving PFI compounds to deliver food to local schools and poor neighbourhoods. These local offices are

[129] A PFI activist in Mangalore in 2011, who gave me a night tour on his motorbike to show me PFI's social services during Ramadan, pointed out that the PFI spends 8 lakhs on Ramadan distribution in all of Karnataka and that the movement reaches over 3000 households in the state, which does not include household sharing. He further explained that each aid-kit is worth 500 rupees, and contains "sabzi, ghee, mithai, daal, chawal, atta aur gosht [various food items]" (respondent 5). The Karnataka financial report for 2011 – 2012 illustrated that the PFI has spent 19 lakhs for Ramadan kits, and has reached 8003 families. In 2013 the PFI spent 95 lakhs for Ramadan kits throughout the entire country, according to its Annual Report (2014). In 2015, PFI's Rehab India Foundation claimed to have reached "79,154 families in fourteen States of India. We [Rehab] disbursed 79,154 Qurbani food kits in 1033 villages situated in 132 districts of 14 states across our country. 3,95,770 impoverished people were benefited" (Rehab 2016).

practical spaces, equipped with round tables, basic IT facilities, mattresses and blankets for local staff and visitors, where relics of previous campaigns such as sketches and maps of event locations or banners with slogans from political rallies were still lying around ("e.g. stop the Zionist agenda on Indian soil").

In the following section, I will provide a brief insight into the working of a local PFI office as an important facilitator of social service provision, welfare activities and conflict mediation. When I arrived for my interview at a PFI district office in Karnataka in November 2012, a local gym owner was chatting to the District President, Yusuf, about his planned business expansion and how the PFI could assist him. The two men were old friends and grew up in the same neighbourhood. I joined the conversation for a while until we were interrupted by an elderly woman who entered the office. She begged the District President for help in finding a "new shelter" for her and her "sick husband", who has worked in "steel that ruined his health". The family recently lost their "pukka [brick] house" during a flood, and have "lived in a cheap and improvised cardboard house" since then. The District President reassured her that the PFI would try to help her find a new place. A PFI financial report of 2011-2012 disclosed that the organisation has paid for house repairs, covered electricity charges, and provided financial and legal support to the poor to start small enterprises (PFI 2012c). After the women left, Yusuf provided me some insights into the lists of scholarships, distribution of books, uniforms, paid bus charges, and other office accounts as well as pictures of award campaigns by the PFI in the district[130]. According to these lists, only a minority of scholarship and loan recipients were actual PFI members, but most of them were sympathetic, according to Yusuf. Amounts varied from 1,500 rupees to 10,000 rupees, but rarely exceeded that amount. PFI District offices have to send monthly reports, with

[130] Showing me the movement's documentation of social activities became a common routine where ever I visited a PFI office and met local leaders. In 2013 and 2014, scholarships, school expenditures and other educational initiatives exceeded 14 cores all over India. 20% of the allocation of graduate stipends was reserved for the children of Imams, as an attempt to address specific sub-groups within the marginalised sections (see PFI 2014d).

spreadsheets of expenses, to the state office in Bangalore (for an example, see PFI 2012c). Beyond that, the districts were mostly self-governing.

After the afternoon namaz break at a local mosque, which was a popular gathering point for PFI members, we returned to the office, where a small delegation of five butchers and beef merchants already sat around a table, anticipating the arrival of the District President. In the following negotiation, the butchers urged Yusuf and the PFI to settle a financial dispute with the police on their behalf, in which some police inspectors have demanded "unreasonable bribes". During a lengthy argument, Yusuf reluctantly offered to negotiate with the police and to bring the issue to court, if necessary. However, Yusuf also warned about the repercussions such legal actions may involve, including the harassment of employees and family members and the loss of profit of their business. After about an hour, the delegation left, slightly disillusioned, but willing to carefully consider the options laid out by the District President. Yusuf was sceptical about the possibility of a positive outcome for the meat merchants, reflecting upon his experience of several court cases in the past. When I was about to leave in the evening, an elderly man approached Yusuf outside the office and demanded an additional 2000 rupees for a computer course for his daughter. Yusuf appeared somewhat irritated and annoyed by the request, arguing that the daughter has already received a PFI scholarship. After a brief exchange, Yusuf instructed a staff member to give the man 500 rupees, asking him to try with this amount first. In case it was insufficient, Yusuf instructed the man to come back another day. He then paid for my auto rickshaw to the bus station. During my time in the office, Yusuf, who was in his mid-forties, answered many phone calls, instructed members, and left the office on various errands. He was wearing sunglasses and a purple shirt, and had evident social standing in the community, which was conveyed by frenetic celebration by the masses when he emerged on

stage at public events. Yusuf and other local PFI leaders are described as "people's men[131]" and role models for marginalised Muslims, who feel betrayed by elite Muslim politicians and India's political system. During my fieldwork, young PFI members often talked about corruption in parliament, and were disgruntled by the Brahmanic structures of secular parties such as the Aam Admi party and the INC. The next chapter will illustrate how the PFI is trying to fill this political void by promoting an agenda of value-based politics.

6.5. Conclusion

The Muslim minority community and especially semi-educated lower middle class Muslim youths are affected by unemployment and discrimination in the job market (Sachar Report 2006). During my fieldwork, many PFI cadres expressed their frustrations over the perceived contrast of abject poverty and experienced discrimination on the one hand and great wealth of their political representatives on the other hand. These young adults have watched and read about misconduct and allegations of corruption in the Lok Saba, implicating senior government officials and their family members. This perceived moral void by politicians and business tycoons has created a strong sense of alienation among PFI supporters and Indian Muslims in general. Therefore, this chapter gave an account of the different strategies used by the PFI to fill this moral and political void, appeal to disgruntled Muslim constituencies by providing a sense of "system accessibility", and by aiming for a value and mindset transformation among its supporters through political education and religious frames. Therefore, I have analysed the PFI's internal modus operandi that combined political and legal education with religious discourses on practical Islamic morality, including the

[131]The term was borrowed from Osella and Osella's (2009:206) study on Muslims in Kerala, in which they described how the Muslim community leader PV "enjoys a reputation as a 'people's man': he has brought hundreds of people to the Gulf [Middle East] and is always ready 'to help out'. When we arrive for our meeting, we find a crowd of people, and as we walk together, PV stops to listen to the pleas of two elderly women – one Hindu and one Muslim – to whom he readily gives Rs 500 (around £8.50) each, two crisp notes taken from a fat wallet. When one woman keeps following him, PV soon gets annoyed. 'You had 500 rupees', he hisses to her. 'What else do you want?'".

monitoring of moral behaviour among members, social service provisions, disaster and riot relief missions, as well as legal aid. Chapter 7 will analyse the notion of value politics as a critique of India's current economic paradigm and modernity. I will demonstrate how Islamic movements have promoted an agenda of anti-corruption, good governance, gender equality and secularism, while aligning with other marginalised non-Muslim groups.

Chapter 7:

Muslim Citizenship Politics and Political Modernity in India

> "[Muslims] march ahead towards the objective of ushering a God oriented and humane civilisation for the benefit of entire humanity" (Radiance 2015).

> "Islam provides the solution and ideological foundation for everything from a proper market to a proper parliament, [whereas] the revival of Muslims has to happen through the re-connection with the Quran. The Quran has always guided us through history [tarikh]. Every fall in history came when we morally departed from it (Senior JIH Leader, Bangalore 2011, respondent 49 [3])

This chapter will illustrate that Islamic movements can promote an ethical discourse that is comparable with environmental and anti-globalisation protests around the world (Euben 1999), which does not emphasise political violence and liberation but virtues such as civility, honour and dignity; the "soft words of ethical life" (Devji 2005: 132, see also Mahmood 2005). For instance, Alam (2008) argued that Muslim activists in India have started to demand respect and recognition, "challeng[ing] the deep rooted contempt by upper castes and middle class urbanites". Theoretically, the chapter will address the debate around the moderation thesis and Islamic politics under India's secular state, which I have discussed in Chapter 2. I will highlight how Muslim groups have accommodated and shaped political space from the early 1990s onwards, which the INC government and its various minority initiatives including the Sachar Report in 2006 helped to create.

Giddens (1990: 1) has argued that "modernity refers to modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence". So-called modern societies, which are shaped by industrialisation, urbanisation, democratisation and secularisation, have replaced tradition by rationality and highly abstract systems relying on

experts in bureaucracy, governance, the health system and the media (Nandy 1988, Giddens 1991, Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1996, Asad 2003, Neal 2007). However, scholars have criticised the universal propagation and imposition of European or Western notions of modernity, progress and development (Escobar 1995, Easterly 2006), and the ignorance of multiple, competing and constantly changing realities of modernity (Roy 1994, Arce and Long 2001, Neal 2007). Sociological studies have also questioned the assumption that modernity and rational knowledge will eventually lead to certainty and the betterment of humanity. Instead, these researchers scrutinised the increasing uncertainties and fear as the unintended consequences of knowledge achievements and technological progress through the acceleration of modern influences on a global scale (Giddens 1991, Dunn 1998, Beck 1992 [1986], Bauman 2000).

Therefore, one of the aims of the chapter is to illustrate how Indian Islamic actors express a critique of India's modernity, raising awareness and mobilising around the unprecedented risks that arise from technological and economic changes, consumerism and the arrival of pluralistic lifestyles that threaten traditional institutions, including family, education, and cultural identities (Giddens 1990, Beck 1992, Ahmed 1992, Turner 1994, Barber 1995, Dunn 1998, Islam 2015). Section 7.1. will explore the notion of Muslim citizenship politics, which warns of various threats to Muslim culture and traditions through India's modernity, the economic system and corrupt politics. Thereby, the chapter will show that Muslim organisations are indicating a tactical commitment to gender equality and secular norms in order to align with non-Muslim groups. Although the critical agenda of modernity and efforts by Islamist groups to initiate female empowerment and political alignment with non-Muslim groups has been interpreted as a promising sign of democratic participation, Section 7.2 will highlight various concerns regarding current participatory politics in Muslim groups. Critics have argued that Islamic actors are deceptive and pragmatic, and would re-introduce

illiberal features and Islamise society if they win an official political mandate through elections (Schwedler 2004, Sheth 2009). Therefore, the remaining part of the chapter will discuss the gender bias within Muslim organisations, and other pertinent challenges for the formation of political alliances with liberal Muslims and non-Muslim groups that were encountered during my fieldwork.

Chapter 3 described the emergence of a wider trend of Muslim citizenship politics, which is now promoted by the majority of Islamic groups in India. My fieldwork suggests that various Muslim organisations are indeed aiming for a similar approach to Muslim politics. Hence, in addition to my case study, this chapter will show that the discourse that is promoted by the PFI is also resonating with Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH) and other parties, even though there are tensions and differences between these organisations. Their similar approach with respect to Muslim citizenship politics can be seen as a sign of greater organisational convergence and unity among Muslim groups, which I will discuss further in the conclusion of the thesis. In order to expand the debate, I will include my fieldwork data from the JIH, its political wing, the Welfare Party of India (WPI), the women's wing, the Girls Islamic Organisations (GIO), and student organisations such as Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) and Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM). Chapter 3 has briefly discussed the origin and relevance of the JIH for this study.

7.1. Value-Based Politics and the Moral Society

Gellner (1981) has argued that Islam is the religion with the most pronounced framework for societal structure and moral order. With religion resurfacing in public life, Islamic groups have used religious resources and theological knowledge to challenge and hold governments and market economies accountable, raising questions of what constitutes a moral society (Casanova 1994, Norris, and Inglehart 2004, Thomas 2005, Bano and Deneulin 2009). During

my fieldwork, Muslim leaders in India frequently warned of the "loss of moral rule" (respondent 148), "the decline of ethics in politics" (respondent 36), as well as an "erosion of values" among democratic parties (IUML 2011), caused by an aggressive Western-style modernity and pervasive corruption in the government. During my interviews with Muslim activists, a large number agreed that modernity has led to material wealth for some groups, but has also diminished spirituality, family values, and female modesty. For instance, the Secretary General of JIH in Delhi in 2014 expressed his concerns about the increasing divorce rates in India: "Muslim families are confused. Families are breaking down. Isn't it crazy that they can't live together anymore" (respondent 146). In this context, Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH have invoked a language of ethical politics and notions of a morally responsible society. Thereby, they have promoted the importance of institutions such as the family, school and religious authorities, and focused on normative questions of what is morally permissible in politics and in society. This type of politics, which is ignored in policy circles, aims at a moral access point to appeal to those Muslims who feel threatened by the Indian state that appears to undermine their culture, religion and self-worth as a minority. Muslim activists have used the term "value-based" politics[132] to indicate the anti-corruption and "clean" approach of Muslim citizenship politics, which is propagated by organisations such as the PFI and JIH. Value-based politics entails the use of Islamic symbolism and invocations of the Quran combined with political and constitutional assertions. The PFI and JIH's political formula of ethical, legal and Islamic discourses that seek to mobilise support and hold the state accountable has been used by other contemporary Islamist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood during the 2012 election campaign in Egypt. On the official website of the Brotherhood, Ikhwan (2012), the movement illustrated its proposed political and development programme that

[132] The Welfare Party's (JIH's political wing) President admitted that the "term value-based politics is awkward", because it's normative, and often runs against the rational ideal-type of politics (respondent 147), which has been described by Max Weber (1965 [1919]) in his essay "Politics of Vocation".

> "aims to build a society whose will is not defeated by that of a brutal state, corrupt regime, or foreign power – a society that occupies its rightful ranking among the world's nations, a society endowed with lofty values, science and thought in these times of information and knowledge economy and age of creativity and innovation… The project favours true democracy and national belonging, with Islam as a reference; and sets out with unpartable Egyptian pride".

Therefore, Islamic groups in India are critical of the liberal message promoted by secular elites and popular Muslim intellectuals, who emerged in the wake of India's liberalisation and communal tension of the early 1990s to keep Islam out of the public sphere[133]. In this context, I interviewed Siddique, a charismatic leader of the JIH in South India, at the construction site of a hospital in Bangalore in 2011. Siddique, who lived in the USA as a practising medical doctor for several years, was overseeing the hospital's construction on behalf of the JIH. Workers were carrying cement sacks into the building, which was already erected but the interior was yet to be finished. He gave me a quick tour and spoke a few words to the workers, who greeted him respectfully. After that, we sat down in one of the unfurnished and dusty operating rooms for the interview, in which Siddique stressed that

> "secular Muslims elites constantly engage with the question of modernity, but neglect Islamic principles. They take an un-Islamic route towards educational, economic and political development. For them, progress is equated with making money, sending rockets into space or increasing the numbers of Muslims who win Nobel Prizes and study for PhDs. This development model is detached from the core principles of the Quran" (respondent 49[3]).

My interviewees in the PFI and JIH heavily resisted to liberal attempts to confine Islam and Islamic culture to the private sphere, with one calling it a "cultural invasion" (respondent 50[2]). A CFI member in Calicut in 2015 stressed that "social, secular and political motivated

[133] During my interviews with PFI and JIH members, we often discussed the work of Muslim liberals affiliated to the magazine Islamic Voice in Bangalore, the Centre for Peace and Spiritually in Delhi and the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism in Mumbai, which was formerly run by Asghar Ali Engineer. A JNU based sociologist argued in Delhi in 2012 that after the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, these liberal Muslim elites could establish themselves as preferred spokesmen for Muslims by the Indian government, because of their promotion of forgiveness, peace, communal harmony and a non-assertive Islam in public (respondent 90).

work cannot be separated from Islamic objectives and religious activism. As Muslims, we have to work for the protection of our community and culture" (respondent 31). A similar view was expressed by India's father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi: "I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics ...You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments" (Gandhi 1958:63, cited in Nepstad 2004).

Among my interviewees affiliated to Islamic movements, there was a wider consensus that religion, and in particular the core values of Islam, can play a positive role in public life and for society in general. For instance, a senior PFI leader argued that "the Prophet's teachings will enhance confidence and self-esteem among young Muslims, who suffer from a lack of direction and social responsibility" (respondent 23[6], see also Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Hence, Muslim groups including the PFI and JIH reject the separation between cultural and national identity, which is often demanded of religious minorities by Hindu nationalists. In this context of a perceived cultural attack on religious minority communities in India, Mahmood (2005: xiv) has noted that Islamist movements "articulate against many of the concepts, sensibilities, practices, and forms of life associated against with a secular liberal understanding of religion [as private belief]. These movements use the Sharia not as a formula for the creation of an Islamic state but as a discourse of ethical and moral cultivation".

My fieldwork findings suggest a widespread concern among Islamic activists about the dilution of traditional Islamic values and morals through modern influences and beliefs that correspond with the emergence of plural lifestyles, individualism, sexual freedoms, and consumer behaviour among the global upper middle classes. Nasr (2009: 176) has argued that an Islamic revolution towards pluralism and an Islam-friendly modernity is being

spearheaded by a Muslim, middle class demography, including "bloggers, rappers, fashion designers, televangelists, human rights activists, and self-styled Islamic gurus and thinkers of all stripes who are avidly consuming its many offerings – movies, television programs, music, sermons, blogs and books". Nasr (2009: 186) further stressed that

> "today, Islamic reformist intellectuals, with their new modernity-friendly interpretation of Islam, write more in English, French, German or Dutch than in Arabic, Malay, Farsi or Urdu. They probably do so because their work fails to speak directly to the needs and ends of the majority of Muslims. Hence, the writings of the Islamic reformers have little to say about how to move the Muslim world past its economic stagnation and empower the poor".

According to Derre (2008) and Shumer-Smith (2000), India's English-speaking middle classes perceive outside conditions as rapidly changing, while for the non or lower middle class groups, life is largely characterised by economic stagnation and insecurity. Correspondingly, a 27 year-old, full time member of JIH's student organisation Solidarity (SYM) in Calicut in 2014, who held a master's degree in social work, argued that "the Muslim middle class goes to the Gulf [Middle East] in order to earn good money, build big houses, and buy fancy cars, but they have no interest in social causes anymore" (respondent 134[1]). Similarly, a PFI activist, speaking about Muslim civil society in Bangalore, light-heartedly noted that "these [upper middle class] Muslims haven't heard about our [PFI] activities. They sit in their AC offices, not leaving their comfort zone… Only when you isolate yourself, you can pretend you haven't heard about all the social problems and crimes that common Muslims face every day" (respondent 2[3]). Singerman (1995) has addressed the lack of public recognition of grassroots activism if it fails to speak directly to elite actors in government or legal bodies. Hence, grassroots movements such as the PFI often struggle to find adequate avenues for representation and support.

In Calicut in December 2014, I went with a 25 year old CFI activist to a public gathering that addressed the recent incidents in which the constitutional right of freedom of speech was

violated by Hindu nationalist groups. As soon as we entered the venue, where the speakers were already sitting on their chairs on the podium, the CFI activist instantly expressed his reservations: "These are all intellectuals: only words but no action". He was totally disinterested in the content of the speeches, and left shortly after our arrival (respondent 32). His disappointment can be interpreted as a more general criticism by religious minorities of the nature of civil society. Studies have addressed the exclusive character of civil society organisations that articulate the agenda of the English speaking, urban middle class in developing countries, whereas the interests of marginalised groups and religious minorities remain underrepresented in the civil society's discourse (Flyvbjerg 1998, Kaviraj and Khilnani 2001, Chandhoke 2003, Visweswaran 2010, Kumar 2016). In such circumstances of perceived mistreatment of Islam and Muslim culture by Muslim elites, civil society and the secular state, Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH have praised the parliamentary republic of Turkey and what is known as the "Turkish model": namely the state's management of religion and society by promoting Islamic piety under President Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP)[134]. The PFI (2014c) recommended a detailed study of Turkey that would benefit Indian Muslims:

> "The rise of Turkey under Rajab Tayyib Urdugan [sic] and his AK party is unprecedented and may pave the way to liberation of the Muslim world through systematic Islamic change in the society through democratic means. The Kemalist and anti-Islamic armed forces in the country have been neutralised and the country has become something like a beacon of hope and peace. It may be noted here that Kamal Ataturk, the so-called founder of modern Turkey established an anti-Islamic system which permitted no show of religious signs… How the AK Party has achieved this is to be studied in detail, even though Urdugan has many detractors".

[134] Erdogan was seen a powerful and pious leader and the AKP was admired for its new Islamism, and 'good' value promotion via religiously guided state institutions. For instance, the government department Diyanet "explicitly promotes itself both at home and abroad, as modelling a moderate secularised from of Islam well suited to modern circumstances" (CSIA 2015). Turam (2007:4) argued that an "increasing number of Turkish citizens became more accepting and sympathetic toward Islamic actors", who changed from viewing "Islam as the main threat to Turkey's secular heritage" to a driver of democratic reform and good governance in contrast to the previous repressive and corrupt military government.

During a seminar on “The victory of Erdogan in Turkey and the Muslim World” by the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH 2014a), speakers recommended that the state-led Islamism in Turkey “will be worth emulation for the Muslim World and other countries, and it will also encourage Islamic forces working for the cause of democracy in different countries”. It is seen as the ultimate proof that “Islamic values and economic progress go hand in hand”. The appeal to the Indian Islamists stems from the AKP’s fight against radical secularism including the unquestioned rule of positivism and science, and against the Kemalist ban of religion from the public sphere, but also its success regarding economic growth and inclusive development. The next section will illustrate how Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH try to defend the Muslim personal law and Islamic heritage in the context of modern influences and pressure from both secular and Hindu nationalist groups in India.

7.1.6. Defence of Personal Law and Islamic Heritage

Aziz, a PFI leader in Mangalore in 2015 stressed that “in India, it is very difficult to build a new mosque, even in a Muslim neighbourhood. There are so many legal obstacles and people will furiously protest against it. But, you won’t face many problems to open a pub next to a primary school” (respondent 2[9]). Aziz’s concern is mirrored in the wider discourse within Islamic organisations that Islamic culture is under threat because of “intoxication and inebriating beverages… pre- and extra martial sex … and sexual perversities [that] tear the gentle fabric of human dignity” (Radiance 2015a). In this context, the SDPI President explained to me the importance of the continuation of the Sharia as personal law for Indian Muslims. Sitting on his desk in front of a large map of India in the Delhi office in 2015, he stressed that he had not been a “practising Muslim his entire life”, but supported “the Left, and trade unions” in his early 20s. He only became a “pious Muslim and political active” between 1985 and 1992, emphasising that

> "it all started with the Shah Bano case and the civil code issue [see Chapter 3 for discussion]. I remember the aggressive attacks by politicians and the court, which scared me. Thankfully Rajiv Gandhi decided in favour of Muslims".

He further highlighted that

> "the personal law is very important. In a country with more than 15 cores [150 million] Muslims, how can you ignore their culture? Minorities have to follow their own religious system. In every democracy you have such protective systems in place" (respondent 35).

Interviewees from the PFI and JIH have often stressed that the personal law has to be "retained", in order to protect "cultural plurality". The CFI President argued in Delhi in 2015 that "Islamic law should not go against the constitution. The penal code is fully accepted by us. But minorities should be granted some personal space to preserve their culture with respect to marriage, divorce and religious rituals" (respondent 7[4]). Langer and Brown (2008: 49) also showed in their study on cultural status inequalities that "plural legal systems [such as the personal law in India] not only increase the access of these minorities to the legal system, but also their overall sense of being culturally valued". Consequently, Muslim interviewees emphasised that replacing the personal law with a uniform civil code constitutes a threat to public order, since such cultural and religious discrimination would lead to the radicalisation of religious minorities (respondents 23[3] and 148). Research has indicated that cultural, religious and social status anxieties have contributed to political violence and group conflict in the past (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004, Langer and Brown 2008, Lieberman and Singh 2017).

Therefore, most Islamic organisations and Muslim parties have tried to protect the personal law and cultural concessions granted by India's constitution through petitions and awareness programmes, including seminars, large-scale conferences and ad hoc protests (Deccan Herald 2016). Rudolph and Rudolph (2000: 36) have noted that "for religious

minorities, the uniform civil code signified an effort to erase the personal law of diverse communities. It posed a threat to their cultural identity, even to their cultural survival[135]".

PFI and JIH activists expressed their approval of religious signifiers in politics and public life being allowed in India (e.g. public servants are able to wear a turban, veil or beard) as "a real sign of progress", while they strongly criticised government interventions in France and Switzerland to ban the veil and minaret (respondents 14 and 50[2]). These minority activists in India vocally protect their Islamic heritage, including dress code, language and prayer times in educational institutions (Times of India 2016c). For instance, the PFI and JIH have assisted female students and their families with petitions to allow them to wear hijabs in schools. The Girls Islamic Organisation (GIO 2014), JIH's official female organisation, has produced a high quality documentary entitled "In the Name of Secularism: Revealing the Discrimination on the visible Identities" about how secular pressure to comply with liberal schooling standards threatens cultural identities. The GIO conducted a survey in Kerala, in which it identified 40 educational institutions that have discriminated against Muslim students on the basis of Islamic identity markers and cultural features, including hijabs and full-sleeve uniforms[136]. In this context, Siddique, the JIH leader in Bangalore, addressed the secular pressure on religious minorities:

> "Modern education and the school curriculums do not talk about God and the creation. They allow no space for Muslim culture. Prayers in schools are looked down upon as something unnecessary, un-scientific and inappropriate for educated people. [He warns about the alienating effect when] you call for education without addressing the socio-cultural rules of religious minorities. That is why, Muslims are not coming whole and soul into education which promotes atheism, godlessness and immodesty" (respondent 49[3]).

[135]On the contrary, Rudolph and Rudolph (2000: 36) stressed that "for Hindu nationalists, a UCC [uniform civil code] promises a legal means to eliminate cultural difference and the `special privileges' accorded to 'pampered minorities'. It would also rectify what they perceive as an injustice, the reform in the 1950s of Hindu personal law (the `Hindu Code Bills') without reforming the Muslim personal law, making it possible in principle (but rarely in practice) for Muslim men to have four wives and to divorce at will".

[136] For a further discussion of Islamic identity markers in the public space, see Appendix 6.

The next section will expand the notion of Muslim citizenship politics as a critique of India's economic system.

7.1.1. Responding to Neo-Liberal and Urban Centric Development

This section will demonstrate that Muslim citizenship politics includes a demand for the correction of India's current trajectory of capitalism, economic interest, and corrupt practises. The concept of economic interest, financial speculation and India's neoliberal growth model were frequent topics of conversation with Muslim activists. During the interview with Siddique at the hospital construction site in Bangalore in 2011, he stated that

> "the Quran and the Prophet are very clear about interests. When companies grow on the principle of interests, for us it not progress but exploitation. Big companies have looted, raped and cheated the world; especially the bankers and Jews! We'd rather have our people live in ghettos, where they enjoy a peaceful, spiritual existence under constraints, rather than becoming the next Rupert Murdoch [Australian media and business mogul]" (respondent 49[3]).

Islamic movements often forbid interest as well as investing in sinful or risky industries (gharar) such as alcohol, tobacco, entertainment, and gambling (maisir). The former President of the Student Islamic Organisation (SIO), responding to the global financial crisis of 2008, stressed at a press conference in Mangalore that "the Milton Friedman model of capitalism has come to an end. The recession is an obvious result of a financial system built on reckless speculation and interest. It is high time that the new generation thinks of an economic system based on Islamic principles, which is against speculation and interests" (SIO 2009). These normative Islamic positions are shared by other religious movements, many of which argue that financial and economic activities without strong moral guidelines are harmful and exploit the poor. For instance, Christian and Islamic groups have formed alliances in the past to fight inequality and environmental damage caused by international

companies and the financial system, while promoting economic justice and equal distributions of the gifts of God (see Church of Scotland 2016).

In January 2015, I was waiting for Sharief, a JIH activist, to come from the jumuah, the mid-day prayer on Fridays, in Bangalore. While we walked to the state office of the Human Welfare Foundation, a development organisation affiliated to the JIH, behind Queens Road, Sharief referred to the open sewer and damaged road in this lower middle neighbourhood: "Now you see the other side of Bangalore without fancy main roads and glass facades [of office high-rises][137]"(respondent 52[6]). Later, in the office, another Muslim activist disapproved of India's ongoing "urban centric development" that is carried out by the government and private sector (respondent 142). The language of these young Muslim activists mirrors the anti-globalisation rhetoric of a SDPI pamphlet:

> "giant shopping malls are erected in the graveyard of small scale shops and industries. Sprawling golf courses, five star hotels and water theme parks are highlighted as the items of development, whereas vital issues of food security, security of water, price hikes and power crisis are blatantly ignored… the bulk of our population are dwelling in slums and leading a mean life and earning meagre income as rickshaw pullers, cobblers and coolies" (SDPI undated 1).

Research on India's liberalisation in the early 1990s has analysed the consequences of the emergence of the new middle class that has been accompanied by the development of exclusive urban spaces within Indian cities (Athique 2008, for a brief discussion of India's liberalisation see Appendix 7). Varma (1998: 203) has argued that "one outcome [of market liberalisation] is the growing physical distance between the poor and the privileged in India, as those who have moved up the income scale seek to barricade themselves from poverty's pervasive presence". The media and the government are portraying "the urban middle class

[137] Many PFI and JIH members have worked and lived in Bangalore, which has a Muslim population of 1.5 million. A report by the Centre for Social Markets (2011: 14) stressed that the city represents India's rising social and economic disparity: "Bangalore typifies a ground on which two contending forces broadly stake their claim: on the one hand are the rejuvenated citizens, who are amply assisted by the technocratic vision of change offered by the leaders of the new economy; on the other hand are the slum dwellers, unemployed youths, and women groups".

consumers as the representative citizens of liberalising India" (Fernandes 2006: 3). Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH have strongly objected to the exclusive development policies that led to "the gradations of citizen rights and benefits" (Ong 2006). Although India's constitution guarantees full citizenship rights to all, in reality only those who are part of the growing private sector such as the IT industry are fully protected. Ong (2006: 75-96) has further argued that the prioritisation of neoliberal economic and security polices has infringed other constitutional rights such as freedom of assembly and expression. This critique of neo-liberal policies is reflected in the political language chosen by Muslim groups, describing the current economic regime as "anti-people", "predatory capitalism", "protector of big industrial houses", or as a "loyal servant to imperial masters" (SDPI 2009, SDPI 2014a). The next section will show how Islamist groups address the state's protection of elites and corrupt practices while promoting a return to social democracy.

7.1.2. Anti-Corruption, Good Governance and Social Democracy

Studies have shown that corrupt practices by state officials have impeded development, governance and provided incentives for politicians and security forces to commit abuses (Kaufmann 2005, Dasgupta 2007, Phel 2015). Corrupt practices are also associated with the increasing impunity of criminal politicians and businessmen as well as with civil unrest, public anger and voting behaviour (Kaufmann 2005, Beyerle and Hassan 2009). Allegations of corruption have been a major issue and were publicly debated during local and state elections in India (Asien Tribute 2016): most of India's regional and national politicians have criminal charges pending against them, including fatal attacks on political rivals, kidnapping, intimidation, coercion, hate speeches, tax evasion and money laundering (Phel 2015). In addition, Chandra (2016) has illustrated that most political parties in India lean towards clan-based and dynastic politics, including those parties that have promoted themselves as specifically non-dynastic parties in the past (e.g. the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh

and the All India Trinamool Congress in West Bengal have now included family members and close relatives in the top ranks of the party leadership).

Studies have indicated that Muslim citizens by and large approve of India's secular democracy as a legitimate and desired form of governance (Alam 2004, Bhargava 2010, Piliavsky 2014), but are frustrated with the status quo of democratic processes, political procedures inside and outside parliaments, including the self-interested, corrupt, and incompetent conduct of elected politicians (Yadav 2000, Nayyar 2001, Hasan 2007a). Yadav (1999:2399) argued that Muslims and other disadvantaged groups "use elections effectively to choose their representative and government but rarely can they use elections to choose politics about issues that matter most to them". With the growing alienation from the political processes alongside perceived and manifested corruption within local or national governments, political opportunities are arising for religious groups and parties to use these topics in order to mobilise support and hold the state accountable. In their study of Islamic movements in the Middle East, Beyerle and Hassan (2009: 265) have argued that over the past 20 years, Muslim citizens "have grown so tired of corrupt politicians that the clean image of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood have rendered them appealing". Husseini (2009: 237) further stressed that the Islamist organisation Hezbollah "improved its image because of its reputation for efficient and clean local governance in the municipalities in the southern suburbs of Beirut" (see also Norton 2007: 109). In India, Islamic movements such as the PFI and JIH have slowly adjusted and expanded their strategies from religious laden discourses to an anti-corruption agenda that described unethical practices by political elites as a "cancer" (see Radiance 2011, JIH 2012). Consequently, Muslim citizenship politics can

be partially understood as a result of the “moral rejection of corrupt practices” (Phel 2015: 18) within large segments of the Indian public during the 2011 anti-corruption movement[138].

Contrary to the negative public perception and distrust of the political outlook of Islamist movements in India, Muslim groups such as the JIH and PFI have organised and used anti-corruption campaigns and seminars on Islamic ethics to prove their ideological adherence to the principle of good governance and India’s democratic system (respondents 40[2] and 49[2], see also PFI 2013d). For instance, during a PFI seminar on social justice in Bangalore in 2012, the PFI State President of Karnataka asked the Muslim audience to contemplate a "pariyaya rajikiya" (an alternate system of politics) in relation to the “current distorted and corrupt political system”. He then promised that the PFI would “tackle this untidy environment” of Indian politics. In this context, interviewees from the PFI and JIH advocated “a return to social democracy”, emphasising that “social democratic values are Islamic values”, “democracy is best system between socialism and capitalism” or “social democracy is most compatible with Islam” (respondents 2, 31 and 35). For that reason, the SDPI (2014) published a small booklet “Social Democracy and the Welfare State: Conceptual Foundations of Positive Politics in India”, in which the party embraced social democracy and provided historical definitions of the nation state, the welfare system, and various explanations of why India’s social democracy is under threat. A lawyer affiliated with the PFI argued that “PFI endorses a strong development and interventionist state which is not against private property or privatisation, but against any kind of monopoly or oligarchy” (respondent 22). Other PFI and JIH members further argued that state measures should be implemented by disciplined, technocratic and pious leaders, who can ensure social redistribution and equality in the areas of education, employment and political representation. “After all, we have to

[138] The large scale anti-corruption movement centred on a hunger strike by the social activist, Hanna Hazare, in April 2011 and the subsequent emergence of the anti-corruption Aam Admi Party.

recognise and accept that everything is public and God given", noted the PFI Chairman (respondent 18[4]).

7.1.3. Secular Norms and the Promotion of Patriotism

The preceding section has shown that Muslim groups are ideological adherents to the principle of good governance and endorse social democracy. Because of the rise of democracies throughout the world after the Second World War and again after the Cold War (Giddens 2002: 70-71), the majority of political groups and movements will have to show at least a minimum commitment to democratic norms and conventions. Especially after the September 11 attacks, Mahmood (2006: 344) has argued that governments around the world and in particular the US State Department have started to give preferential treatment to Islamic authorities and religious discourses, including religious education in schools, that seem "compatible with rationality and exercise of liberal rule" (see also Gearon 2013). Such liberal pressure has led some Islamic movements to reconsider and adapt to secular norms in cases where they cooperate with non-Muslim groups and in India's minority context, where minorities are often under a general suspicion of treason and disloyalty (Rai 1993, Hansen 1999). However, the importance of an Islamic ideology has not ceased to be relevant, and remains an important factor to motivate and recruit members as indicated in Chapter 6. When it comes to public relations with the state and other non-Muslim actors, Islamic groups that operate within highly contested democratic regimes tend to indicate their commitment to the liberal set of rules, as they "articulate a more broadly resonant message, capable of convincing or persuading a broader range of their fellow citizens" (Yadav and Kalyvis 2010: 213). Kurzman and Naqvi (2010) have demonstrated that the language of democratic norms, including female and minority rights, has significantly increased on Islamist platforms, while Islamic references to the sharia, jihad, and hostility

towards Israel and the USA has diminished. These shifts have been interpreted by researchers as promising signs of moderation in Islamic movements due to the influence of liberal democratic frameworks (Roy 1994, Alam 2008, Ahmad 2009, Nielsen 2011).

Consequently, Muslim organisations in India adopted the globally shared language of political secularism in their communications and engagement with state agencies and non-Muslim groups in order to circumvent the "Islamist" tag, and associations with violent groups such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic State or Boko Haram (see PFI 2012b). The PFI and JIH have invested substantial amounts of time, effort and financial resources emulating other secular organisations, think tanks and local government administrations. They have published 'objective' reports, conducted surveys and so-called fact-finding missions, and cited studies by global consultancies on bribery and corruption, reputed research institutes on police violence and official government statistics on poverty. Their publications also addressed debates on the global economy, climate change, environmental damage and foreign policy, including the American occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, drone attacks in Pakistan, and Buddhist terrorism in Burma and Sri Lanka (see Radiance 2007a, PFI 2012, and SDPI 2014). One such report by the PFI (2014c) stressed in its introduction that "we are duty bound to study and analyse the socio political and economic conditions in India and overseas". Organisational headquarters of the JIH and PFI (not their local district offices, which I described in Chapter 6) resemble the corporate office-style with cubicle computer desks, reception areas with televisions, newspaper tables and small libraries, and the local staff offer tea and hand out business cards[139]. These office spaces accommodate documentation, media, public relation and fund-raising departments, and are located close to printing houses and other organisational wings such as the offices of the women's, student, clergy, political, development and educational branches. Monthly bulletins, weekly

[139] Field observations were conducted at the JIH's and PFI's headquarters in Delhi, as well as their state offices in Kerala and Karnataka.

newspapers and e-newsletters are published, while organisational websites as well as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts are updated on a regular basis. When the PFI's organisational homepage was launched in 2009, the website communicated in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Malayam, Telgu, Khannada and English. However, responding to secular pressure and transparency concerns, the online format was subsequently changed exclusively to English, while the religious terminology was either down played or rephrased. Additionally, Islamist groups like the PFI and JIH have included other specifically non-Islamic and inclusive signifiers into their movement such as yoga exercise, ayurvedic knowledge, Hindi and Sanskrit slogans, the national flag and anthem, and other popular songs, including Muhammad Iqbal's "Sare Jahan se Accha Hindustan hamara [or anthem of the people of India]" to indicate patriotism[140]. For example, on India's Republic Day in January 2017, PFI activists displayed a 150-feet-long national flag in Punganuru, Andhra Pradesh, appealing to "the youth to inculcate the habit of patriotism and render services to the nation with dedication" (Hans India 2017). In doing so, the PFI has tried to challenge the popular Hindu nationalist view that only Hindus can be true patriots, since Muslims and Christians have their holy or religious land (punyabhumi) elsewhere (Sarkar 1996, Misra 1999).

Moreover, in the context of conferences and civil society events, the PFI and JIH have tended to send their human rights envoys, rather than appear under their main organisational name[141]. A PFI leader explained the rationale for this cautious approach in public:

> "Because our movement concentrates on Muslims, our secular efforts are still labelled as extremists, and fundamentalists. The police will say that Muslims only know how to cry about Islam and don't do anything for their development. But, always when we try to come to the mainstream and show our love for the nation, they put these labels on us. Many progressive Muslim organisations stopped

[140] See Appendix 15 for PFI's movement anthem.

[141] For instance, the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation (NCHRO) has been created by the PFI, while the Forum for Democracy and Communal Amity (FDCA) and Association for the Protection of Civil Rights (APCR) are both affiliated with the JIH.

working after a while, because they are weak and afraid of such intimidation" (respondent 11).

This section has illustrated that the organisational coherence, public appearance and secular commitment of Muslim groups in India requires sustained collective effort. This mirrors Mosse's (2004:657) study on development organisations, in which he argued that "considerable work is needed to sustain such a system of representations… through the practical task of model-building and reporting, field visits and review missions [by the leadership], public events and promotional literature, or publicity and marketing". The PFI's public presentation aims to imitate the professional language of international organisations, and is different to its outreach strategies at the grassroots level, which I discussed in Chapters 4 and 6 (see also Appendix 8). The next section will show how Muslim groups in India explore novel avenues to align with non-Muslim groups, in order to increase public legitimacy and comply with democratic norms.

7.1.4. Political Alliances with Non-Muslim Groups

Hindu Muslim Sikh Isaayi,	Hindu Muslim Sikh and Christian
banke chaley bhayi bhayi,	Walk together as brothers
sar kuchley insaafo ka,	Lets smash the heads of those, who are unjust.

(PFI's Organisational Anthem, see Appendix 15)

This section will highlight that Muslim organisations in India try to build discursive bridges and political alliances with ideologically dissimilar groups, including socialist, Dalit, Sikh, Christian and human rights groups in order to increase their political influence and generate a sense of collective victimhood. Islam (2015), referring to Laclau's concept of populism, argued that Muslim groups in India have generated common enemy frontiers with other disadvantaged groups to challenge the state. In "Hegemony and Socialist Strategy", Laclau

and Mouffe (1985) stressed that populism is not exclusive to right wing demagogues, but can be effectively used for democratic mobilisation and to build broad alliances between lower classes and disadvantaged groups against the common enemy. In his later work, Laclau (2005) maintained that populism is not a threat but an important aspect of democratic life.

Islamic movements such as the PFI and JIH in India have advocated for a third front of Muslims, Dalits and other disadvantaged groups (PFI 2009a), and "new initiatives to build a broad based alliance of pro-people and secular forces" (PFI 2014c), which they reinforced with popular slogans such as "freedom from hunger, freedom from fear" (the official party slogan of the SDPI). Gamson (2007: 254) pointed out that social movements, which may be "relatively poor in conventional resources and limited in access to decision-makers, can still influence polices and discourses by various means". For example, the PFI frequently attempted to involve popular intellectuals, politicians and other grassroots activists, including the African-American social activist, Hodari Abdul-Ali, the Middle East journalist Alan Hart, and the journalist Gauri Lankesh, who was recently convicted of defamation[142], by granting them a public voice at events, during campaigns and in publications (PFI 2007a). These speakers from established non-Muslim groups and milieus will "draw attention as articulators of the preferred frames" (Gamson 2007, see Appendix 20). In 2014, a PFI activists in Bangalore stressed the importance of a "Sikh Muslim Peace mission" in the context of a five day riot in Hyderabad in December 2013, noting that "other religious minorities and the left are operating in a similar way as the PFI, when it comes to social issues, tactics, and protests" (respondent 2[8]). After the riot, the PFI cooperated with two Punjabi and Delhi based Sikh associations to help restore communal harmony and underline

[142] Brysk (1995: 577) argued that "since the credibility of information is judged in part by the credibility of the source, we would expect speakers with greater social legitimacy to succeed more often at persuading others" such as doctors, teacher, priests, soldiers and so on.

the shared interpretation of history by the two minority communities. In the past, Sikh and Muslim organisations, including the PFI, came together to commemorate the Sikh Riots of 1984 and the Gujarat Genocide of 2002, asserting that both atrocities were politically motivated and carried out by the Indian state and that the culprits were exempt from legal punishment (Sikh Siyasat News 2016).

Moreover, Dalit and lower caste activists have often shared the stage with the PFI and JIH, proclaiming a unity of Dalits and Muslims. For example, a Dalit politician of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) addressed the audience at a PFI seminar in Bangalore in 2011: "All the secular organisations should come together and celebrate the 6th December [when the Babri Mosque was destroyed] as a day of secularism and make an effort to stop communal fascist forces from repeating these types of heinous crimes in our country". In addition, Muslim political parties, including the SDPI and WPI, have accommodated Dalit, Christian, Sikh and other non-Muslim candidates as official representatives to contest local elections[143]. Substantive emphasis has also been placed upon Dalit and tribal victimhood by Muslim parties. PFI and JIH activists used phrases such as "Dalit annihilation", "atrocities on Dalits" and recounted acts of violence against Dalits at public events. For example, the PFI Chairman said in front of 200.000 Muslims in Bangalore in 2007 that "in Maharashtra a Dalit women was brutally raped and killed recently by upper caste people, because she was educated, had a mobile phone, put on jeans and lived a life like an upper caste women. Last week upper caste fascists beat a Dalit youth to death because he entered a Shiva temple for prayers" (PFI 2007). The PFI and JIH have also framed the victimhood of lower caste communities as a result India's neo-liberal economy:

[143] Oskar, a chain-smoking local Christian politician, who was a WPI candidate in Mangalore in 2012, explained to me that his family was very upset with his involvement in a "Muslim party", but he believed in the assertive politics of Muslims. He added "if you are attacked you need to retaliate" (respondent 106). Non-Muslim candidates such as Oskar are still exceptions in Muslim parties such as WPI and SDPI.

> "Dalits are dumped in the city slums as cheap labour and face social ostracism whenever they talk about their rights. Tribal groups in central and eastern India are put in internment camps to help huge resource hungry industrial houses" (SDPI 2014a).

Therefore, the PFI Vice Chairman stressed the need for Muslim and Dalit unity in Calicut in 2012: "Dalits and Muslims form around 60% of India's deprived. In order to solve these problems, we have to become partners" (respondent 8[1]). A similar sentiment was expressed by a PFI leader in Delhi, arguing that "Dalits and Muslims share the same blood by being oppressed". He then explains that "even though they worship more than one God, insanyiat [humanity] has to come first" (respondent 36). During my fieldwork, the agenda of Muslim groups of liberating and aligning with non-Muslims was justified through the language of Islamic duty, usually by ending the "modern day slavery" of Dalits and Muslims will be rewarded in paradise (respondent 28). A Christian respondent from Mangalore in 2015 described how "PFI members in Mangalore approached me and thought that they have the religious obligation to protect me, because I am a Christian. They justified it because Muslims are the largest minority and therefore have a responsibility towards other religious minorities in India". After Hindu nationalist attacks on churches or Dalit villages, PFI cadres will immediately reach out to help "our Dalit and Christian brothers and sisters" with rehabilitation and relief work, according to a PFI legal activist (respondent 15). Moreover, a senior PFI leader, who had promoted cooperation between Dalits and Muslims for a long time, confirmed that "negotiations" about sustained cooperation with non-Muslim groups are taking place "in public and private", while "Muslim campus groups" are trying to work towards a "single voice at round tables and seminars" (respondents 1, also 11).

The PFI and JIH have hailed historical milestones by Dalit leaders including the Dravidian movement, the Pona Pact, and the achievements of Ambedkar, Periya, and Phule (PFI 2010b). A PFI leader in Cochin argued "Ambedkar has addressed the right issues such as

discrimination and injustice by birth and caste. We have got a lot of inspiration from the Dalit movements in South India. Dalit organisations have promoted self-worth and discipline of cadres, which is similar to what the Prophet has discussed with his followers" (respondent 23[3]). However, in previous decades, Islamist organisations have discredited non-Muslim groups for their "jahiliyyah" or "ignorance of divine guidance" (Schwedler 2006, Schwedler and Clark 2006, Islam 2015). Historically, Dalits, socialists and Islamists engaged in acrimonious disputes. Dalit leaders disapproved of the lack of engagement with Dalit philosophers by Islamic organisations that reflected a sense of superiority within Islam. For instance, the JIH disallowed members from cooperating or appearing on the same platform with non-Muslims for more than 30 years after India's independence (Ahmad 2009: 212). However, after the Babri Masjid destruction that increased political pressure on the Muslim community, Muslim groups started to create their own human rights organisations, political parties and movements, and increased their involvement and visibility in pro-democracy initiatives, advocated for broad based alliances, and learned from Dalit and low caste movements. Also, Dalit movements have been linked to notions of self-determination, recognition and agency (Weiner 2001, Zene 2007, Basu 2012), while Dalit parties such as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have transformed political and symbolic landscapes by renaming public landmarks such as parks, hospitals, schools and colleges (Jeffrey 2008). Muslim organisations have learned from such Dalit assertions and adopted similar strategies, whereby they currently try to improve the community's self-esteem by promoting alternative symbols of national history. The PFI has used the example of Sultan Tipu of Mysore[144] during campaigns and speeches as a symbol of "anti-imperialism" and a contemporary role model "against US barbarism and terrorism" as one SDPI leader put it: "The bravery and the sacrifices of Tipu Sultan are an example for the world and everyone

[144] French (2011: 232-3) noted that "in 1780, the Muslim ruler of the predominately Hindu kingdom of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, inflicted an important and bloody victory over the British, checking their expansion in the South… [As response], the British troops slaughtered Tipu Sultan and several thousand Mysore people".

should learn from them. Every single brick of Mysore, the city which was a state during his rule, articulates his achievements and the contribution to liberate India from British" (Karnataka Muslims 2012). Consequently, PFI and other Muslim leaders have publically demanded the creation of a Sultan Tipu university in Karnataka and the renaming of the Bangalore international airport after him (see PFI 2007).

The following section will demonstrate that the PFI and JIH have invested substantial organisational energy in including female voices and gender discourses in their agenda, which some scholars have described as a welcoming sign of moderation and internal reform (see Vatuk 2008, Ahmed 2008).

7.1.5. Promoting Female Empowerment

> "The empowerment of women is one of the most fundamental steps for empowering any society" (National Women's Front, Karnataka, undated leaflet).

This section will engage with the wider debate on female participation in Islamic movements (Metcalf 1998, Arat 2005, Mahmood 2005, Bano and Kalmbach 2011) and illustrate that Muslim groups in India have included female activists in order to confront gender based exploitation, patriarchal structures, violence, education and dowries (Vatuk 2008, Ahmad 2008, Schneider 2009). Islamic movements in India have also begun to assist Muslim women with employment and legal issues such as domestic abuse, sexual harassment, maintenance payments and custody rights, "not through languages of secularism but through Islamic scriptures and reinterpretations of the Sharia" (Frontline 2013a). Recently, the PFI and JIH have stressed that India's economic liberalisation in the early 1990s has "resulted in more exploitation of women" (PFI 2014c), which is perpetuated by a "male dominated socio-economic system (Radiance 2015b). In her research on the JIH, Vatuk (2008: 518) observed an "encouraging sign when the leader[ship] of a religiously orthodox Islamist mass

organisation of this kind essentially echoes what the leaders of so many much smaller organisations with longstanding and serious commitments to the pursuit of feminist goals, have been striving for two decades to communicate to the Muslim clerical establishment and the Muslim community at large". Ahmad (2008) highlighted that from 1970s, some segments within the JIH and beyond started to depart from the extremely restrictive views on women and Maududi's "neo-patriarchal and misogynist ideology[145]" to promote a more liberal interpretation of Islam. Such slow reform of the prevailing gender orthodoxy within the Muslim community was coupled with the emergence of the Muslim middle class and educated youth voices in India from the late 1970s.

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Recently, Islamic organisations in India have started to increase their numbers of female members (Times of India 2006). During my fieldwork, PFI leaders highlighted the activities of its women's wing, the National Women's Front (NWF), while they stressed that it is rare among mass based Islamic groups to have a separate organisation for women. 20,000 women attended the NWF's "Awakening Conference" and art exhibition on women's rights in Coimbatore in November 2014. A PFI activist emphasised female agency during the event management of the conference: "Our female cadres hung up flyers and posters all by themselves, wearing pardah [long sleeve Islamic dress], and carrying their children on their arms during the mid-day heat" (respondent 30). Leaders further stressed that the PFI has employed female journalists and trained female interns in their publications houses such as the newspaper "Thejas" in Calicut, and the Media House in Mangalore. The President of the SDPI pointed out that four out of the 35 members of the national working committee of the party were women: "Our aim is of course to reach 50% but even 25% is tough" (respondent 35). Among my interviewees, the ongoing internal negotiations and the importance of patience were emphasised in respect to female representation and "to bring women closer

[145] Maududi did not envision that women could play a public role in politics: he was against singing, dancing, makeup, and advocated for the full veil (Ahmed 2008).

to politics". Similarly, Ahmad (2009: 221) argued that when the JIH tried to address the lack of female leaders and members the actual change was minimal with only 6.5% of female participants in 2000, but the symbolic meaning of tackling the issue has been important. The PFI Vice President explained the difficulties for the PFI and other Islamic groups to promote and increase female participation:

> "[In India] we live in a highly conservative Muslim society and male supremacy is the uncontested norm. For any grassroots organisation and mass movement, it is extremely difficult to change the attitude of people. You have to do it very slowly and intelligently because we are up against a powerful tradition. If we discredit this tradition, we will be ousted" (respondent 8[5]).

A CFI activist also indicated how female PFI supporters, who tried to join the movement, have often been discouraged by their social milieu: "The majority of Muslim families will not allow their daughters to take part in political and gender rights' activism especially in North India. In Kerala and Karnataka, the situation is somewhat better because of higher female education" (respondent 7[3]). This corresponds with an Outlook article (2008) on female Muslim activists in South India that argued "organisations such as TJ [Tabilighi Jamaat] and JIH, considered bastions of conservatism, have very active women's wings all over India, but it is only in South India that women are so active and socially aware. Higher literacy and global influences are the reason for it[146]".

Interviewees from the JIH and PFI have frequently pointed towards the persistent bias in the current gender debate, calling out the "hypocrisy of the West" in their understanding of Muslim women and Islam. The PFI Vice President has stressed that "in Europe gender equality was only achieved in its recent history… Isn't it true that women voting rights were only achieved in the 1960s and Switzerland only in the mid-70s"? (respondent 8[5]). Another

[146] Some 25% of women in rural areas and 15% of women in urban areas are part of the Indian workforce (Catalyst 2015). Market liberalisation since the early 1990s contributed to this negative trend since the rapid creation of new jobs were harder to access for women (e.g. construction work). In addition, except for very poor households, Indian families tend to confine women to domestic spaces as a sign of status and security concerns (Hasan and Menon 2004, Sachar Report 2006).

PFI activist further argued that “I am not buying the liberal argument that only when women remove the headscarves, they are truly liberated. It’s more complex than that” (respondent 30). The President of the Rehab India Foundation regarded the public outcry against the hijab as a conspiracy prompted by the “CIA and Mossad… In my home, my daughter and wife wear also saris. We are not against saris, but with a veil you can still work hard and contribute to society. I don’t see the problem here” (respondent 36). Scholars have argued that while the veil and Islamic dress codes are negatively viewed as a sign of conservatism and repression of women, they are also cultural symbols that can be used by religious minorities to generate a sense of recognition and dignity, as well as to indicate resistance to the cultural norms of the majority. Giddens (1991:62) noted that “in all cultures, dress is vastly more than simply a means of bodily protection: it is, manifestly, a means of symbolic display, a way of giving external form to narrative of identity”. However, Mahmood (2005:15-16) has tried to shift the debate on the veil and Muslim culture away from the dominant discourse of resistance and repression. She has questioned certain feminist assumptions that women, if imbued with agency, would resist the (submissive) ideals, virtues and moralities of Islamist movements. Instead, Mahmood has analysed female agency through the notions of modesty and piety, which has been ignored in the academic literature. Modesty and piety are often associated with internalised oppressive dispositions by the victims of patriarchy. For instance, the veil is either worn functionally to get by in daily life, or as resistance to the hegemony of secular norms. The deliberate choice of a pious life by Muslim women, as the PFI and JIH would maintain, has rarely been accepted in public and academic discourse.

In the remaining part of the chapter, I will discuss several concerns in Muslim citizenship politics regarding female participation and alliances with non-Muslim groups.

7. 2. The Persistence of Illiberal Agendas in Islamic Organisations

Schwedler (2013:4) has argued that an Islamic movement "might present itself as committed to the democratic process only to abandon that stance once it has gained enough power democratically to overturn the democratic system entirely or at least to alter the processes to insure their ongoing influence in the real functioning of power[147]". Interviewees who were sceptical of the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics have argued that Muslim groups, including the PFI and JIH, are tactically engaging with India's democratic polity, because of their minority status and political pressure from secularists and Hindu nationalists. Ideologically, they remain committed to an exclusivist Islamist and patriarchal agenda and intend to change the democratic system if they held a political mandate. Despite attempts to build political alliances with non-Muslim groups, Clark (2006) has argued in her research on Jordanian Islamists that their cooperation with others rarely exceeded symbolic gestures, while religious reform regarding the Sharia has remained highly contentious. Therefore, establishing alliances with non-Muslim groups, setting up women's wings and endorsing a secular discourse are not always indicators that Islamic movements have fully accepted liberal values (Brown 2007). In fact, the use of secular and human rights discourses may even conceal important gender and other internal differences within these religious movements (Das 1995, Sheth 2009, Mahajan and Jodhka 2010).

A Dalit activist, who has worked with the JIH in Bangalore, argued that "the PFI is motivated by hatred and revenge. They would not be good leaders when they are in power". He then

[147]Critics of Islamic politics in Turkey have been concerned that President Erdogan and the ruling AKP party have not undergone any ideological transformation. Erdogan has used Islamic frames for identity politics and electoral mobilisation, and has alienated secularists, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities. This strategy has been exemplified by Erdogan's controversial statement in 1998, for which he has served 10 months in prison: "Democracy is like a train. We shall get out when we arrive at the station we want. Mosques are our barracks, the minarets our bayonets, domes our helmets and the faithful our soldiers" (New York Times 2016). Section 7.1. illustrated that Muslim groups such as PFI and JIH have praised Erdogan and the Turkish model, viewing it as compatible with social democracy.

started to ask some rhetorical questions: “When they are in power, do they guarantee equality? Do they follow any liberal principles? And will they divide or unite the country? There is definitely a divide between their words and action. The trend nowadays is to appear secular, when they are actually deeply Islamic” (respondent 144). Similarly, a journalist and insider in Indian politics in Delhi asked after an interview with a senior JIH leader: “What if these groups get 51% voting share… I doubt that they would be committed to the constitution. Other religious communities and sects would not have much to look forward to anymore” (respondent 149).

The following section will further address some pertinent concerns about the commitment to gender equality by Islamist organisations.

7.2.1. Gender Bias and Traditional Authority

Public perception of women in South Asia is dominated by images of passive victimhood and a regionally specific system of patriarchy (Aftab 2008). In particular, Muslim women are often considered to be unable to speak up for themselves and therefore require male patronage (Kidwai 2003, Schneider 2009). Furthermore, female participation in, and support for, Islamist movements have provoked extreme responses from feminists and secularists across the political spectrum. Despite the emergence of various women’s wings and manifold gender initiatives, scholars have argued that Islamist groups still contribute to gender inequalities (Vatuk 2008, Schneider 2009), and female cadres of Islamist organisations are described as “pawns in a grand patriarchal plan” (Mahmood 2005: 15-16).

In this context, during my fieldwork, the PFI and JIH were often accused of monitoring and influencing female behaviour and sexuality by enforcing ideas of Islamic piety and modesty in relation to dress codes and traditional gender roles as mothers and housewives. Despite

signs of reform and internal debates within these movements, Vatuk (2008: 517), building on Moghadam's (2004: 53) work, has argued that most Islamist women's wings still appear regressive and "less concerned with the advancement of women's rights than with the advancement of Islamisation". In the past, the JIH and PFI together with their women's wings have organised protests against sex education in school syllabi, holding up banners with slogans such as "say no to condoms" or "against sex education", while asserting that unchecked sexual behaviour provokes hedonism and the erosion of traditional family values (see also SIO 2007, 2007a). The JIH in Bangalore has also held a fashion show, displaying traditional South Asian dresses to raise awareness against "Western clothes" that are associated with nudity and immodesty. A female speaker at the fashion show stressed that "only the educated mothers can give rise to an educated ummah" (Islamic Voice 2000). While female education has become an important agenda within Islamic women's wings, the goal has been defined around traditional gender roles and motherhood, ascribing women the duty of "moral guardians of a society" (NWF 2015). The National Women's Front of India (NWF 2015) stated on its website that "women have three major roles to perform in the course of their life. They have to discharge their duties as good daughters, good wives and good mothers".

During my fieldwork, access to female interviewees was often restricted due to highly gender-divided social environments in which groups such as the JIH and PFI are embedded (see also Gayer 2012). It was rarely possible to enter female, domestic spaces, build trust with women, find female key informants or circumvent male supervision. Male activists tried to monitor and control access, supervised interviews and cancelled or delayed meetings with female activists. A senior female researcher, who has extensively studied women's issues and development in South Asia, pointed out that "limited or no access at all is rather telling in itself about the mentality of the group which we set out to study". At fieldwork

sites such as in Bandra in Mangalore, the lack of female visibility in public spaces or the absence of women in the offices of Islamist organisations was noticeable. The few female PFI cadres I met during my fieldwork usually worked in separate rooms. At PFI protest marches through Muslim mohallas, women would dress in black burqas, and were shielded by Muslim men holding ropes to demarcate the female safe space (PFI 2015b). At other events women were seated separately or had separate "female only events, because of their own social issues" as a PFI member explained to me[148].

Outside observers, including ex-PFI and JIH members, confirmed that it is rare to find women in decision-making positions in Islamic organisations, and if they are it is only for "name sake", "cosmetic reasons" and to appear "politically correct" (respondent 26). A female activist in Bangalore expressed her disappointment about the lack of female participation in Muslim organisations: "We are ladies! So we are not involved in any kind of Jamaat [JIH] activities because they side line us" (respondents 44 also 46, and 47). Correspondingly, a prominent Muslim publisher who has supported the PFI in the past explained that

> "women are still seen as a problem. These groups firmly believe that sexes must be segregated, and men and women cannot work together. PFI and JIH promote this kind of Islam. But to avoid the issue, they try to speak a secular language and create these nominal woman wings" (respondent 84[4]).

Similarly, their organisational language tended to be gendered, patronising or excluding. Male activists referred to female community members as "our women" and "our girls". In addition, movement publications dealing with gender related topics seldom went beyond issues of female protection, security, and morality[149].

[148] However, during my fieldwork, I observed that gender divides in the households of PFI leaders were less rigid and focused on the display of female piety compared to the group image at public events that the PFI is trying to project to its Muslim support base.

[149] At a short-film festival by a Muslim youth group, close to the JIH, in Kerala, the only film that portrayed female issues, dealt with a male stalker, chasing after a woman (Solidarity 2014). For a further discussion of the

Moreover, prominent explanations for the protection of female modesty and security by Muslim groups are rooted in the increasing availability of new technologies. Mobile phones, with internet applications in particular, were viewed as the source of "social evils", "new anarchism" and a threat for public morality. The PFI (2014c) stated that "the mobile internet [that] has become a cesspool of evils 24 hours to all", because of its promotion of "free sex", "prostitution" and the "commercialisation of sex". Muslim community leaders have linked the growing number of mobile phones to the rise of sexual harassment and female insecurity. Reddy (2015: 482) argued that new technologies "circumvent traditional sources of authority [and] generate profound anxieties". Therefore, the female autonomy that comes with new technologies and modernity has been regarded as dangerous as it "disrupts tradition and rank … and is a quintessential sign of individual agency" (see also Jeffrey and Doron 2013). Therefore, Muslim groups have organised workshops and seminars for the ethical usage of the social media (PFI 2015a), and have demanded more state regulation of "the internet to stop all online pornography" and to prevent "moral decadence and sexual anarchy" (JIH 2015). However, such moral apprehension towards technology by Islamic movements, including the PFI and JIH, has not been an exception in contemporary India[150].

7.2.2. Porous Alliances and the Failure of Alignment

This section will show that the emotional defence of the Muslim personal law as well as the assertive cadre-based appearance of groups such as PFI has posed a challenge to the

securitisation of Muslim women in India see Sachar Report (2006: 13) in Appendix 13.

[150] The widespread fear and public concern about mobile phones was fueled, when in 2004 two under-aged students filmed their oral intercourse on a school premise in Delhi, which went viral (The Telegraph 2004). Similarly, the 2012 "porngate affair", in which two politicians were caught watching pornography on a mobile phone during a parliament session in Karnataka, caused a public outcry (BBC 2012). In the past, Hindu nationalist groups have successfully advocated for the ban of beef, alcohol and other types of entertainment. Gujarat has banned the sale of alcohol and beef. In Karnataka, pubs have to close at 11pm to avoid social disorder (India Today 2013). In 2005, Maharashtra closed night clubs and bars by using a colonial law, in order to avoid the corruption of young women in "dens of iniquity and fronts for prostitution" (NDTV 2015a), while in 2016 alcohol was banned in Bihar for the protection of women from "drunkards".

formation of political alliances with liberal Muslims or non-Muslim groups[151]. During my fieldwork, Dalit organisations have frequently indicated an interest in political cooperation with Muslim groups. A prominent leader of the Dalit Sangharsh Samithi (DSS) in Bangalore in 2014 described the PFI and JIH as "considerable movements" and acknowledged the "shift within the Muslim mentality. They have stopped to rely on Congress [INC]. Muslims are also coming closer to us. Ek goal hai. Empowerment hai [our common goal is empowerment]" (respondent 131). However, these potential non-Muslim allies were highly critical of the personal law and Islam itself, which - in their view - contributed to gender injustice, female illiteracy, unemployment and domestic violence in the Muslim community[152]. Some interviewees affiliated with a variety of secular and Dalit organisations expressed their concern about the visible gender divide at public events, the lack of female members and conservative dress codes in Muslim organisations, while they openly linked the veil and burqa to the oppression of women (respondents 77, 113, 131 and 143).

Moreover, a Christian respondent, originally from Mangalore, dismissed the securitisation argument that explained the cultural defensiveness and conservative outlook of Indian Muslims as resulting from the constant threat of militant Hindu nationalists and police forces (see for instance Sachar Report 2006). On the contrary, he argued that Islamist groups such as the PFI and JIH "want to protect their tradition of a rigid patriarchal system, not because of external pressure or the conservative ulama. They believe in the supremacy of Islam". He elaborated that "in Tamil Nadu for example, Muslims were close to the Dravidian movement and the DMK, but an internal gender reform has never occurred. How is that

[151] Excerpts from my interviews with potential allies of the PFI and JIH: "Muslims are only interested in politics, if the prophet or the Sharia is insulted" (respondent 143). "When non-Muslims speak critically about the Prophet, they respond too emotionally with bravado" as argued by a Christian academic from Mangalore, 2015 (respondent 151). "Muslims are intolerant. Good Muslims like Asghar Ali Engineer will not be heard (respondent 144).

[152] The women rights' activist, Zakia Soman, has argued that "India is one of the only countries where Muslim women are rarely allowed to pray in mosques and have limited legal recourse (including receiving alimony) if their husbands divorce them through triple talaq. Marriages are not required to be registered, and sometimes made without women's consent" (cited in Inside Islam 2012).

possible, except, if someone doesn't believe in gender equality in the first place?" (respondent 151). In a similar vein, the president of a Dalit organisation, who had a lot of sympathy for Muslim organisations such as the PFI and JIH, stated that any political cooperation is conditional: "They must seriously study Ambedkar and overcome the repression of women in Islam. Religion should remain a private matter, and cannot be mixed up with politics" (respondent 131).

Other critical observers were sceptical of the recent political ambitions by Muslim groups to speak on behalf of and offer protection to Dalits and other disadvantaged groups (which I will further discuss in the conclusion of the thesis). During our conversation about Muslim/Dalit political cooperation, a Muslim interviewee in Bangalore critically remarked that "Dalits are successful in their politics. They have their own parties like BSP, DMK and Samajwadi. Dalits don't need the support of Muslim political parties" (respondent 60[3]). Therefore, generating a Dalit support base for Muslim parties and movements has proven difficult, since established Dalit parties have indicated scant interest in including or being spearheaded by Muslim leaders (see Caravan 2016). A Muslim interviewee in Bangalore further stressed that "Dalits are trying to lose their identity, and assimilate to the upper caste habitus, whereas Muslims and especially Islamic movements like JIH and PFI want to prevent their identity from getting weaker and deluded by elements of Hindu culture" (respondent 53[5]). In the context of the suicide of the PhD student Rohith Vemula at the University of Hyderabad, who belonged to the Dalit community, the sociologist Waghmore, highlighted that

> "Dalits are accepting Hindu/upper middle class merit standards. Mobile, middle class Dalits, at times, give in to the present pressures of Hindu purity and modernity – by changing their surnames, hiding their caste, becoming vegetarian, or by aggressively participating in anti-Muslim Indian-ness. For Dalits to be citizens and part of the nation, they have to mimic the pure and privileged" (cited in Indian Express 2016c).

As a result, lower caste and Muslim groups may not have succeeded in building long term political alliances, beyond certain symbolic issues, given their different political strategies towards identity assertions and the issue of mimicry of upper caste behaviour by various Dalit segments (Bhabha 1994, McLeod 2000).

Muslim interviewees have also disclosed a pragmatic and historical awareness of why cooperation with Dalit, Christian and other minority groups has remained contentious and volatile. A PFI activist explained that "today, the media is completely under the control of the upper caste Hindus, not only by big cooperate houses, but also by upper caste editors, and their journalists on the ground". He admitted "Christians and Dalits are also buying into the media campaigns against Islamic organisation and Muslims in general" (respondent 30). The recent violent history, in which Dalits and Muslims have attacked each other in communal riots, including Gujarat, coastal Karnataka, and Muzaffarnagar, has generated even more suspicion and prevented long-term political alliances. During our interview in Calicut in 2014, the PFI Vice President analysed the contentious relations between Dalits and Muslims in historical terms:

> "It [the tension between Dalits and Muslims] started with the massive Hinduisation of non-Hindu pilgrims in the late 1880s, when the Raj started counting the heads of the people for taxation. The colonial administrators could easily identify Christians, Muslims, and upper caste Hindus, but Dalits and tribals could not be easily ascribed to a community or religion. They had nothing in common with the upper caste Hindus. In fact the upper castes were treating them as untouchables, as someone beyond the varna [caste] system. Millions of people were beyond the varnas, and the British helped the upper caste Hindus to Hindu-ise the untouchables [Dalits], because they put them in the Hindu fold. This process [of hinduisation] has going on for the past 100 years, and now, the Dalits themselves start believing that they are Hindus. [Consequently] it is not easy for any Muslim organisation to communicate with the Dalits, even though most of the socio-economic and political problems are shared by both communities[153]" (respondent 8[5]).

[153] A Christian minority activist explained this phenomenon of suspicion in his house in Mangalore in 2012: "Muslims are reaching out to us, but we are not coming closer to them". In the global context, "relations between Christians and Muslims are not very good. This distrust translates into the domestic context. Christians won't rent rooms out to Muslims. They think Muslims are dirty and bring all their relatives to the

During the Karnataka state elections in 2004, a "third front" or political alliance between Muslims, Christians, Dalits and other disadvantaged groups briefly formed, but after the Muslims were legally charged with political violence and terrorism, Dalits and other groups withdraw (Assadi 2004). At the local level, the Centre for Harmony, a regional human rights organisation in Mangalore that aligned with the PFI in the past, primarily because the PFI has used secular human rights language and mobilised supporters. A journalist in Mangalore argued that "the PFI had the numbers and boots on the ground. They could easily mobilise 5000 Muslims for a protest, which the Centre for Harmony – that is run by elderly intellectual types – could never pull off. Their alliance was mutually beneficial" (respondent 141). However, when the PFI was involved in alleged political violence and moral policing in 2009 (see Chapter 5), the Centre for Harmony became concerned that its reputation would suffer and has publically dissociated from the PFI (respondents 60[3] and 77). Asghar Ali Engineer argued during an interview in his office in Mumbai that

> "the secular face of Islamist organisations like PFI is not their real face. They are not democratic. Their use of violence and aggressive public posture puts me off. PFI leaders have approached me and I have some friends who tried to convince me to meet with them. But I believe that they reinforce stereotypes of a violent Islam. Muslim organisations should work with wisdom, not with emotions. Their followers are in a hurry, impatient and want instant justice. If a Hindu organisation is militant, it has not so many repercussions, but if a minority organisation does it, it will have huge consequences. Just look at SIMI for example. It was not sustainable" (respondent 80[2]).

This focus on reconciliation by maintaining friendly relations with adversaries was stressed during my interviews with liberal Muslim politicians. The former Minister, Mumtaz Ali Khan, stated that "most of our problems can only be solved with the assistance of Hindus, as they are 80% of the population… What Jamaat [JIH] and PFI are doing is not secular. It's not

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neighbourhood" (respondent 113). In addition, Muslim interviewees still remembered the silence of Christian leaders during the Babri Masjid destruction in the early 1990s, where Christians indirectly blamed Muslims for the violence (respondent 78).

remedial" (respondent 42[1]). Studies on the democratic behaviour of religious movements and parties have illustrated that political violence has deterred moderate and centrist supporters (Basu 2001, Husseini 2009). In this context, some Muslim interviewees who identified as politically moderate or liberal, have accused groups such as the PFI and JIH of the "promotion of a retaliation mentality", the creation of a "political environment of us versus them", "have and have-nots", and "Brahmanism versus Islam" by "fighting Hindu terrorism with Muslim counter-terrorism" (respondents 41, 60, 92, 96 and 133). An IUML leader in Calicut conveyed his concerns by stating "PFI and JIH show the aam admi [poor men] videos of the violence in Gujarat and the Babri Masjid destruction. They purely sensationalise and mobilise against the RSS" (respondents 118[1], see also 119). Another eminent Muslim interviewee initially hailed the politics of the new Muslim parties of PFI and JIH as a "novel voice of the downtrodden", but three years later he accused them of "polarisation", denouncing their leaders as "novices, who are playing tit for tat" (respondent 84).

Social movements appear more horizontal and inclusive during their initial phase. However, in order to sustain its core support base, they often have to become increasingly hierarchical and exclusive over time (see Lawson 2015). Take for example that Indian Islamic movements have cooperated with non-Muslim groups temporarily, but not indefinitely as this might agitate their core constituency. In an interview with a Dalit activist and PFI supporter in "the only open bar" in Mangalore in 2015, who I met again two years later, he stressed that "PFI leaders have disengaged from me. A year or two ago, I spoke at all their events, and was highly sought after. But now they are more self-sufficient, and don't invite me anymore, which feels a bit strange" (respondent 114). Similarly, a former PFI member remarked critically that the PFI and JIH are not truly interested in Dalit, secular or, as the following case will show, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) alliances: "If you make a content

analysis of PFI's publications, you would not find a lot of topics concerning Dalits, Christians or sexual minorities that go beyond empty slogans. PFI's main agenda for mobilisation remains the protection of Islam. This sectarian approach does not build bridges" (respondent 26). On 22 November 2012, I attended a protest march organised by the Student Islamic Organisation (SIO), a prominent student wing of the JIH in Bangalore, who shared a political platform with the Karnataka Forum of Sexual Minorities, the New Socialist Alternative, and other Dalit and human rights groups[154]. During the event, a Muslim attendee expressed his disgust about the presence of sexual minorities: "You see these Hijras [transgender] over there; I am shocked that the Jamaat [JIH] would go public with them. How can we [Muslims] invite these groups? It's disgusting". His aversion and disapproval was palpable at that moment. On the other hand, the LGBT activists were visibly uncomfortable, which was later confirmed by one of them after the event. During the rally, there was limited interaction between the different human rights, religious, gender and LGBT activists. Many of my Muslim respondents reacted with disbelief and questioned the intentions of the SIO and various JIH leaders in inviting LGBT activists to the event. These observations corresponded with other fieldwork findings indicating the persistence of heteronormative traditions and values within Muslim groups in India. A senior JIH leader and editor of Radiance argued that "our obligation is to represent Islam. Islam is quite clear about certain things like the purpose of life, oneness of God, or the message of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Islam tells us to learn from nature and nature created men and women, while homosexuality is clearly against nature" (respondent 88). After the interview, the JIH leader gave me a special edition on the dangers of homosexuality and transsexuality, which was published by Radiance (2009), equating homosexuality with a disease, epidemic,

[154]The protest march to the town hall with the title "stop arresting innocent youth and end terrorism of government agencies" included a "stage performance" of four SIO members, lined up in a row next to each other, kneeing on the ground, while wearing sacks over their heads and being handcuffed (invoking the image of prisoners in the American detention camp of Guantanamo Bay). Numerous SIO members, and high-ranking JIH members, including the State President of the JIH were participating in the demonstration (see Appendix 14).

criminal offence, and a risky habit: "Homosexuality is a crime. [It] defeats the sexual unions, [while] unrestrained lust and hedonism disturbs the family system, [and] throws society into chaos" (see also Radiance 2015c). Such illiberal views were also reflected in the vocal opposition by various Muslim groups, including the JIH and PFI, towards the ruling of the Delhi High Court in 2009 to decriminalise Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, allowing same sex relations between consenting adults[155] (Radiance 2009). In 2013, the Indian Supreme Court overturned the judgement, which was publically welcomed by various Muslim and non-Muslim groups including the PFI and JIH (JIH 2013).

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the ways Muslim minority movements have assertively promoted the discourse of Muslim citizenship politics in relation to India's development models, economy and social inclusion. I have illustrated that the PFI and JIH have portrayed state elites as incompetent, morally corrupt and unable to empower and uplift Indian Muslims. On the contrary, Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH have promoted a reformative type of value-based politics, inspired by the Indian constitution and Islamic references that resonates with its disadvantaged Muslim support base. They have endorsed certain standards of the welfare state and social democracy. Consequently, the current political agenda of these Islamic groups cannot be viewed as an antithesis of modernity, but as an alternative conceptualisation and strong critique of it (Casanova 2001). In this study, the PFI and JIH disapproved of certain developments such as the increasing lack of spiritually in everyday life and the hegemony of science and rationality, while they embraced modernity and social

[155] Muslim leaders such as Maulana Bukhari promoted the boycott of the INC because of the party's "stand on homosexuality by saying, 'How can any Muslim support the party which promises to legalise homosexuality?'" (cited in NDTV 2014). The wider sentiment against homosexuality in contemporary India is mirrored in the annual opinion poll by the Hindustani Times (2013), which illustrated that most students and young professionals still believe that homosexuality is inacceptable and unnatural.

democracy in different ways. These Islamic actors largely accepted liberalism as part of India's modernity, provided that it didn't breach Quranic boundaries. "You can be a liberal, you can have your rationale, you can have your way, but with limits. The broader outlines, which were set out by the Prophet, are not to be crossed", argued a JIH leader in Bangalore in 2011 (respondent 49[3]). The prominent Islamic intellectual and JIH member, Javeed Jamil, noted that "rights without duties and prohibitions are an open invitation to exploitation. This is what differentiates Islam [and value-based politics] from the current [state] ideologies where human rights are used less to safeguard the dignity of people and more to exploit them" (cited in Radiance 2015c). The introduction to this chapter stressed that the critique of modernity by Islamic groups such the PFI and JIH can be compared to other post-modern, environmental and anti-globalisation movements. These movements have also highlighted that the uncurbed use of freedoms, including new technologies and conspicuous consumption, reduces the ability for self-reflection, and diminishes feelings of solidarity and belonging (see Hoffman 2016).

However, the chapter has also addressed the limiting factors of such comparisons between Muslim citizenship politics, using the the PFI and JIH as case studies, and other post-modern movements and secular human rights organisations. For instance, Muslim groups such as the PFI and JIH are trying to fight the erosion of an Islamic morality and consciousness, and have criticised the ideals of post-modern lifestyles and unrestrained individualism, sexual freedoms and autonomy, which according to these Islamist actors have failed to provide a basis for trust, solidarity, and a moral society. In doing so, the chapter illustrated the tension between demands for inclusive and secular political mobilisation and Islamic identity politics, by indicating that the PFI and JIH are struggling with respect to gender equality, the inclusion of the non-Islamic agendas of Dalit, feminist or LGBT movements, and political cooperation with moderate Muslims and non-Muslim groups. Hence this chapter

demonstrated that Islamic movements are not anti-modern and adverse to notions of democratic participation, but are in fact envisioning their own political agendas and solutions based on the complex demands of India's modernity and Islamic traditions. In the conclusion of this thesis, I will provide a summary of the key findings of the empirical chapters, and discuss various implications that emerged during the research on Muslim citizenship politics.

Chapter 8: Conclusion
Has Secular Politics Failed?

The thesis has provided an insight into the workings of a contemporary Islamic movement in India, by analysing its agenda and strategies, its leadership and cadre-base structures and the factors limiting its political expansion and access to secular Muslim and non-Muslim constituencies. I have used the empirical case study of the Popular Front of India (PFI) and compared the movement to other Muslim groups, including the Jamaat i Islami Hind (JIH), examined their political discourses, and linked these findings to broader global Islamic politics. By studying Muslim politics in India, the thesis aimed to contribute to the research on Islamic activism in a minority context that has received less academic attention than those Islamic movements and politics in the Middle East (Devji 2005, Ahmad 2009, De Cordier 2010, Reetz 2010). India's secular democracy, which has created some unique political space for religious groups, constituted an important analytical case by which to understand the new ways of political participation and moderation trajectories of Islamic actors. The empirical analysis has illustrated that Muslim movements such as the PFI use manifold religious, legal and constitutional discourses for social mobilisation, financial support and maintenance of membership. By doing so, the thesis has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of how Islamic movements utilise various spiritual, organisational and material resources and strategies for collective action, community development and democratic engagement, challenging the assumptions that successful development and participation in the democratic process result in a decline of religious influences (see Nandy 1990, Candland 2000, Rosenblum, 2003, Bano 2012, Kettell 2012, Devine 2015).

At the most basic level, the thesis set out to answer the question: *what are the PFI's proposed framing strategies for mobilising and activating the community*? I illustrated in Chapter 4 that Islamic groups such as the PFI promote a grievance frame in order to keep

the emotional injuries and victimhood of Indian Muslims in the historical memory of the community. I have also highlighted that the PFI expands the grievance frame to emphasise shared victimhood of Muslims, Dalits, Christians, Sikhs and other religious minorities, letting victims speak about their traumatic experiences, and publicly reminding supporters of various Church attacks, incidents of forced conversion, the Sikh Riots of 1984, the Babri Majid destruction in 1992 and the Gujarat carnage of 2002. According to the leaders of Islamic organisations such strategies of public remembrance are a result of public pressure from the majority Hindu population to forget, and move on from these past atrocities. Hence, these grievance frames and public expressions of hurt resonated with many segments of the Muslim minority community in India. Muslim organisations began to articulate citizenship rights and demand public and political recognition, which is part of the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics. In addition, these expressions of moral injury are different from the previous inward-looking and passive approach to politics that has been practiced by the ulama and elite Muslims.

Secondly, the empirical analysis in Chapter 7 has illustrated that the frames used by the PFI and other Muslim groups have promoted the discourse of a morally clean and anti-corrupt politics due to the perceived failure of secular politics to preserve a spiritual and dignified character in the daily life of Indian Muslims. Furthermore, for the Islamic activists I met during my fieldwork, secular and neo-liberal government policies that have promoted drinking, smoking, the objectification of women and the decriminalisation of homosexuality are a clear indicator of the moral corruption, selfishness and indecency of Indian politics. In such a context, groups such as the PFI tried to fill the spiritual void and perceived lack of integrity in politics with normative Islamic frames, which are partially comparable to the ethical politics of post-modernist and other religious movements. In a similar vein, the lay leadership of the PFI has defended the ulama-led movements, and even aligned with Islamic

authorities, to gain access to their theological resources such as mosque and madrasah networks. Thereby, the PFI and other Muslim groups have vocally protected the personal law and Islamic character of Muslim institutions, which has been highly appealing to segments within the local Muslim population.

The second level of analysis focused on the question *what are the characteristics of the constituency that resonates with the PFI's proposed framing strategies?* The thesis demonstrated that the PFI represents and appeals to the aspirations of marginalised (often semi-literate) Muslim youths, who are prone to police harassment, Hindu nationalist attacks and other forms of social deprivation. Chapter 6 illustrated that members value the PFI's collective action frames that emphasise worldliness and pragmatism, such as meritocracy, legal and political education as well as religious responsibility. By joining or supporting the movement, members became involved in the provision of social services and took part in disaster or riot relief missions across the country. These facilitated meaningful interactions and tapped into their desire for camaraderie, adventure and travel experience, while also satisfied their aspiration to become good Muslims by fulfilling their Islamic duty to serve humanity (insaniyat).

In addition, PFI members were attracted to the movement because of its modern language of legal justice, human rights, and the PFI's agenda of professionalism and discipline, which is different from the obedience of their parents' generation and the inward-looking and ritual focused ulama leadership. Therefore, the thesis has demonstrated that PFI cadres and supporters experienced a heightened sense of agency and self-respect by participating in PFI-led programmes that taught Muslims about their legal rights and political awareness. PFI cadres learned how to defend each other from police discrimination through court cases, petitions, boycotts and public protests. Chapters 4 and 6 have also illustrated that groups

like the PFI have enjoyed the silent (financial) support from pious upper and middle class Muslims as well as from members of reformist movements such as Tablighi Jamaat, as the PFI is able to offer physical protection from Hindu nationalist attacks, even beyond the law if necessary. Moreover, the movement has also been supported because of its assertive campaigns regarding moral and religious injuries, including the destruction of the Babri Masjid and other attacks on Muslim culture that offended the pride and self-worth of the Muslim minority in India.

The final level of analysis focused on the question *what counterframes are employed by Hindu nationalist and the state to diminish PFI's influence and to attack its reputation?* Chapter 5 demonstrated that counterframes such as allegations of terrorism, anti-nationalism and Islamic conspiracy have been employed by the police and Hindu nationalists, and were highly effective at diminishing the appeal and tarnishing the reputation of the PFI. The empirical analysis has illustrated that Hindu nationalists have promoted a strong sense of victimhood and a siege complex due to aggressive Islamic minority groups such as the PFI. The reasoning behind this victimhood and siege mentality has been used to rationalise political violence and so-called vigilante attacks against religious minority communities. Therefore, the thesis indicates that both Hindu nationalists and Islamic groups like the PFI have reinforced a sense of mutual victimisation to mobilise supporters and justify their agendas. Moreover, Chapter 7 illustrated that due to the aggressive organisational appearance, negative public reputation, and vocal defence of the Sharia component of the personal law by groups such as the PFI, secular non-Muslim groups are cautious of openly aligning with them, while moderate middle class Muslims have accused the PFI's citizenship politics of polarising Hindus and Muslims even further.

Against this backdrop, research on Islamic movements and minority politics in India has to be empirically nuanced of the emergence of Muslim citizenship politics in the wake of the 2006 Sachar Report, which has been greatly celebrated by scholars as a sign of the new found political confidence and political awakening of the Muslim community in Indian society. Contemporary Islamic movements in India should be examined through qualitative case studies of the various empirical manifestations of the new trend of Muslim citizenship politics. By using the PFI as such a case study, this thesis has contributed to the small but growing body of literature on Muslim citizenship politics and the testing of the moderation thesis in India's democracy. In the remainder of the conclusion, I will briefly reiterate how Indian Islamist groups such as the PFI are promoting a political departure from the traditional patronage of the INC, other established secular parties and Muslim elites, who have historically claimed to represent the Muslim masses without any tangible socio-economic results. Finally, I will return to the initial discussion of the moderation thesis in Chapter 2 and demonstrate that political pragmatism and considerations of power-sharing within coalition politics forces the newly emerged Muslim movements such as the PFI to make various concessions within India's democratic framework.

8.1. Departure from Congress and Secular Parties

In the 2016 Kerala state election, three independent Muslim parties, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Welfare Party of India (WPI), and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) challenged the INC cum IUML coalition (Deccan Chronicle 2016). A similar trend was observed in 2014, when various Muslim organisations in West Bengal aligned and actively tried to break away from the two established secular parties, Trinamool Congress and the Left (Indian Express 2016d). In both elections, Muslim parties stressed that secular elites

have politically exploited the Muslim community for decades. Prominent religious leaders, including Delhi based Imam Bukhari, also advised their Muslim constituencies to boycott the INC during the 2014 national elections for its failure to provide security and development (NDTV 2014). During my fieldwork, Muslim minority groups, including the PFI and JIH, argued that the INC resorts to tactics of scaremongering for electoral gains by projecting itself as the only legitimate party that can protect Indian Muslims from communal violence. A Muslim student activist and PFI member argued in Delhi in 2015 that

> "Congress [INC] has threatened Muslims by telling us, if you don't vote for us, there will be riots. The truth is that Congress never helped us. Six decades have gone by and we are still worse off than Dalits. Our parents still think that without Congress there will be riots. That's why they prefer to live their lives like slaves" (respondent 7[3]).

In this context, Muslim organisations are trying to generate an alternative understanding of the dominant discourse of INC patronage, in which Indian Muslims will be safer and more secure by disengaging from the INC and other regional parties and starting to politically organise and unite. Moreover, Muslim movements, including the PFI, are aware of and promote the narrative of a united Muslim community and leadership, which would yield substantive political leverage at state and national level given that Muslims constitute 14.2% of the Indian population according to the last census (2011), and represent over 20% of the electorate in approximately 100 of India's 543 constituencies of the Lok Sabha[156].

Chapter 4 highlighted that the PFI has framed the INC alliance with Muslim elites to have lacked the political determination to prosecute the RSS and BJP culprits and ensure justice for Muslims after the Babri Masjid destruction in 1992. The hesitation of the INC was seen as a sign of a political fear of aggravating Hindu voters that "created the atmosphere in which BJP leaders felt completely secure to continue with their fascist politics", noted a PFI

[156] Indian Muslims are a significant religious minority in various Indian states, including 17% in Bihar, 19% in Uttar Pradesh, 34% in Assam, 27% in West Bengal, 12% in Maharashtra, 27% in Kerala and 13% in Karnataka (Census 2011).

member (respondent 2[4]). In addition, the SDPI President pointed out that "the black laws [anti-terror laws] were initially started and operated by Congress [INC], which mostly targeted Muslims. But our so-called Muslim elites from the IUML and AIMIM completely failed to speak up, when they were in coalitions with Congress[157]" (respondent 35).

While grievance frames, including the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the atrocities in Gujarat and Muzaffarnagar, and the violent campaigns and hate speeches of BJP leaders such as Advani, Modi and Amit Sha suggests that Hindu nationalism has been the main political mobiliser of new Muslim political parties; my fieldwork indicates that the opposition towards the INC and other secular parties has been an equally powerful collective action frame. For instance, a PFI State President has argued that

> "it has been a very common swan song of the so-called secular parties to play with the emotions of the Muslim community. Since the late eighties, the Congress and other regional parties have reduced Muslims into a mere vote bank and never encouraged or allowed the Muslims to form their own political platform. This is once again proved more fiercely in the fact that the number of Muslim MLA's increased by only two seats in the 14th Karnataka Assembly elections, where the mathematically acceptable number by proportionate representation of population should be 34" (PFI 2013c)

A 2006 survey by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies highlighted that "instead of Hindu communalism or lack of religious freedom, a majority of the Muslim respondents (60%) feel that the [secular INC] government is responsible for the present situation of Muslims in India" (The Hindu 2012b, see also FirstPost 2017). These findings correspond with the current literature on Muslim minority politics (reviewed in Chapter 3) that suggested that common Muslims have lost faith in the INC and its Muslim elite allies because of their perceived failure to deliver security and development. In this context, Muslim minority organisations have protested that the previous INC government has not

[157] Ruff argued that "the Muslim League [IUML] never took an aggressive political line even after the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992, leading to the emergence of splinter groups [including the PFI] advocating a different, more aggressive tack" (cited in Asian Tribute 2016).

delivered what has been promised in the recent Sachar and Mishra reports[158]. Over a decade after the publication, Muslim activists were highly sceptical of the proffered outcomes, while under the BJP government representation of Muslim ministers decreased even further to 2 out of 75, which is the lowest rate since 1947 (Economist 2016). A senior PFI leader summarised the perceived political stagnation of Indian Muslims, using a medical metaphor: "Yes, we have the Sachar and Mishra reports now, but it's like commission after commission after commission. It's like a child getting diagnosed over and over again. We know it is sick, but the doctor refuses or delays to hand out the medicine" (respondent 36).

In this context of a perceived failure of the state to fulfil its role as a provider for religious minorities, the thesis illustrated that Muslim movements such as the PFI and JIH have benefited from this crisis of representation from the late 1980s onwards, which exacerbated the existential fear and the sense of moral injury of Indian Muslims. Muslim groups have gained momentum as they tried to fill the political and spiritual vacuum. Given the rejection and growing distrust of secular patronage by the INC, Islamic actors such as the PFI and JIH are offering alternative solutions in the form of citizenship politics and local alliances with other regional groups (Alam 2000, 2008, De Cordier 2010). Such cooperation has led to the prognosis of an end to Muslim vote bank politics (Bhargarva 2010). Chapter 7 explained that new alliances with non-Muslim groups, such as Dalit and other minority communities, are based on mutual interests and the notion of shared histories of victimhood. The next section will critically discuss such assumptions about these shifting political alliances, and illustrate that Indian Muslims are becoming less tolerant towards outsiders who are trying to speak on their behalf.

[158] According to the Indian Express (2012, 2016f), 10 years after its publication, most of the salient issues that were identified in the Sachar Report, "have not seen significant improvement in the years since the Report was submitted. In some cases, things seem to have, in fact, deteriorated [e.g. representation of Muslims in the police force]" (Indian Express 2016f).

8.2. Political Autonomy and Self-Reliance

Although studies have suggested that alliances have been shifting for some time, as Indian Muslims joined the INC opposition in the 1980s, and accepted the political patronage of socialist and Dalit parties (Hansen 2000, Jaffrelot 2001, Jodhka 2007, Bhargava 2010, Gayer and Jaffrelot 2012), the data collected during this project suggests that Muslim groups, including the PFI and JIH, have started to question the available alternatives to the INC and partially rejected being politically spearheaded by non-Muslim parties. De Cordier (2010: 495) argued that these alternatives to INC patronage, including the BSP, DMK, SP, or CPIM, lost credibility "as an opposition channel and political translation of social discontent at least among part of the Indian Muslims and other minorities". Conversely, the recent trend towards self-reliance and political autonomy indicates that Muslims have started to assume leadership and patronage of other disadvantaged communities, which is exemplified in manifold new party formations, including the WPI and SDPI (respondents 51, 62, 84, and 125). Such a confident assertion of Muslim political leadership has been tacitly expressed in the PFI's vision statement: "This organisation is a move towards co-ordination and management of such efforts for the achievement of socio-economic, cultural and political empowerment of the deprived and the downtrodden and the nation at large" (PFI 2012d). Similarly, in a political brochure by the Welfare Party of India (WPI), it has asserted its political leadership and promoted "a value-based welfare state, governed by justice freedom, and equality" with the stated political objective to establish an "alternative politics" with the WPI to "emerge on the horizon of Indian politics as the voice of the voiceless". Thereby, Muslim movements reject "the practise of one person, family or coterie leadership", and have "bid goodbye to tactical voting and go for strategic plans designed to achieve adequate representation in legislative bodies" (see SDPI 2009).

In the 2011 speech at the Maidan campaign ground in Delhi, a PFI leader underlined the strategy of self-reliance and distrust towards non-Muslim political patronage, while he invoked the discourse of securitisation in front of 500,000 Muslim attendees: "The attitude of the bureaucracy and police towards Muslims, whether it be Congress ruled Andhra Pradesh or BSP ruled Uttar Pradesh, or BJP ruled Madhya Pradesh is disturbingly similar" (PFI 2011a, see also Indian Express 2016g). Consequently, the lay leadership of the PFI, JIH and other Muslim groups comprehend the community as "political weightless" and "cheap vote banks for secular and Dalit parties" (respondent 148). In his Jamia Nagar office in Delhi in 2015, a senior JIH leader and WPI President argued that

> "in the past, the Jamaat [JIH] advised the Muslim community to vote for the most sensible, the most morally sound candidate[159]. But today with all the corrupt candidates of Dalit, OBC and socialist parties, we are forced to pick the lesser evil. That is why, we started to think about our own political ambitions and came up with the Welfare Party [WPI]" (respondent 147).

This sentiment of distrust toward non-Muslim political representation was echoed by the SDPI President describing India's political party landscape: "The Congress talks secular but acts corrupt and communal. Same with the communists [CPIM], who have been bought by the capitalists. The BSP and other socialist parties are run by family clans [while] AAP is full of Brahmins. How can we trust anyone of them?[160]" (respondent 35). Moreover, for the Uttar Pradesh state elections in 2017, Verma and Gupta (2016: 115) have argued that "Muslims have become doubtful about the electoral prospects of the SP [Samajwadi Party], due to the recent internal feud within the Yadav parivar (family)", as well as the parties' failure to protect Muslims during the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013 (Mander 2016). The 2017 Uttar Pradesh election results have indicated that Muslims indeed voted in a fragmented

[159] For instance, "in a campaign pamphlet, Jamaat i Islami members were told prior to the 1996 election to vote for candidates opposed to gambling, liquor, corruption, prostitution and 'reputed to be gentlemen… sympathetic to the Muslim viewpoint on education, personal law, honour [and] language'"(cited in Hansen 2000: 270).

[160] Muslim organisations have expressed strong scepticism towards the anti-corruption party AAP (Aam Admi Party), because of the alleged political proximity of some of their leaders to Hindu nationalism and their anti-Muslim sentiments (India Today 2011, PFI 2013b).

manner, being split between the SP, BSP and other Muslim alternatives such as the Peace Party, AIMI or SDPI (The Hindu 2017a, Indian Express 2017, FirstPost 2017). The next section will discuss some of the potential limitations of this new trend of Muslim citizenship politics and the aspirations of the newly emerged Muslim parties.

8.3. Limitations of Muslim Citizenship Politics

Studies have indicated that Muslim citizenship politics, based on a pan-Islamic identity promoting value or ethical politics and the notion of a victimised and monolithic Muslim community, will inevitably struggle to succeed in India, because of the manifold regional, linguistic, sectarian, generational, and cultural divisions among Indian Muslims (Ahmad 1978, 1984, Alam 2007, Ahmad 2015, Islam 2015). In addition, researchers stressed that the organisational rivalry and absence of uniformity among Islamic movements constitutes a challenge to Muslim citizenship assertions without an all-India agenda or leadership structure (Alam 2008, Punathil 2013). For example, Chapter 7 used the PFI and JIH as analytical case studies to show that Muslim politics in India is moving towards Muslim citizenship politics. However, both movements have also engaged in fierce battles of political legitimacy and have competed for members and resources ever since the PFI's inception in the early 1990s, especially in Kerala and Karnataka. A current PFI cadre, who had previously been with the JIH, noted that "many of our [PFI] members in South India have a Jamaat background. In that way, we have weakened the Jamaat by taking manpower from them, which also explains why the Jamaat resents us". In the past, JIH leaders have heavily criticised the PFI in their publications, even causing an internal dispute within the JIH whether it is justifiable and "Islamic" to write such "damaging and downgrading articles" about another Muslim movement[161] (respondents 51[2] and 52[6]). At the JIH district office

[161] For instance, the JIH argued that "the Popular Front of India is neither popular nor a front, but an extremist caucus controlled by unwise and short-sighted persons". The leadership "finds its relevance through

in Mangalore, a local businessman and JIH activist indicated JIH's organisational demarcation, arguing that "the difference between the PFI and the JIH is similar to Gandhi and [Subhas Chandra] Bose during the freedom struggle. Although they had the same goal, they disagreed on the means" (respondent 104). In a similar interview, a social activist who has worked with the JIH and PFI, argued that

> "JIH is not very far from the PFI ideologically. But JIH has been a long-term player and understood how to survive in the Indian context… JIH does not ruffle feathers in the way PFI has done in the past. For example, JIH is rarely called a terrorist organisation, which is a big achievement in the Indian political system. Now and then, the RSS, BJP and even Congress will need the Muslim villain to mobilise non-Muslim voters, and the PFI is giving this villain image to them".

Hence, in the eyes of JIH leaders, the PFI's approach is uncompromising and will play into the hands of Hindu nationalists. The JIH has also portrayed the PFI leadership as ill-qualified scholars, a commonly studied counter-frame within social movement theory, indicating a rational attempt to discredit a rival group (Wiktorowics 2004). During my interviews with JIH members, the main explanation of why the PFI is more assertive than the JIH is the PFI's "misguided understanding of the Quran" that has placed disproportionate emphasis on the "eradication of evil" (respondents 52, 58 and 103). In reference to the PFI, the JIH has highlighted that

> "the Holy Qur'an repeatedly reminds us of our basic duty of propagation and encouragement of good values and deeds and eradication of evils. In all the contexts the Holy Qur'an has given top preference to propagation of good values. Eradication of evils comes later only… Lamenting the harm of darkness or blaming somebody for it will not bring about any positive result" (Radiance (2007).

In other words, the PFI and JIH have challenged each other regarding "the interpretation of symbols and control of the institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them"

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controversies" (Radiance 2007). In addition, during the 2014 general election, the Milli Gazette (2014) has reported that "WPI [Welfare Party of India] has refused to support SDPI even in constituencies where the party has no candidate ... It is believed that the national leadership of WPI was under tremendous pressure from Kerala not to have any truck with SDPI. Kerala units of both Jamaat i Islami and WPI are known to be rivals of SDPI".

(Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 5). In addition, Islamic groups, including the PFI and JIH, have competed with each other over the quantity, quality and efficiency of their social service delivery and their ability to physically protect Indian Muslims, including rehabilitation projects and disaster or riot relief missions, as well as workshops and seminars on legal education, political rights and Islamic responsibilities, which has contributed to a vibrant Muslim civil society and activist scene[162] (see also De Cordier 2010).

Furthermore, such ideological divisions among Muslim leaders became apparent during my interviews with established Muslim political elites from the INC, IUML and AIMI, who feared that the independent political ambitions of movements such as the PFI and JIH will change the secular voting behaviour of Indian Muslims, and split the Muslim vote (see Quartz 2016). During an interview at the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi in December 2012, E. Ahmed, the IUML President and Minister of State for External Affairs at that time, commented on Muslim politics of his home state of Kerala: "The type of politics that PFI and JIH are doing is dangerous. Only Congress is able to build secular alliances" (respondent 129). Similarly, during an interview in his house on Akbar Road, Rahman Khan, the former INC Minister of Minority Affairs, admitted that groups like the PFI may have "good intentions and some popularity among the Muslim masses, but political achievements through polarisation are not possible". He then warns about their political ambitions: "You will get two or three local seats, but you will not win anything. If the PFI has a vision of upliftment, it should remain a social movement without engaging in politics for a handful of votes. It's a risky strategy. Leave politics to us [INC] and our regional partners" (respondent 38[2]). Studies have shown that the political fragmentation of Muslim voters has benefitted the BJP in the past, such as

[162] The PFI leader commented, with a sarcastic undercurrent in his voice, that "in the 1990s the Jamaat wanted to copy us in terms of providing physical protection for the community. They brought out the Jamaat Relief wing, which was basically a protection force with uniforms and trained cadres, but they were too scared and could not do what we could" (respondent 8[4]).

in Karnataka in 2004 or in the latest Uttar Pradesh election in 2017 (Assadi 2004, Verma and Gupta 2016, The Hindu 2017a, Indian Express 2017, Hindustani Times 2017).

Given these ideological and political rivalries between Muslim leaders and groups, we need to question the relevance of the political ambitions of the PFI and other recently emerged Muslim political parties, because of their perceived lack of organisational uniformity and negligible impact during elections. At the 2016 Kerala assembly election, Muslim parties failed in their attempt to persuade the Muslim masses, which was reflected in their low impact at the ballots (The Hindu 2016). A senior journalists and insider of the PFI argued in Mangalore in 2011 that

> "they have a long way to go before they deserve any serious attention. In Kerala for instance, which they boast to be their strongest bastion, in the recent Assembly elections they fielded over 80 candidates and began to foolishly believe and claim that following the polls, no party will be able to rule Kerala without their support. They were quoting their own so-called studies and surveys to justify this claim. After the elections the results showed that the total votes secured by all their candidates together in entire Kerala was about 1.6 lakhs. (160.000). Even after this disaster, unfortunately they were not prepared to accept the truth. With such attitude I don't think this group will ever grow to a significant level" (respondent 79, also 117[1]).

In electoral terms, citizenship politics by Muslim parties – that has focused on anti-corruption and moral or normative questions – may be insufficient to convince and unite Muslim voters, who are strategic and pragmatic in voting for candidates more likely to win elections (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987, Heath 2015, Verma and Gupta 2016). Moreover, scholars have argued that the proposed "morally clean" and "anti-corrupt" agendas, which various Muslim parties have recently promoted, will not increase their vote share, since corrupt politicians of established parties are still associated with higher returns, including protection, service delivery and access to material support[163] (Mason 1996, Nielsen 2011,

[163] For instance, Phel (2015) showed that the INC could not generate electoral gains for its anti-corruption agenda within the party during the 2014 elections. Moreover, Nielsen (2011) argued that Muslim voters in West Bengal

Phel 2015). For instance, a Muslim activist, who has previously campaigned with the PFI and JIH, stressed that "Indian Muslims are very smart. They don't always vote around religious lines, but will give their vote to Congress, socialists or Dalit parties. It depends on the individual and the party candidate who seems to get the job done" (respondent 86, see also Verma and Gupta 2016). Furthermore, in the Indian context of a non-Islamic state, the political and economic agendas and proposed solutions by Islamic movements and their political parties are incapable of determining a viable political alternative to the already established socialist or secular parties (Islam 2015). While Muslim groups such as the PFI or JIH have promoted a value-based or Islam-friendly form of governance, similar to the welfare state, that would regulate uncurbed capitalist expansion, these new actors barely challenge the neo-liberal hegemonic status quo, in which many of their middle class lay leaders are embedded (see Chapter 3).

Finally, although Muslim voters may sympathise with the PFI and other Muslim grassroots movements, established Muslim parties have questioned the legitimacy of the PFI on the grounds of organisational history and political expertise. The IUML President, who knew the PFI leaders from Kerala personally, explained to me that "we [IUML] have been working for the community for over 60 years. Show me what these PFI hotheads have done. I tell you: Nothing! The only thing, which they achieve, is to make a lot of noise and destroy our reputation[164]" (respondent 129). The following section will try to defuse some of the above-mentioned concerns about the latest trend of Muslim citizenship politics in India, and

refused to vote for smaller parties, including the SDPI and WPI, since voters anticipated their scant influence on policy making after the elections.

[164] JIH leaders and other interviewees from traditional parties and the ulama have been amused and laughed or been irritated and thin-skinned with agitated gestures, labelling the PFI as an annoying anomaly with ill-trained leaders and cadres. The PFI Chairman addressed the topic of organisational history in the PFI Media House in Mangalore in January 2015: "The Jamaat [JIH] is not willing to cooperate with us, because it has its own agenda. Their main contention is that the Jamaat was established 65 years ago, while we are only 25 years old. Jamaat leaders feel that there are elder and more senior to us and that we should merge into their organisation under their conditions" (respondent 18[4]).

indicate why research on this phenomenon within India's democratic framework constitutes an important contribution to the growing literature of Muslim minority studies.

8.4. Implications for the Study of Muslim Politics in India

The thesis commenced by setting out the argument that Muslim citizenship politics is emerging, where Muslim lay leaders are slowly departing from the political patronage of the INC, regional parties and Muslim elites to form their own Muslim political parties and promote an all-India Muslim unity. However, some of the results of this study have brought into question the proposition advanced in the Introduction, namely that Islamic movements such as the PFI are worth studying because of their potential developmental and reformist impact on the community and India's secular democracy. As shown in Chapter 6, the PFI has a loyal cadre-base, but their impact during elections is minimal. Moreover, the PFI's proposed frames have appeared as aggressive and communal to outsiders, which has alienated middle class Muslims and other non-Muslim groups. Critics have argued that the PFI's assertive posture has also increased police raids and Hindu nationalist attacks, making the Muslim community more vulnerable. Hence, considering the PFI's scant impact during elections and the movement's aggressive public posture, one may ask the following question: *Why is this study significant given that Muslim citizenship politics has failed to expand its constituency and generate mass support during elections and has alienated Muslim liberals and non-Muslim groups?* The following section attempts to justify the purpose and relevance of this research project.

Islamist groups readily admit that their effect at the ballots is minimal, though not insignificant[165]. A PFI leader argued that

[165] The PFI Chairman noted that "it is still very difficult to make Muslims vote for us, but it is slowly changing. South Indian Muslims are well aware of politics, but the problem is that they have been mostly behind Congress

> "it all depends on how you measure success. There are many movements and organisations which are not successful by external standards, but they feel successful. If you see our political party [SDPI] as part of a new social movement that works on different levels, we are surely successful[166]" (respondent 2[8]).

This view corresponds with Mosse's (2004: 658) critical study on development practices in South India, which stressed that "failure is not a failure to implement the plan, but a failure of interpretation [and rationalisation]" by the key protagonists. Chapter 6 showed that Muslim groups such as the PFI are not interested in short term electoral results, but are following long term strategies by building organisational resilience, political institutions, and training a highly disciplined cadre-base through the promotion of democratic political and legal education. Therefore, Muslim citizenship politics can be seen as a symbolic as well as pragmatic attempt to regain political autonomy and confidence for the Muslim population in India. The emerging Muslim lay leadership has rallied against secular elites and Hindu nationalists, who have questioned the loyalty of Indian Muslims in the past. Such Muslim citizenship assertions have been accompanied by a public display of patriotic, secular, and Islamic signifiers, questioning the relegation of religion to the private sphere especially for religious minority communities in India. In addition, Muslim citizenship politics can be partially compared to other minority and Dalit movements and parties such as the BSP, which have enhanced the representation and visibility in politics, increased the self-worth and diminished the public stigma that was associated with these historically disadvantaged

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over the last 35 to 40 years in particular in Karnataka. There was no real alternative to Congress hegemony, but we are trying to be this alternative in the future" (respondent 18[2]). According to the New Indian Express (2016), the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) "contested in all 20 constituencies in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls in Kerala and without any alliances succeeded in increasing votes more than 70 % compared to the last assembly elections. After UDF [INC-led coalition], LDF [Left] and BJP, the SDPI came next with 2,73,847 votes followed by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) with 2,56,662… In Malappuram constituency, the SDPI candidate Nasarudheen Elamaram got 47,853 votes, stood fourth after Muslim League, CPIM [Communists], and BJP".

[166] In response to a critical article in the Hindu (2016) entitled "Minor Muslim parties fail to make impact", a Muslim online commentator argued that "Rome is not built in a day. All such Muslim-led 'small' parties are building blocks of future multi-religious multi-ethnic secular political edifice of India, when Brahmins have finished with their harakiri rituals. New India has to be Brahmin-mukt [free] if the Republic has to survive in peace and harmony in centuries to come".

communities, though they may not have substantially improved the economic conditions of their constituencies (Varshney 2000, Jaffrelot 2003).

Moreover, labelling Muslim movements such as the PFI as unsuccessful or failed can be misleading, given that such attempts are often part of the second or even third wave of social movements that have learned from past mistakes. For instance, the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), which was banned by the government and often labelled as a misguided youth movement by Islamic authorities, has in fact left an important legacy for Muslim minority organisations in India. Currently, groups like the PFI and JIH as well as their political parties, the SDPI and WPI, have various high-ranking leaders, who were active members of SIMI 35 years ago (see Chapter 3). Their transition indicates an ability to learn from one's own experience and that of other organisations, as these leaders, who were once members of an exclusive and radical youth movement, are now heading democratic mass movements and political parties, promoting an inclusive agenda of Muslim citizenship politics. Like the PFI and other contemporary Muslim groups who have embraced Islamic pragmatism and a quasi-Protestant work ethic (see Chapter 6), SIMI's "main concern was the generation of an Islamic ethics fit for modernity. The organisation published elaborate career planning material for its members, it encouraged hard work and discipline in order to qualify for leading and powerful posts in the state bureaucracy and the private sector. Much like other radical conservatives, SIMI activists advocated stronger government and protection of family values" (Hansen 2000: 265). In this context, Ahmad (2009) suggested that SIMI and its political legacy challenged the old Islamic authorities and became an indicator of the wider political democratisation of Indian Muslims. Consequently, the current leadership of the PFI and JIH benefitted from being members and supporters of SIMI in terms of knowledge transfer, including expertise in social mobilisation, political awareness, and new forms of engagement with potential allies and adversaries. Despite the highly

constrained political context for Indian Muslims due to an assertive Hindu nationalist movement, the PFI leadership managed to diversify its cadres (Chapter 3), has sustained its support base and recruited new members (Chapter 6), and has slowly built a wider network of different social organisations and political wings in various states and regions across India for almost three decades, indicating significant organisational resilience (Schock 2005, Weinstein 2007, Chenoweth and Stephan 2011). In addition, the PFI's practical and legal approach is reflected in the movement's response to the current BJP government. Outside observers expected Muslim minority leaders to be alarmed in 2014 by the bleak prospect of an assertive Hindu nationalist government backed by a landslide victory. However, a PFI activist has argued that

> "with Modi and the BJP in power, we don't have to see it all negatively. Muslims have learned to survive and know how to cooperate with other victimised communities… Our mentality has changed a lot over the last two decades. We have a clear political vision now and are much more confident. The new generation is better educated, and has greater access to information via the internet which makes a big difference" (respondent 2[8]).

Hence, calling Muslim movements, including the PFI, unsuccessful solely based on electoral results will not capture the full picture, and ignores the importance of the symbolic politics of recognition, dignity and belonging.

Earlier, I highlighted the antagonistic relationship between the PFI and the JIH. Scholars have argued that social divisions as well as organisational rivalries among Muslim groups will hamper the success of Muslim citizenship politics as a nationwide political project. Despite these existing organisational differences, during my fieldwork there has been a genuine effort from Muslim groups to stress that "divides are becoming smaller" (respondent 18). In an interview with the WPI President in Delhi, he emphasised the political coalition in West Bengal, in which the SDPI, WPI and other Muslim parties have collaborated. He was confident that "more Muslim parties will align, similar to what the socialist and Dalit parties

have achieved in the past" (respondent 147, also 2[8], and TwoCircles 2014). In a similar vein, the SDPI President has expressed sympathy for the WPI, even though he made it clear that "the Welfare Party has basically copied and pasted our manifesto". He further highlighted that strategic conversations with WPI leaders about potential collaborations are taking place, "but not at the official level yet" (respondent 35). This sense of mutual influence and learning is reinforced by a SIO member, who showed me the latest publications on biased media reporting against Muslims. He then acknowledged that the political activities of the JIH and SIO are becoming gradually more assertive due to the influence of new strategies and the political competition of the PFI[167] (respondent 52, see also De Cordier 2010). During my fieldwork, I often observed how members of the PFI, the JIH and other Muslim organisations made jokes about each other and expressed sentiments of mutual respect and admiration[168]. Among the leadership, organisational animosities were more rigidly pronounced compared to the cadre and grassroots level, where mutual sympathy and curiosity were commonly found (see Appendix 21). The final section of the thesis will demonstrate that the political lay leadership of the PFI are willing to compromise their normative agenda for the practical consideration of coalition building with established parties.

[167]While in the past it has been mainly the PFI that has openly challenged the government and police forces, more recently, the JIH and other ulama-led movements became increasingly more assertive in instances where minority rights were infringed. For example, during the ban under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) of the Islamic Research Foundation by the Salafist preacher, Zakir Naik, in Mumbai (respondent 82), TwoCircles (2016) has reported that "[while] the response of various Muslim organisations, both political and otherwise, has been cautious to say the least, [t]he case of Jamaat i Islami Hind and Popular Front of India is different. Both organisations have severely criticised the move [by the government] to ban the Islamic Research Foundation, calling it unconstitutional and a minority witch hunt" (see also Indian Express 2016e).

[168] For instance, a SIO member sent me a text message reading "I wish you all the best for your marriage with a PFI girl". In addition, in the JIH student wing office of Solidarity in Calicut in 2015, the PFI affiliated newspaper Thejas was displayed on the table in the common room. One Solidarity activist commented that "it's a good paper, which addresses the right issues. That's why we read it".

8.5. Political Pragmatism and Coalition Building

Studies have shown that democratic politics can have a moderating influence on political groups and parties, even if they didn't always believe in democratic processes. Chapter 2 illustrated that religious groups will be shaped by democratic frameworks, and will refine their agendas towards more inclusive politics (Roy 2007, Ahmad 2009, Tezcur 2010). Chandra (2005), building on Rudolph and Rudolph's (1987) notion of the "centrist equilibrium of Indian politics", has also argued that India's religious and caste politics is compatible with democratic processes provided that certain political conditions are fulfilled, including the constitutional recognition of group differences and affirmative action policies. While religious or caste-based parties were initially been in fierce and – at times – violent competition, they eventually moderated and gravitated towards the political centre. For Chandra, India's extreme ethnic and religious diversity with manifold minorities and sub-cultures requires political pragmatism and the willingness for any given party or movement to form coalitions in order to attain a stake in policy making[169].

Muslim groups such as the PFI have indicated political pragmatism and willingness to compromise their seemingly uncompromising stance on values, morality and clean politics to gain a stake in policy making and governance. PFI leaders disclosed that they have negotiated with established Muslim and non-Muslim parties that they have publicly accused of being morally corrupt and the enemies of Muslims and Islam in India[170]. For instance, during the last two Kerala state elections, the PFI and JIH have supported and tried to enter either the Communist (CPIM) or the INC led coalitions. An ex-PFI member noted that "it is an

[169] Chandra (2005) has used various party and movement examples, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Janata Dal (JD) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). She illustrated how these parties and movements have over time modified their extreme, antagonistic and often anti-democratic positions towards political pragmatism and coalition building.

[170] For example, the PFI has approached the Aam Admi Party (AAP) in Delhi, despite the fact that the PFI has accused AAP of being a Brahmin and anti-Muslim party (see also SDPI 2015). The PFI has also supported AIMIM in Hyderabad, when Qwaisi's house was attacked, and has expressed praise for AIMIM's seat in parliament. In this context, PFI leaders have indicated interests in aligning with AIMIM, even though they have previously labeled it a communal and dynastic party (respondent 13).

open secret that both Congress and CPIM have tolerated the movement, because the PFI would eventually give their support to one of them. That is why, PFI has enjoyed silent state protection[171]" (respondent 26). Such backstage negotiations with established and centrist parties suggest a pragmatic desire for compromise and participation by Indian Muslims. The inclination of new parties such as the SDPI and WPI towards political pragmatism indicates a democratic commitment to and inclusion in India's political modernity. These Muslim groups have assessed their electoral prospects and adjusted their short and long-term political ambitions. The Hindu (2016a) reported that "with each passing elections [in Kerala] ... minor [Muslim] parties, namesake candidates and rebels have been scaring both the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Communist Party". This kind of public recognition is celebrated by the PFI and other groups as a symbolic victory and a move in the direction of political autonomy for Indian Muslims[172].

Even though Muslim movements such as the PFI adhere to an Islamic ideology, they have remained vague regarding the question of how the recommended formula of citizenship politics can be translated into practice. Internally, ideas about morality, pluralism and development are highly contested, while religious discourses are often used with pragmatic intentions or down played for strategic goals and elections. The new political lay leaders of the PFI and other Muslims groups have indicated a middle ground: remaining socially conservative, but also not departing from liberal democratic norms and the language of participation, in order to increase their appeal and acceptability among diverse audiences

[171] The Deccan Chronicle (2016) also reported that "CPIM and the Congress had faced allegations of secret tie-ups with Muslim splinter groups like PDP, Welfare Party and SDPI". Moreover, the Hindu (2016) noted that "there were allegations that the WPI had transferred votes in favour of the CPIM candidate... resulting in the defeat of the IUML nominee". The Indian Express (2016h) quoted a local IUML politician in the Kerala District of Azhikode during the state elections in 2016: "The SDPI wants to defeat me [and the IUML] because of my stand. They had around 3,000 votes and the party hopes to defeat me by entering into a nexus with the CPIM".

[172] The director of Kozhikode-based Keluettan Padana Kendra affiliated to the CPIM, argued that "in Malabar, the Jamaat led Welfare Party and Popular Front of India's political outfit SDPI may ruin the chances of UDF [the INC and IUML coalition]" (Hindu 2016a). Another CPIM leader in Calicut angrily noted that the PFI and JIH "are trying to steal Dalits from us; trying to hurt us. Nowadays it becomes trendy for all organisations to speak on behalf of Dalits. Dalits are illiterate, and easy to manipulate" (respondent 117[2]).

and avoid scrutiny by a highly vigilant state apparatus. Therefore, Muslim citizenship politics avoids appearing too secular, inclusive and dismissive of Islamic traditions at the grassroots level as it may alienate the ulama and its core Muslim constituencies. On the other hand, it tries to refrain from public assertions that would make these movements appear overly driven by Islamic identity politics, as this would play into the hands of right wing Hindu groups, and alienate some middle class supporters who work in the formal sector. In finding such a balance within India's democratic framework, Islamic organisations struggle with contradictions and challenges regarding their modus operandi, and internal divisions between different Islamic sects, generations, sexes and classes. However, this diversity within the PFI and other groups also demonstrates that Islamic movements are not static or homogeneous entities, but are in fact highly complex and ambiguous by nature, juggling the tensions and paradoxes of political modernity with Islamic traditions.

Finally, this thesis has argued that most Muslim elites and traditional Islamic organisations are becoming increasingly more assertive and involved in democratic processes, and have similarities with and are influenced by the political vocabulary of grassroots groups such as the PFI. In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Muslim elite parties and Islamic groups confidently addressed concerns about disproportionate police violence and racial profiling against Muslims under the anti-terror laws, as well as the political and economic deprivation of the majority of Indian Muslims, while they assertively demanded quotas in the public sector and reservations in education (Milli Gazette 2014, Indian Express 2016g). Fieldwork evidence has suggested that due to increased competition from assertive Muslim grassroots movements, established parties, including the IUML and the AIMI have been forced to renegotiate their terms within INC-led coalitions in order to reassure the parties' fading Muslim supporters (see also India Today 2012, Asian Tribune 2016). Muslim movements such as the PFI have been perceived as novel players, who have only recently entered the new political

environment. Their presence may indicate more inclusiveness, internal democratisation and political fragmentation of Muslim minority politics in India. Like other political players who emerged in the past, including Dalit and lower caste parties in the 1980s, new Muslim parties such as the SDPI and WPI will try to win new audiences by highlighting the difference between them and the established Muslim elite parties. That is why the PFI is more assertive compared to traditional Muslim elites, since the movement still needs to prove its organisational capability, go beyond symbolic politics, and gain political leverage in state politics, which will require continuous empirically research into Muslim citizenship politics in India.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview lists[173]

PFI Elite Respondents[174]

#	NAME AND POSITION	**DATE AND LOCATION**
1	PFI State President of Karnataka	30.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 19.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 30.08.2011, Mangalore [3] 20.09.2011, Delhi [4] 12.11.2012, Mangalore [5] 17.11.2012, Mysore [6] 06.12.2012, Bangalore [7]
2	PFI Executive Council Member (Aziz)	19.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 24.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 30.08.2011, Mangalore [3] 31.08.2011, Mangalore [4] 20.09.2011, Delhi [5] 09.12.2012, Bangalore [6] 24.12.2014, Bangalore [7] 25.12.2014, Bangalore [8] 02.01. 2015,Mangalore [9] 10.01.2015, Bangalore [10]
3	President of the All Indian Imam's Council (AIIC)	26.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 06.12.2012, Bangalore [2]
4	PFI District President of Mysore (Iqbal)	28.08.2011, Mysore [1] 17.11.2012, Mysore [2] 24.11.2012, Mysore [3]
5	PFI member in charge of the PFI Delhi Office	30.08.2011, Mangalore
6	PFI member, victim of police discrimination (Naveed)	31.08.2011, Mangalore 17.11.2012, Mysore
7	Campus Front of India (CFI), President	20.09.2011, Delhi [1] 15.12.2012, Delhi [2] 12.01.2015, Delhi [3] 15.01.2015, Delhi [4]
8	PFI Vice President	15.08.2012, Delhi [1]

[173] In order to protect my research participants, ensure confidentiality and anonymity, most of the names of interviewees, some organisations and research locations have been changed or omitted. Otherwise, titles and ranks of leaders and cadres of the PFI and other organisations are presented as they were held during the time of the fieldwork.

[174] I use the term "elites" to describe those individuals or groups in decision-making and leadership roles such as local politicians, bureaucrats, party leaders, lobbyist, and business owners but also community and religious leaders, intellectuals, bloggers, grassroots activists, social workers and students. While not always elites in the socio-economic sense, many of these individuals were experts in their respective fields, and so could inform this research project.

		02.11.2012, Calicut [2] 10.12.2012, Hyderabad [3] 30.12.2014, Calicut [4] 31.12.2014, Calicut [5]
9	PFI State President of Maharashtra	15.08.2012, Delhi [1] 03.09.2012, Delhi [2] 13.10.2012, Delhi [3] 05.11.2012, Delhi [4] 13.12.2012, Pune [5]
10	PFI member, human rights advocate, and local businessman	12.11.2012 Bangalore [1] 22.11.2012 Bangalore [2]
11	PFI Vice State President of Karnataka	17.11.2012, Mysore [1] 25.12.2014, Bangalore [2]
12	PFI State General Secretary of Karnataka	17.11.2012, Mysore
13	SDPI District President of Mysore	24.11.2012, Mysore
14	PFI District President of Madikeri	25.11.2012, Madikeri
15	PFI member and human rights lawyer	25.11.2012, Madikeri
16	SDPI State President of Karnataka	25.11.2012, Madikeri
17	PFI member and local businessman	25.11.2012, Madikeri
18	PFI Chairman, former President and founder of Karnataka Forum of Dignity	17.11.2012, Mysore [1] 29.11.2012, Mangalore [2] 30.12.2014, Calicut [3] 02.01. 2015, Mangalore [4]
19	PFI State President of Kerala	5.12.2012, Calicut
20	PFI General Secretary of Kerala	5.12.2012, Calicut
21	PFI member and lawyer	06.12.2012, Bangalore
22	PFI member and senior lawyer	09.12.2012, Bangalore
23	PFI Executive Council Member, founding member, and former PFI Chairman	14.12.2012, Delhi [1] 30.12.2014, Calicut [2] 06.01.2015, Cochin [3]
24	PFI supporter, assistant professor in journalism at the Social Advancement Foundation of India	28.12.2014, Calicut
25	Ex-SIMI member, publisher and dentist	28.12.2014, Calicut
26	Ex-SIMI and ex-PFI member, dentist, left the PFI because of political ambitions (e.g. SDPI)	28.12.2014, Calicut
27	PFI supporter and PhD student	29.12.2014, Malappuram
28	SDPI District General Secretary of Malappuram	29.12.2014, Malappuram
29	Ex-SIMI member, currently works in Saudi Arabia	29.12.2014, Malappuram
30	PFI Executive Council Member	30.12.2014, Calicut
31	Campus Front of India (CFI), State President, Kerala	05.01.2015, Calicut
32	Campus Front of India (CFI), State General Secretary Kerala	05.01.2015, Calicut
33	Campus Front of India (CFI), State President, Karnataka	10.01.2015, Bangalore
34	Campus Front of India (CFI), District President, National Council Member	10.01.2015, Bangalore
35	SDPI National President	16.01.2015, Delhi
36	Rehab Foundation, President (new PFI Chairman, 2017), also first NDF (1992), PFI (2006) and SDPI (2009) Chairman	16.01.2015, Delhi

Respondents from civil society, Islamic organisations and government institutions

#	NAME AND POSITION	DATE AND LOCATION
37	Institute for Objective Studies, Director, and President of Milli Council (Manzoor Alam)	14.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 30.10.2012, Delhi [2] 14.01.2015, Delhi [3]
38	Minister for Minority Affairs, Congress (Rahman Khan)	14.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 07.11.2012, Delhi [2] 12.11.2012, Bangalore [3]
39	Islamic Voice, founder, editor and businessman	16.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 03.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 05.08.2011, Bangalore [3] 16.11.2011, Bangalore [4]
40	Real estate businessman	22.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 10.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 14.11.2012, Bangalore [3]
41	Karnataka Muslims, Founder and Editor, Muslim newspaper close to JIH	27.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 14.11.2012, Bangalore [2] 06.12.2012, Bangalore [3] 26.12.2014, Bangalore [4]
42	Minister of Minority Affairs of Karnataka, BJP (Mumtaz Ali Khan)	28.07.2011, Bangalore [1] 16.08.2012, Bangalore [2]
43	Yoginder Sikand, sociologist	30.07.2011, Bangalore
44	Al Azahr School, Director	03.08.2011, Bangalore
45	Teacher, Islamic Voice reader	04.08.2011, Bangalore
46	Centre for Peace and Spirituality, Director of South India and personal counsellor	04.08.2011, Bangalore
47	Islamic women Organisation with counselling and self-help focus, Director	05.08.2011 Bangalore
48	Congress Minister, Karnataka (Roshin Baig)	06.08.2011 Bangalore
49	JIH Leader and medical doctor (Siddique)	07.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 10.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 13.08.2011, Bangalore [3] 22.11.2012, Bangalore [4]
50	Student Islamic Organisation (SIO), President	08.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 19.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 08.11.2011, Bangalore [3] 22.11.2012, Bangalore [4]
51	Former Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) member investigative journalist, Newzfirst, editor	08.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 23.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 14.08.2011, Bangalore [3] 12.11.2012, Bangalore [4] 22.11.2012, Bangalore [5]
52	Student Islamic Organisation (SIO), Secretary of Public Relations and journalist (Sharief)	08.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 23.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 31.08.2011, Mangalore [3] 08.11.2012, Bangalore [4] 24.12.2014, Bangalore [5]

		09.01.2015, Bangalore [6]
53	Islamic Voice, Editor and BBC journalist for Karnataka	09.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 11.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 16.08.2011, Bangalore [3] 21.11.2012, Bangalore [4] 10.01.2015, Bangalore [5]
54	IT professional, reader of Islamic Voice	09.08.2011, Bangalore
55	JIH Leader and medical doctor	11.08.2011, Bangalore
56	Young Muslim Digest, Editor, magazine close to JIH	11.08.2011, Bangalore
57	Deccan Herald, journalist	12.08.2011, Bangalore
58	Centre for Contemporary Studies, member, local Imam	12.08.2011, Bangalore
59	Milli Council, General Secretary, Karnataka Zone	12.08.2011, Bangalore
60	Frontline, journalist	13.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 15.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 13.11.2012, Bangalore [3] 08.01.2015, Bangalore [4]
61	Communication manager IT company, Islamic Voice reader	14.08.2011, Bangalore
62	JIH member, IT consultant, victim of police discrimination	15.08.2011, Bangalore [1] 15.01.2015, Bangalore [2]
63	Alternative Law Forum, Founder and human rights lawyer	19.08.2011, Bangalore
64	PUCL member	20.08.2011, Bangalore
65	Islamic Voice, journalist	20.08.2011, Bangalore
66	Islamic Voice, Public Relations manager	22.08.2011, Bangalore
67	Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, sociologist	23.08.2011, Bangalore
68	Assistant Police Commissioner, Traffic Division	23.08.2011, Bangalore
69	Assistant Police Commissioner, Law and Order Division	23.08 2011, Bangalore
70	Intelligence Bureau (IB), Director (Ramakrishna)	23.08 2011, Bangalore [1] 25.08.2011, Bangalore [2] 16.11.2012, Bangalore [3]
71	Secretary to the Minister of Minority Affairs, Karnataka (BJP)	24.08.2011, Bangalore
72	Police Inspector, assistant to Police Commissioner of Mysore	27.08.2011, Mysore
73	University of Mysore, political scientist	27.08.2011, Mysore [1] 23.11.2012, Mysore [2] 24.11.2012, Mysore [3]
74	District Representative of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Karnataka (BJP), and lawyer	28.08.2011 Mysore
75	Unity Hospital, Founder and Director	01.09.2011, Mangalore [1] 26.11.2012, Mangalore [2]
76	Dalit Voice, Founder and Editor	01.09.2011, Mangalore [1] 26.01.2012, Mangalore [2]
77	Centre for Harmony, Director and PUCL member	01.09.2011, Mangalore
78	PUCL, Regional Director	01.09.2011, Mangalore [1] 27.11.2012, Mangalore [2] 03.01.2015, Mangalore [3]
79	Vartha Bharathi, Editor, Kannada daily newspaper	02.09.2011, Mangalore
80	Asghar Ali Engineer, former Director of the Centre for Study of Society and Secularism	05.09.2011, Mumbai [1] 06.09.2011, Mumbai [2]
81	BBC South Asia correspondent	05.09.2011, Mumbai
82	Islamic Research Foundation, member	07.09.2011, Mumbai
83	Asia Foundation, researcher	08.09. 2011, Mumbai

84	Milli Gazette, Founder and Editor	14.09.2011, Delhi [1] 23.09.2012, Delhi [2] 19.12.2012, Delhi [3] 12.01.2015, Delhi [4]
85	Radiance, Chief Editor,	14.09.2011, Delhi
86	BBC journalist and social activists	15.09.2011, Delhi
87	Tata Institute of Social Science, researcher	16.09.2011, Gurgaon
88	Radiance, Founder and senior JIH leader	16.09.2011, Delhi
89	Centre for Peace and Spirituality, Founder, (Maulana Wahudin Khan)	24.09.2012, Delhi
90	Jawaharlal Nehru University, sociologist	26.10.2012, Delhi
91	Jawaharlal Nehru University, political scientist	26.10.2012, Delhi
92	Secretary to the Minister of Minority Affairs (Congress)	07.11.2012, Delhi [1] 12.11.2012, Bangalore [2]
93	Association for the Protection of Civil Rights (APCR), State President, close to JIH	08.11.2012, Bangalore
94	Tehelka, journalist who has written about the PFI	22.11.2012, Bangalore
95	JIH State President of Karnataka	22.11.2012, Bangalore
96	The Hindu, journalist	26.11.2012, Mangalore
97	BJP supporter, former RSS member, college law teacher, (Manosh)	27.11.2012, Mangalore [1] 28.11.2012, Mangalore [2] 01.01.2015, Mangalore [3] 03.01.2015, Mangalore [4]
98	BJP supporter, lawyer and writer for the Voice of India	27.11.2012, Mangalore
99	Legal scholar based in Vadodara (Gujarat) and London.	27.11.2012, Mangalore
100	Muslim Beary Academy, President and BJP politician (Javeed)	28.11.2012, Mangalore
101	Muslim Beary Academy, Secretary	28.11.2012, Mangalore
102	Police Inspector	28.11.2012, Mangalore
103	JIH District President, Mangalore, and manager of Shanthi Prakashana (printing company)	28.11.2012, Mangalore
104	Local JIH member, businessman, lived in Dubai	28.11.2012, Mangalore
105	Local JIH member	28.11.2012, Mangalore
106	District General Secretary Welfare Party of India (WPI)	28.11.2012, Mangalore
107	Welfare Party of India (WPI), member	28.11.2012, Mangalore
108	The Hindu, journalist, who is originally from Bangalore	29.11.2012, Mangalore
109	The Hindu, journalist	29.11.2012, Mangalore
110	The Hindu, Chief Editor,	29.11.2012, Mangalore
111	Local VHP Leader	29.11.2012, Mangalore
112	Local RSS Leader and Mathematics and IT teacher (Shankar)	30.11.2012, Mangalore [1] 02.01.2015, Mangalore [2]
113	PUCL member	30.11.2012, Mangalore
114	Teacher and local Dalit activist, supporter of PFI	30.11.2012, Mangalore [1] 03.01.2015, Mangalore [2]
115	Islamic Trust, Director close to the Islamic Research Foundation	30.11.2012, Mangalore
116	Communist Party of India (Marxist), member	01.12.2012, Calicut
117	Communist Party of India (Marxist), Director of Research	03.12.2012, Calicut [1] 05.01.2015, Calicut [2]
118	IUML, District President	03.12.2012, Calicut [1] 29.12.2014, Calicut [2]

119	IUML, Public Relation manager	03.12.2012, Calicut
120	Salaam Center, Director	06.12.2012, Bangalore
121	AIMIM, senior member	10.12.2012, Hyderabad
122	Majlis Bachao Tehreek (Save Majlis Movement), Founder	10.12.2012, Hyderabad
123	Tata Institute of Social Science, political scientist	12.12.2012, Solapur (Tulsarpur)
124	Human right activist	13.12.2012, Pune
125	Jamia Millia Islamia, political scientist	16.12.2012, Delhi
126	Jawaharlal Nehru University, political scientist	17.12.2012, Delhi
127	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, political scientist	18.12.2012, Delhi
128	Pro-BJP columnist and journalist	19.12.2012, Delhi
129	Minister of State for External Affairs, and National President of IUML (E. Ahmad)	19.12.2012, Delhi
130	Former Police Commissioner of Delhi	22.12.2014, Delhi
131	Dalit Sangharsh Samithi (DSS), State President	26.12.2014, Bangalore
132	Journalist, works in Hyderabad	28.12.2014, Calicut
133	Majlis Education Trust, President close to JIH	29.12.2014, Calicut
134	Solidarity Youth Movement, member close to JIH	29.12.2014, Calicut [1] 31.12.2014, Calicut [2]
135	University of Calicut, political scientist	30.12.2014, Calicut
136	Solidarity Youth Movement, General Secretary	31.12.2014, Calicut
137	BJP politician and lawyer	31.12.2014, Calicut
138	Local BJP politician, businessman	02.01.2015, Mangalore [1] 03.01.2015, Mangalore [2]
139	University of Mangalore, historian, BJP supporter (Kumar)	03.01.2015, Mangalore
140	Senior public commentator (M.N. Karasseri)	05.12.2015, Calicut
141	Investigative journalist (Sunil)	08.01.2015, Bangalore
142	Vision Office, State President close to JIH	09.01.2015, Bangalore
143	Republican Party, Dalit leader,	09.01.2015, Bangalore
144	Human Rights Activist and publisher of Muslim Magazine	09.01.2015, Bangalore
145	Jamia Millia Islamia, political scientist	12.01.2015, Delhi
146	JIH, General Secretary	14.01.2015, Delhi
147	Welfare Party of India (WPI), President, former SIMI President	14.01.2015, Delhi
148	Welfare Party of India (WPI), General Secretary	14.01.2015, Delhi
149	Senior journalist	14.01.2015, Delhi
150	Centre for Equity Studies, researcher	14.01.2015, Delhi
151	Jawaharlal Nehru University, political scientist	15.01.2015, Delhi

Public Events, Conferences, and Seminars

1	Launch event of Karnataka Muslims (Newspaper), (Manzoor Alam and Rahman Khan were attending)	14.07.2011, Bangalore
2	Discover Yourself, Islamic self-help workshop, PFI and JIH members have attended it in the past.	16.07.2011, Bangalore 17.07.2011, Bangalore 19.07.2011, Bangalore 16.11.2012, Bangalore
3	Islamic reading group organised by the Centre for Contemporary Studies.	27.07.2011, Bangalore
4	Conference "Fabrication of False Cases" (first encounter with PFI activists)	30.07.2011, Bangalore
5	JIH conference, "Muslim Professional and Youth Annual Meet"	07.08.2011, Bangalore
6	JIH conference and business meeting, "Islam's Answer to Corruption".	10.8. 2011, Bangalore
7	Alternative Law Forum, seminar on Violence against Muslims	19.08.2011, Bangalore
8	SDPI conference on "Social Justice and Reservations for Muslims"	26.08.2011, Bangalore
9	Ramadan distributions by the PFI	28.08.2011, Mysore
10	Ramadan distributions by the PFI	30.08.2011, Mangalore
11	RSS welcome event for the Secretary General of Amnesty International, Salil Shetty, who was born in Mangalore.	30.08.2011, Mangalore
12	Weekly service of Maulana Wahudin Khan at the Centre for Peace and Spirituality.	27.09.2012, Delhi
13	Student Islamic Organisation's National Election conference	08.11.2012, Bangalore
14	Why Popular Front of India, large-scale public campaign	17.11.2012, Mysore
15	SDPI seminar on "Affirmative Action and Social Justice"	21.11.2012, Bangalore
16	Protest March by the Student Islamic Organisation (SIO), "Stop arresting Innocent Youth"	22.11.2012, Bangalore
17	Academic conference on "Rethinking Religion in India" at Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala (SDM) Law College.	24.11.- 27.11. 2012, Mangalore
18	Catholic service at the Milagren Church	30.11.2012, Mangalore
19	Large-scale political rally by the BJP	01.12.2012, Calicut
20	IUML conference and national elections	01.12.2012, Calicut
21	RSS conference	02.12.2012, Calicut
22	Protest rally by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) against rising fuel prices	02.12.2012, Calicut
23	PFI seminar, 20th Anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition	06.12.2012, Bangalore
24	Muslim civil society conference, 20th Anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition	06.12.2012, Bangalore
25	JIH conference to welcome the newly elected President (Amir) Jalaluddin Umri.	06.12.2012, Bangalore
26	Human Rights Convention against Draconian laws (an activist of PFI's Human rights wing, the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation (NCHRO) spoke and attended.	10.12. 2012, Hyderabad 11.12. 2012, Hyderabad
27	National General Assembly, PFI leadership election	28.12. – 30.12.2014 Calicut
28	Muslim wedding with PFI, JIH, Muslim League and ex SIMI guests.	29.12.2014, Malappuram

29	Mangaluru Initiative for Nationalist Dialogue (MIND), BJP business conference to welcome the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sithharama (BJP).	03.01.2015, Mangalore
30	Public seminar on "Freedom of Speech", which I attended with a PFI activist.	05.01.2015, Calicut

Non-elite and informal conversation with lower ranking PFI members and supporters

Number of cadres and supporters	**Place**	**Dates**
(61)	Bangalore Mysore Mangalore Mumbai	14.07.2011- 03.10.2011
(83)	Delhi, Bangalore Mysore Maderkeri Mangalore Calicut Hyderabad Solarpur Pune	15.08.2012- 19.12.2012
(32)	Delhi Bangalore Mangalore Calicut	04.12.2014- 17.01.2015



Map of South India that shows the main fieldwork locations, in which the PFI has a strong support base (e.g. Mangalore, Bangalore, Mysore, Kozhikode [Calicut], Malapurram).

Appendix 2

Based on my observations during the 29th October 2005 Delhi bombings (that resulted in the loss of 69 lives), the government limited text messages on mobiles phones to 3 to 5 a day and restricted movement within the city. In 2009, domestic Skype calls were banned because of the company's refusal to cooperate with the Indian security services (Times of India 2009), while compulsory registration was required to use cyber cafes, and to activate mobile phone SIM-cards. Recently, the government proposed handing out free SIM-cards for foreigners entering the country, which could be used for further surveillance and movement tracking (Times of India 2016d). Such government policies indicate the tense state within government agencies with respect to potential terrorist attacks.

Appendix 3

Gambetta (1988: 217) has defined trust as "a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both before he can monitor such action […] and in context, in which it affects his own action […]. When we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly

mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him". With the onset of modernity, and the decline of traditional organised systems (e.g. religion, family), individuals and groups are required to trust in complex and "abstract institutions" (Giddens 1991) such as governments, banking systems and other expert knowledge. Trust, for Giddens, is built in early childhood through interaction with a caretaker, and can be seen as "emotional inoculation against existential anxieties […] which establishes an early sense of an "ontological security" (Giddens 1991: 36-39). In contemporary societies, in which institutions are much more dynamic and complex than those of the past, the individual needs trust as a psychological defence mechanism that functions as a "protective cocoon" (Giddens 1991: 40) in order to have confidence in a world consisting of a plethora of ostensible dangers. Given that Indian Muslims are socialised in a hostile and securitised social environment, it has been argued that they suffer from a trust deficit and fear psychology (see Hansen 1999, Basu 2001, Wilkinson 2007, Basant and Sahriff 2010). Survey evidence has indicated that higher levels of generalised trust correspond with good governance, democratic participation and higher economic outcomes. On the other hand, underperforming institutions and corrupt state elites result in lower levels of trust in societies (Dasgupta 2007).

Appendix 4

The Baba Budan Giri Idgah or shrine controversy has been frequently referred to as the "second Ayodhya" or "Ayodhya of the South" by the BJP leadership. The Baba Budan Giri Idgah in the hills of Chikmagalur, 150 kilometres from Mangalore, became the centre of a communal controversy in early December 1998. For centuries, the Idgah was a symbol of the region's syncretic culture, worshipped by Hindus and Muslims and taken care of by a Muslim family seen as saints by the local Muslim and Hindu population. The roots of the conflict can be found in issues regarding control and ownership of the sacred space between the Wakf Board and the Heritage Department. The issue has been publicly as well as legally debated for a long time, but the local Hindu population who visited the Idgah in great numbers only started to voice demands to convert the Shrine into a Hindu temple subsequent to the Ayodhya movement of the early 1990s. In December 1998, the RSS and VHP organised various such yatras to reclaim the Idgah, hoisting saffron flags and delivering inflammatory speeches against minorities. This communal prelude happened a year before the assembly election. During my fieldwork, I often came across statements such as "riots are happening much more frequently during election time" or "this is all political tamasha for the sake of election outcomes". The resemblance to the Babri Masjid controversy is striking, even though it turned out to be less violent for several reasons. Interestingly, the BJP struggled to employ a false understanding of history as they had done in North India (e.g. Muslims caused Partition, Islamic invasion). This failure is partially attributed to the persistence of syncretic cultures at the grassroots level. Instead, the BJP relied upon mere economic arguments of Muslims stealing jobs and outnumbering Hindus in the near future due to higher birth rates, which resonated with the BJP's constituency of the petty bourgeois (Assadi, 1999, 2004, Sikand 2000).

Appendix 5

The Delhi Metro Rail Cooperation (DRMC) explained to its commuters in the Metro Museum in Delhi that "Spiritualism is a guiding force at DRMC and is inherent in the working of the

organisation. Trainees at the Metro training school at Shastri Park begin their program by reciting the inspiration prayer "Itni Shakti Hamein Dena Data" from the Hindi movie 'Ankush'. Yoga and Meditation are important parts in the Metro training curriculum. The Bhagavad Gita constitutes an important part of the management philosophy of the Delhi Metro… Before joining, all executives are given copies of 'Gita Makaramdam' by Swami Vidya Prakashananda, containing Shlokhas of the Bhagavad Gita, their meaning, substance and commentary. Quotes from the 'Gita Makaramdam' printed in the monthly newsletters and safety bulletins of DMRC, so that the messages reach all the employees as well as contractors. Spiritual sessions are held at regular intervals for the benefit of all employees" (Metro Museum at Patel Chowk, New Delhi, October 2012).



Mudras Sculptures in the arrival hall at Terminal 3, New Delhi International Airport.

Appendix 6

The Sachar Report Committee (2006: 6) addressed the secular pressure and discrimination against Muslim women in public spaces because of their religious identity and cultural markers (e.g. burqa and purdah). The report summarised the concerns of female interviewees. "In the cooperate offices, hijab wearing Muslim women were finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs. Muslim women in burqa complain of impolite treatment in the market, in hospitals, in schools, in accessing public facilities such as public transport and so on". In line with other studies the report stressed that "to the exclusion of all other aspects of a Muslim's life (income, jobs, education, security and even caloric intake), the rules of marriage, right to divorce and maintenance have become the benchmarks of a gender just existence. The obsessive focus on selective cases of Muslim women passionately discussed in the media results in identifying the Muslim religion as the sole locus of gender-injustice… Civil society and the state locate Muslim women's deprivation not in terms of the objective reality of societal discrimination and faulty development policies, in but the

religious-community space. This allows the state to shift the blame to the community and to absolve itself of neglect" (see also Hasan and Menon 2004, Agnes 2016).

Appendix 7

Economic liberalisation that unleashed Indian market forces began with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, and the following electoral success of P.V. Rao Narasimha and the INC in 1991. Due to the dire financial situation of the Indian government, the newly elected Prime Minister Rao accepted a loan from the International Monetary Fund under the condition of opening up India's economy for foreign investments and privatisation. This was celebrated by business and middle classes as India's "golden summer" (Das 2001: 213), while the English media has described it as "abroad is now in India" (Fernandes 2006: 41). Even though the economic liberalisation of the 1990s has been positively received mainly by the middle class, it has also created space for discussion and debate about its negative repercussions, such as cultural decay and diminishing social responsibility among members of the upper stratum of society (Bardhan 2001). Varma (1998) has argued that the Indian middle class has neglected its moral and ethical responsibility towards the deprived and disadvantaged in society. Instead, it is predominantly concerned with personal enrichment and status maintenance. The negative effects of liberalisation and rising consumerism has led to a "growing amnesia" towards social issues within the middle class (Kothari 1993). Meanwhile, social disparity in India is widening at an enormous pace and will likely continue despite the socio-economic achievements made over the last decades (Bardhan 2001).

Appendix 8

A PFI leader has argued that "we face no language barrier. We use local and national languages, and try to reach all classes. In Karnataka, we use Khannada and Berri, Telgu in Andhra Pradesh, Malayam in Kerala, Tamil in Tamil Nandu and Urdu and Bengali in the North and North East" (respondent 1[2]). Another PFI activists stressed that "people like to communicate in their own language. You have to go and address them in the language they know best. Only the educated classes can be reached in English. Lower classes and lay men will not understand and accept messages in 'NGO-English'" (respondent 2[1]). Pande (2009: 48) has argued that "the English language in India today segregates people more firmly than class, caste, and community into haves and have-nots. Most English-language journalists and their readers scarcely understand the lives of most poor people and have little or no contact with the languages that the poor speak and worship in".

However, the use of local languages for local support has also compromised the expansion of the PFI. As shown in Chapter 3, the PFI emerged in South India but tries to have an impact in North Indian states. Many of their leading activists have not been fluent in Urdu, which, according to a PFI member in Delhi, "might be perceived as a sign of incompetence, and an obstacle to build trust". In this context, lower ranking cadres, who were originally from or stationed in North India expressed some concerns about the Urdu proficiency of their leaders: "They are unable to speak and convey their politics to a gao-walla [villager] in UP [Uttar Pradesh]". Although the ability to communicate in Urdu by some of the leaders might be limited, I could also observe during my fieldwork that PFI leaders were patient in their efforts to improve these shortcomings, and the movement has produced a wide array of visual and audio material in Urdu. In addition, student cadres from South India have studied in Delhi, and have acquired Urdu proficiency. Additionally, the PFI has tried to diversify its

leadership demography by putting up candidates from other parts of India, including Assam and West Bengal.

Appendix 9

Islam arrived in South India and was spread along the Malabar Coast as far as Gujarat by merchants from the Arabic peninsular between the 7th and the 9th century, long before the arrival of the Mughals in North India (Dale 1980, Kunju, 1989 Miller 1992, Assyang 2004). Historical scholarship has illustrated that before the arrival of the coloniser in the 18th century, the Muslim (and Hindu) category did not play a significant role as a distinct identity marker, since both communities defined themselves through their local cultures (Hardy 1972, Brass 1979, Robinson 1974, 2007, Chandra 2008). The colonial administration and its census practices from 1871 onwards started to conceptualise communities along more rigid religious identities and in terms of religious revivalisms. Muslims were perceived as incompetent, irrational and oppressive invaders while Hindus were viewed as the subjugated original inhabitants of the subcontinent (Jones 1981, Inden 1990, Appadurai 1993, Chakrabarty 2000, 2003, Bhagat 2001, Metcalf 2004, 2006, 2009). In addition, the Islamic agendas of reformists such as the Deobandi or Ahl-i Hadith (Salafi) movements tried to promote a version of textual Islam while they rejected everything introduced to Islamic practice after the earliest times. However, the Muslim masses with their various quotidian belief systems, who often spoke in local dialects, were reluctant to fully subscribe to these reformist or colonial conformity projects. Moreover, the different cultural and religious practices such as saint and tomb worship, marriage, funeral and inheritance customs and rites, and superstitious beliefs constituted living examples of the hybrid character of Islam in India (Assadi 2004, Assyang 2004, Wasey 2008, Rao 2010, Punathil 2013, Sud 2013).

Appendix 10

Since the early 1980s, Hindu nationalist organisations such as the VHP and RSS tried to build a movement around a united Hindu identity and cross-caste solidarity through the proclaimed liberation of Hindu temples and holy sites such as in Ayodha, Mathura and Kashi. Hindu nationalist activists effectively managed to penetrate rural and urban areas through house-to-house campaigns in order to popularise temple issues and the notion of Hindu victimhood by an aggressive Muslim minority population. In 1986, a gate to the disputed Babri Masjid in Ayodha was opened by court order, which has also coincided with the Sha Bano case. Both incidents, together with the Congress' reservation promises for lower caste Hindus in the wake of the Mandal Commission, helped the Hindu nationalist cause enormously. In late 1990s, the Ayodhya movement (also known as "rath yatra" or 'pilgrimage procession') commenced, which was led by the BJP leader Advani, who between September and November travelled more than 10,000 kilometres from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodha in Uttar Pradesh. In the context of this campaign and the hate speeches by BJP politicians, 116 riots took place, in which over 500 people died across India. The movement continued with various smaller assertions by the BJP and was heavily supported by the Hindu diaspora in various countries. The BJP agenda revolved around access to a contested religious site traditionally regarded as the birthplace of the Hindu deity Rama, the location of the Babri Mosque on the site, and whether a previous Hindu temple was destroyed to build the Babri Mosque. The mosque was eventually destroyed on 6 December 1992, by thousands of Hindu nationalist supporters in the context of a BJP really, which led to nation-wide Hindu/Muslim riots with at least 2,000 people dead (Hansen 1999, Corbridge and

Harris 2000, Jaffrelot 2001, Sud 2012). An official government investigation, the so-called Liberhan Commission of Inquiry, identified 68 people responsible, including various Hindu nationalist leaders. It has taken 17 years to complete its investigation on the Babri Masjid, and has cost more than 65 million rupees (BBC 2009).

Appendix 11

RSS campaign at the beach in Calicut on 2 December 2012



Appendix 12

Mitra (1999) conducted an extensive analysis of more than 25 British and American films that focused on India over a time span of several decades starting with the early 1930s, during the British Raj, until the mid-1990s. She asserts that the crucial and repeating characteristics in these films generate a rather primitive and uncivilized image of India's citizens and culture. Sardar (1999) has argued that British films in the post-colonial area portray Indians through the colonial lenses. Examples like Walt Disney's Jungle Book (1991) or Aladdin (1992) are evidence of contemporary Orientalism and that "the British Raj has come back after a few years of retirement" (Rushdie 1992: 87). This image of India is created through the process of representation in cinemas in combination with cultural and aesthetic processes. Mitra (1999) argued that the Western audience believes these portrayals and is often unable to question its authenticity. Furthermore, the repetitive images of the Western popular media are confirm the ideology at the moment. "Assumption of Western superiority of the Western perspective as the films show, in the post-colonial period, the films have continued to produce and circulate images that help to maintain a hegemony that has gained purchase over a global audience" (Mitra 1999: 151). For instance, during an excursion

to Mumbai's Film City in 2009, I witnessed an emotional discussion between Indian film experts and a group of British students about the film “Slumdog Millionaire”. At that time, I was inquiring about the aspirational urban middle class and its self-perception, while investigating receptions of various Hollywood and other films, which portray India in a certain light. The majority of the British students considered “Slumdog Millionaire” – a master piece that deserved Oscars and other international awards. However, Indian professionals disliked the film and insulted the West as a moral hypocrite, due to the movie’s major focus on India’s “dark” sides. Both sides became extremely agitated in the discussion, one student began to cry, while other students disrupted the discussion through shouting and “boo-ing”. Ultimately, the discussion was ended by an American staff member of the Film City.

Appendix 13

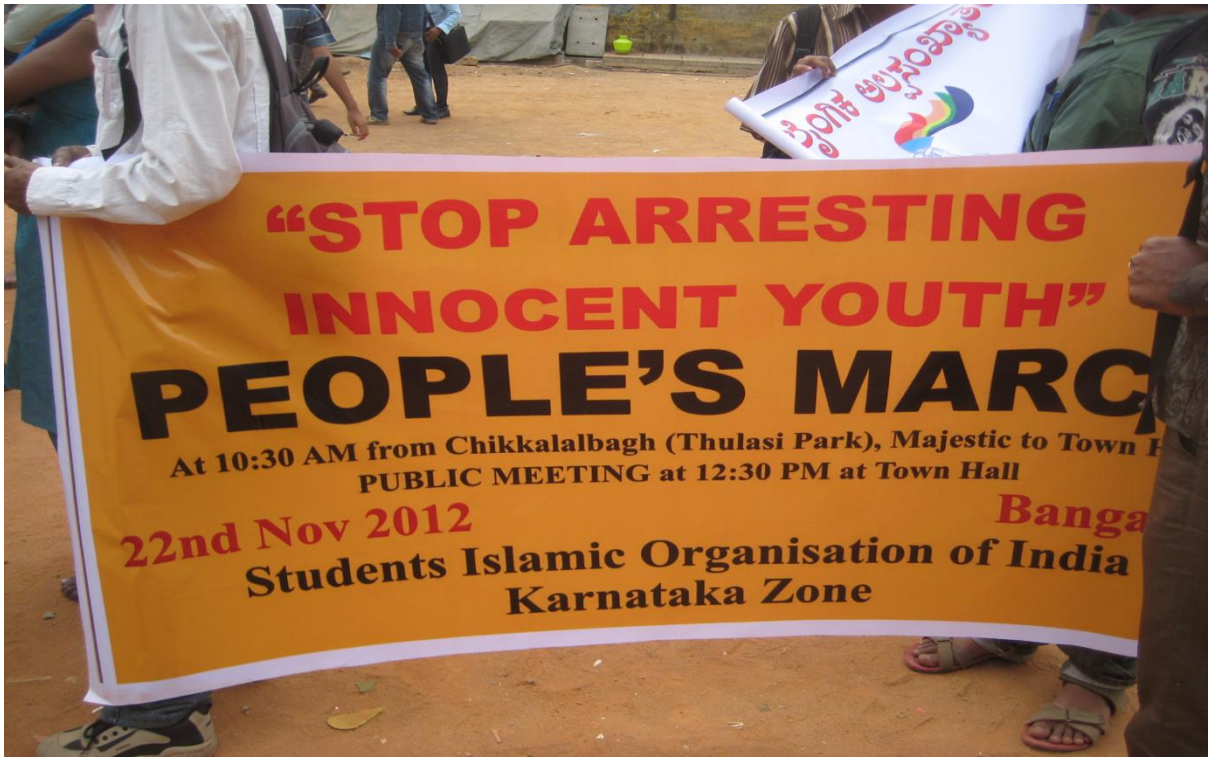
In the context of increasing hostility towards Muslims in contemporary India, the Sachar Committee, (2006: 13) stressed that “the lives, morality, and movement of [Muslim women] in public spaces are under constant scrutiny and control... The lines between ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe spaces’ become rigid. The community and its women withdraw into the safety of familiar orthodoxies, reluctant to participate in the project of modernity, which threatens to blur community boundaries. It was said that for large number of Muslim women in India today, the only ‘safe’ space (both in terms of physical protection and in terms of protection of identity) is within the boundaries of home and community. Everything beyond the walls of the ghetto is seen as unsafe and hostile — markets, roads, lanes and public transport, schools and hospitals, police stations and government offices”.

Appendix 14

Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) Protest March, Bangalore, 22 November 2012,



Student Islamic Organisation (SIO) Protest March, Bangalore, 22 November 2012,



Appendix 15

Organisational Anthem of the PFI:

Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!
Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!
Ye apni tehriki awami hai,	This is your popular movement,
Humko na manzur gulami hai.	Slavery is not acceptable to us.
Ye apni tehriki awami hai,	This is your popular movement,
Humko na manzur gulami hai.	Slavery is not acceptable to us.
Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!
Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!
Ek naya suraj chamka,	A new sun shines
Bajne laga jiska damka,	Which has started to ring/sound,
Mazlumo ki fauj bani,	The downtrodden make an army,
Zulm o sitam se jang tani.	To fight unfairness and exploitation.
Dalit muslim ek huvey,	Dalits and Muslims become one,
Sikh Isayi saat chaley,	Sikhs and Christians walk together,
Firka parasti kaanp gayi,	Sectarianism has trembled
Vehshad chehra dhanp gaye.	terrorised faces are covered.
Ab ye front ka naara hai,	Now this is the slogan of the front,
Har mazlum hamara hai.	every downtrodden is ours
Ab ye front ka naara hai,	Now this is the slogan of the front,
Har mazlum hamara hai.	every downtrodden is ours.
Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!!
Zindabaad! zindabaad!	Live long, live long!
Popular front zindabaad!!	Popular Front live long!!
Aao tutey dil jodey,	Come, let's mend broken hearts
Zulm ke diwarey todey,	Break down the walls of wrongs,
Roshan dil ki torch karey,	Let's light the torches of our hearts,
Amn ki janib march karey.	Let's march towards peace.
Jung huna insaafi se,	The war should be against injustice
Apne haq ki talafi se,	For our own rights
Sab ko lekar saat chaley,	Take everyone along
Surya ma din raat chaley.	let the sun shine through the day and night.

Ab ye front ka naara hai, Har mazlum hamara hai. Ab ye front ka naara hai, Har mazlum hamara hai.	Now this is the slogan of the front, every downtrodden is ours Now this is the slogan of the front, every downtrodden is ours.
Zindabaad! zindabaad! Popular front zindabaad!! Zindabaad! zindabaad! Popular front zindabaad!!	Live long, live long! Popular Front live long ! Live long, live long! Popular Front live long!!
Hindu Muslim Sikh Isaayi, Banke chaley bhayi bhayi, Sar kuchley insaafo ka, Naam bi le jo zaato ka.	Hindu Muslim Sikh and Christian Walk together as brothers Lets smash those unjust heads and of those who take the name of races.
Karey tahaffuz azadi, Ye is mulk ki hai punji, Jung kare sab nafrat se, Firkhawara na lat se.	Let's protect our freedom which is the asset of this country Lets go to war against hatred Everyone should fight against sectarianism.
Ab ye front ka naara hai, Har mazlum hamara hai. Ab ye front ka naara hai, Har mazlum hamara hai.	Now this is the slogan of the front, every downtrodden is ours Now this is the slogan of the front, every downtrodden is ours.
Zindabaad! zindabaad! Popular front zindabaad!! Zindabaad! zindabaad! Popular front zindabaad!!	Live long, live long! Popular Front live long!! Live long, live long! Popular Front live long!!

Appendix 16

The PFI Chairman gave an exclusive interview to the Muslim Mirror (2015), in which he explained the PFI's motivation in detail: "Priorities of Popular Front of India have always been to empower the nation by empowering every sections of the Indian society. We believe in an inclusive model in which the fruits of developments are enjoyed by every citizen of the country. Our country was founded on the core values of secularism and social justice but unfortunately these values were ignored. Being one of the largest cadre-based organisation in India we are committed to struggle to protect these values".

Appendix 17

Appadurai (2014) argued that the "Shiv Sena is the largest urban fascist movements in the world". It was founded by the communal ideologue Bal Thackeray, who "catered to many aspirations of the Maharati youths and middle classes, and their dreams of a sundar city; a city clean from political and ethnic dirt". In November 2012, I was in Mumbai when Bal

Thackeray died, after which public life seemed to have stopped, events were cancelled, shops closed and transport was limited for the following week, due to fear of riots and unrest.

Appendix 18

The student activist son of the current President of the Welfare Party of India (JIH's political party) was arrested for his recent involvement in a campus protest. The media linked the student to his father's SIMI past, and therefore portrayed the issues as an Islamic security threat (Indian Express 2016b). Moreover, during an interview with a Muslim social entrepreneur and Islamic activist in Bangalore in 2015, he told me how he spoke up against the Chief Minister of Karnataka at a conference in the context of the Bangalore blasts in January 2015, because the Minister said that "we can't rule out it was SIMI". The interviewee angrily argued that "why would the Chief Minister say that with so many other options which could explain the blast. He surely used SIMI as a convenient political label" (respondent 62[1]).

Appendix 19

Noam Chomsky, a global symbol of resistance for various anti-capitalist movements, is quoted by Solidarity, an Islamic youth group that is linked to the JIH: "The activities of Solidarity are appealing and elating. I have the firm conviction that it can fulfil the mission undertaken. Go Ahead, All the Best Noam Chomsky (Solidarity 2012). Secular scholars, who have written about police violence against Muslims, have been frequently invited to speak on the same platform with Islamist organisations. A prominent secular female researcher on police violence against minorities, who thinks that groups like the PFI and JIH "fail on all fronts", noted in Delhi in 2015 that "when I am invited to their events, they treat me like a celebrity". Moreover, Muslim youth groups are involved in organising film and documentary festivals showing content by non-Muslim artists about colonial resistance struggles and revolutionaries (including the film "Motor Cycle Diaries" about the life of Che Guevara), state surveillance, and ecological disasters (Solidarity 2014).

Appendix 20



PFI'S National General Assembly in Calicut, December 2014

At the event, I (in the green shirt) was seated in the first row next to senior PFI members. The picture was later uploaded onto the PFI website.

Appendix 21

In order to highlight the contested issue of political convergence between various Muslim groups, I will provide a brief account of a vibrant discussion between Muslim men (in their early to late 40s) from different religious and political affiliations at a wedding celebration in the Malappuram District of Kerala in December 2014. It began with a local SDPI leader, who passionately explained to the other guests why he decided to leave the IUML in 2001: "The Muslim League [IUML] doesn't care for us. It lacks vision for the future. All their leaders are self-interested crooks. With us [PFI], at least you learn how to stand up for yourself with dignity and defend the community". Another guest and a committed supporter of the JIH, who has been involved in "extensive dawah work", admitted that he has a "soft spot" for the PFI as "most Muslims do here [in the Muslim majority district of Malappuram]". He approved of PFI's organisational capacity and strong cadre-base but was worried about "their emotional speeches and protests, which are the wrong strategy". For the JIH supporter, it indicated that PFI leaders were not "spiritually grounded". The SDPI member intervened by saying that "the RSS is much worse… As a Muslim, you cannot afford to offer the other cheek, given all the injustice being done to us". After a while, an ex-SIMI member, who worked in Saudi Arabia, expressed his disappointment with the PFI. He argued that the movement represent a "distorted legacy of SIMI" by trying to go down the "parliamentarian route" and to "change the system from within". He was upset that the PFI has "departed from Maududi's teaching and the Islamic principle of the Caliphate", which generated some bemused reactions among the other discussants. One guest replied ironically "once you are with SIMI, you always remain with SIMI [pointing to his heart], even though SIMI does not even exist anymore".

Appendix 22

Gottshalk (2000:165), highlighting the importance of collective memories of the past, stresses a similar point with respect to the idea of the Muslim 'troublemaker' in his research in small villages in North India, in which "Ravan [his informant] relied on an implied narrative of Muslim conflict in all countries and against all peoples, including themselves. In our conversation, he referred to intra-Muslim conflict and expected me to know the example narratives that demonstrate it. This shift began with the carefully anonymous claim, 'It is believed that everywhere they live, they fight there,' and was soon completed with Ravan's own undisguised claim about 'these people's [violent] nature'".

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