

Populism in India Under Modi Regime and its Implications for Pakistan

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Abstract

This research assesses the rise of populist politics in India under the Modi regime and illustrates the implications it has for Pakistan. It studies the interaction between Hindutva politics, different mechanisms of populism, the emergence of illiberal democracy in India, and the way it impacts the domestic and foreign policies of India. The key findings of this paper focus on how Modi established himself as a populist leader and how populism in India has affected its relationship with the neighboring state of Pakistan. This paper, based on qualitative research, provides analytical input to conceptualize right-wing populism as a violent phenomenon that will have a far-reaching impact on Pakistan's National Security. Following Modi's win in 2018, he started working towards creating a majoritarian identity. To facilitate and further construct this narrative, Prime Minister Modi's government started creating policies such as the revocation of Article 370 in 2019, the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Bill (2019), and the implementation of the National Register of Citizens to help mobilize the masses. This has resulted in right-wing populism being synonymous with Indian politics under the Modi regime. The populist Modi regime used anti-Pakistan rhetoric as an instrument to attract voters and attain majoritarian rule in India. The examination of the populist threats and challenges emanating from Modi's Hindutva government has become a focal point for scholars to comprehend the contemporary political landscape of the region.

Keywords

Pakistan, Populism, India, Modi, National Security

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Introduction

In the realm of academia, scholars have offered a range of definitions to explain the complex character of populism. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017) define populism as an ideology that is anti-secular in its principles and is seen as a radical movement of those who challenge the state's development with their right-wing agendas. Whereas, Krieger and Zimmermann (2018) define populism as a united approach to international law. Populism has a far-reaching impact on the relationship between the state, institutions, and global governance as a whole. While populism in India penetrated rigidly with the success of Narendra Modi becoming Prime Minister, as a phenomenon, it can be understood by analyzing the policies and the politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Narendra Modi during his terms as the Prime Minister. On the international stage, India significantly invested in Iran and Afghanistan, primarily to safeguard regional interests and curb Pakistan's influence. Moreover, India has also been funding terrorism, and anti-state ethnic movements in Pakistan, as proven by the RSS Dossier presented to the media houses by former Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi ("Pakistan unveils dossier," 2021). He claimed that India through its state-sponsored terrorism is backing Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Balochistan Liberation Army, and Jamaat-Al-Ahrar. The post-Pulwama Attack incidents, involving the targeting of minorities, clerics, political figures, and civilians, along with threats to Pakistan's sovereignty, exemplify Modi's strategy for destabilizing Pakistan's security and regional peace. Modi's pro-Hindutva stance has not only allowed him to garner public support but also establish a united Hindu populist front (Kaltwasser et al., 2017).

Populism directly influences foreign policy, shaping the stability or instability of bilateral relations between populist states and others. It is often said to be the defining factor of the politics of the 21st Century (Varshney, 2021). In the South Asian context, it is seen as a form of right-wing politics that is led by a charismatic leader who unites and mobilizes the people for their power maximization. Populism in South Asia, particularly in India, presents a challenge to democratic principles and values (Joshi, 2020). The surge in populism in India can be attributed to its limited integration, both economically and politically, with its neighboring states. India has pursued ultra-nationalist policies that primarily benefit the Hindu elite in the region and their respective states (Dawn, 2021). This increasing populism could potentially exacerbate issues for neighboring states, particularly Pakistan, which grapples with a fragile political and economic system, widespread poverty, and ethnic movements with anti-state sentiments, sometimes exploited by India to its advantage (Sandel, 2018). This paper employs a qualitative research methodology, drawing from a comprehensive array of both primary and secondary sources, to thoroughly investigate the surge of populism in India over the past decade. The primary sources encompass official documents, speeches, and statements from the Modi regime, providing an insightful lens into the policymaking process.

In tandem with primary sources, an extensive review of secondary sources, including academic works, think-tank analyses, and media reports, enriches the research with a broader contextual backdrop. This combination ensures a robust foundation for the examination of the policies enacted by the Modi government that have contributed to the rise of populism in India. The main focus of the research is the rise of populism in India in the last decade. The research analyzes the policies of the Modi regime that are responsible for this upsurge, and how the intensification of populism in India has affected Pakistan, especially its security. Throughout the paper the theory of populism is used to assess the formation of domestic, and foreign policies

of India, and how these policies have direct implications for Pakistan (Kaul & Vajpeyi, 2020).

Within the framework of this theoretical perspective, this research aims to elucidate the underlying mechanisms that establish a connection between populism and policy decisions. The goal is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the direct implications of these policies, both for Pakistan and the broader geopolitical landscape.

In this paper, several pivotal questions have been formulated to address the following. Firstly, the objective is to assess the extent of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) success in utilizing Hindutva ideology as a tool of populism to secure and consolidate political power in India. Additionally, the research will investigate the foreign policy implications stemming from this upsurge in populism. Secondly, we seek to identify the specific policies implemented by the Modi regime that have significantly contributed to the rise of right-wing Hindu Nationalism in India.

Lastly, the intention is to explore how the escalation of populism in India under Prime Minister Modi has led to increased challenges concerning the security of Pakistan. Through an in-depth analysis of these questions, we aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between populism, policy decisions, and their consequences within India and the broader global context.

Exploring Populism: Core Concepts and Characteristics

The concept of populism is comprehensively explored by Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017) in their book, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. The main argument of the work is that populism is an approach supported by many people based on certain sets of ideas. Furthermore, the core tenets of populism can be distilled into three fundamental concepts, as elaborated below. Populism is a multifaceted political phenomenon characterized by several key features. Firstly, and perhaps most notably, populism is distinguished by its ability to attract and mobilize the masses. Populist movements and leaders often harness the grievances, frustrations, and aspirations of a broad cross-section of society, appealing to a wide array of individuals who feel marginalized or dissatisfied with the status quo. This mass appeal is a defining element of populism, as it seeks to rally significant popular support, often through charismatic leadership and simple, relatable messages. Populist leaders aim to establish a strong connection with the people, positioning themselves as champions of the common person.

Secondly, populism inherently involves a critique of the elites, viewing them as a smaller, privileged segment of society that often holds significant power and influence. Populist rhetoric frequently portrays these elites as detached from the concerns of the broader population, emphasizing the divide between the political, economic, and cultural elite and the everyday citizens. This critique of the elites is a fundamental component of populism's narrative, driving a wedge between the "establishment" and the "ordinary people." Populist leaders position themselves as anti-establishment figures, promising to challenge the entrenched power structures and restore the voice of the people in decision-making. Thirdly, populism asserts that politics should be conducted in a manner that resonates with and is accepted by the masses. Populist movements often prioritize a direct, emotional connection with the public, advocating for policies and approaches that reflect the preferences and concerns of everyday citizens. This emphasis on the will of the people can manifest in various ways, such as referendums, town hall meetings, or frequent engagement with the public through social media. Populist leaders argue that

traditional political processes and institutions have become unresponsive to the needs of the majority, and they seek to revitalize politics by making it more accessible and accountable to the people they claim to represent. In sum, populism is marked by its ability to attract a broad popular following, its critique of societal elites, and its commitment to politics that reflects the interests and aspirations of the masses. These three defining characteristics underpin the populist worldview and shape its approach to governance and political engagement.

Meanwhile, Lucie Calléja (2020), in her journal article, writes about the populism that is being practiced in India and how the relations of the country, especially with Pakistan, are being affected by it. In contemporary times, two ideologies, which are usually seen in affiliation with populism, include nationalism and socialism. The right-wing supporters of the ideology are attached to the former one, while the left-wing populists opt for the latter.

In another scholarly work, "Minorities and Populism: Critical Perspectives from South Asia and Europe" authored by Volker Kaul and Ananya Vajpei (2020), the authors delve into the impact of nationalism on the principles of secularism and diversity. In the case of India, we can see how populism can affect civil society and how it can also be responsible for snatching civil liberties. For example, it is observed that due to the increase in right-wing populism in India, many minorities face difficulty practicing their religion.

The following features can thus be highlighted:

Populism as a Threat to the Liberal System

Populism tends to thrive within fragile democratic systems, with the primary objective of establishing an "illiberal democratic environment." In such illiberal democracies, the formal democratic processes are ostensibly in place, but the system often operates in ways that run counter to democratic principles. While elections may still be held, the general public often lacks real power, as ultimate authority rests with a populist group that implements cultural policies that tend to govern in an oppressive manner (Bonet & Zamorano, 2021). While liberal democracies strive to offer their citizens the utmost freedom and opportunities for participation, there is a growing presence of non-democratic values in contemporary politics. (O'Neil, 2010). This is also the driving force behind Indian populism, as it poses a challenge to liberal institutions, policies, and norms. According to populists, the liberalism of democracy weakens the political position of the masses and hence needs to be set aside for the proper functioning of democracy. Populism is perceived as a threat to liberal democracy because it views the liberal democratic system as the source of a sense of deprivation due to its perceived unjust policies. Liberal democracy is a system based on the ideas of freedom and individual rights. The polarization of democracies worldwide shows how people and society are moving away from a liberal perspective and shifting towards populism in the 21st century. The rise of nativism and the shift towards unilateralism, as opposed to bilateralism and multilateralism, are viewed as reactions against the global world order, stemming from the urgency to protect one's ethnic and national identities (Miller, 2011).

Driving Mechanism of Populism

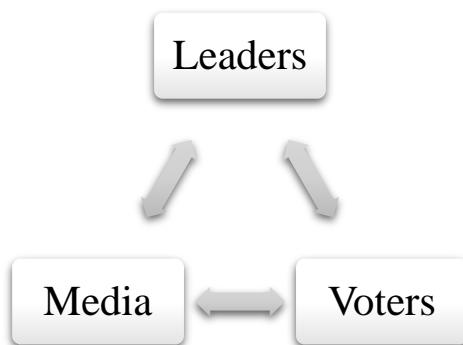
Populism perceives liberal democracy as the breeding ground for elites who manipulate and exploit the system to further their interests, often at the expense of the broader population (Patomäki, 2020). The populist narrative regarding immigrants can be seen as inherently illiberal, leading many Western states to contend with the 'Us Versus

Them' debate. Notable instances include the United Kingdom's 2016 Brexit referendum, rooted in the idea that native populations were facing economic challenges due to immigration, as well as President Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' slogan, which carried an anti-immigrant undertone. Consequently, these examples can be regarded as populist decisions made in opposition to liberalism (Galston, 2018).

Now, let's proceed to discuss the three main driving mechanisms of populism, as outlined below:

Action Formation Mechanism. Within the Action Formation Mechanism, a noteworthy observation is the significant role that psychological triggers play in mobilizing the masses within the context of populism. The accompanying figures illustrate the triangular dynamics of the Action Formation Mechanism, where the populist movement takes shape through the intricate interplay between leaders and voters, facilitated by the media. A favorable media portrayal of the Populist Party can effectively galvanize popular support. Media outlets often capitalize on the insecurities of the masses for their interests and advantages. Populist regimes manipulate the fears of the masses to secure their support through psychological tactics. This fear and anxiety can then morph into animosity against their rivals, ultimately translating into votes for the Populist Party.

Figure 1. Action Formation Mechanism



Source: Compiled by the author.

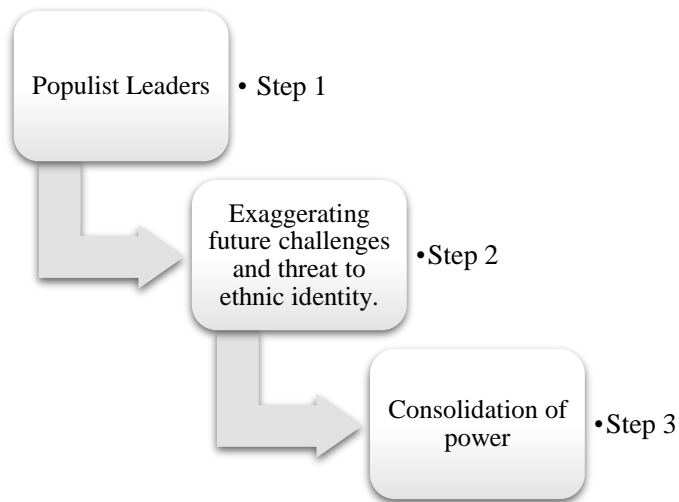
Transformation Mechanism. The Transformation Mechanism comes into play following the emergence of 'collective paranoia' incited by the Populist Party. This consolidation is achieved with the assistance of sensationalist media and the cultivation of fear among the masses. These actions can be categorized into four primary methods, which are as follows:

1. *Alienation:* Through alienation and the cultivation of collective paranoia, individuals are made apprehensive about the potential loss of their ethnonational identity.
2. *Victimization of the Majority:* By victimizing the majority and portraying them as a marginalized community, this strategy is employed to manipulate perceptions and sentiments.
3. *Drive to be 'Great Again':* By instilling in the masses a desire to become 'Great Again,' the Populist Party can create a powerful drive that may result in

structural and systemic changes within the political system, with the support of both the media and the people.

4. Populist Parties employ the 'Us Versus Them' debate as a tactic to isolate the masses from other segments of the community. This strategy generates a sense of urgency among the people to safeguard their 'unique culture' and ensure that their indigenous identity is not threatened by 'outsiders' who are, in fact, part of the same community. This approach fosters a collective paranoia within society, ultimately aiding the party in securing the support of the majority.

Figure 2. Transformation Mechanism



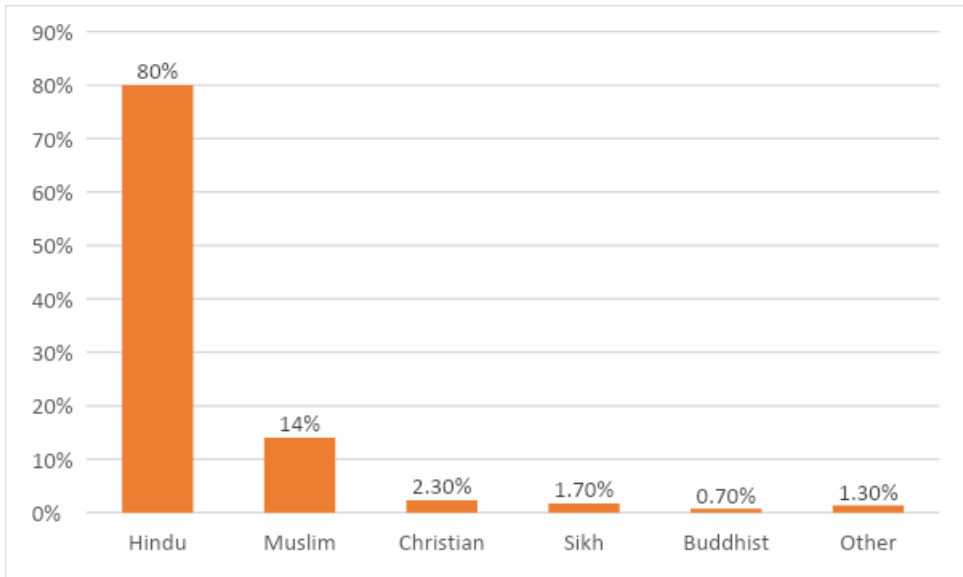
Source: Compiled by the author.

Situational Mechanism. Perceived deprivation and a sense of disrespect can also serve as catalysts for populism among the masses, driven by the prevalent discontent. Consequently, scholars such as Rodrik (2017) direct their attention toward the perceived anxiety surrounding economic fairness rather than absolute equality. The term 'angry populism' aptly encapsulates debates surrounding 'Fair Trade,' which often center on the concept of 'alienating the people' and fostering divisions among different groups within society. In the case of India, the media has been employed as a tool to promote the Hindutva policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and has contributed to the cultivation of paranoia among the masses. It is also evident that the utilization of media for right-wing populist interests has resulted in an escalation of hostility and violence against minority groups in India.

Populism in India: A Case Study

In the state of India, Hindus make up almost 80% of the population, constituting a clear majority. Muslims account for more than 14% of the population, making them the largest minority group. Christians comprise 2.3% of the population, while Sikhs make up 1.7%. Other minority groups include Buddhists, Jains, and others (Kramer, 2021). This information is depicted in the chart below:

Figure 3. Religious Population of India



The Emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party as a Populist Party

During the late 1970s, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, under the leadership of Vajpayee, was able to take control of the government through the coalition of three other parties, leading to the formation of the Janata Party. However, due to certain internal conflicts and factionalism, the government failed and disintegrated in 1979. This split resulted in the formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980, as certain leaders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh refused to endorse the RSS as they considered it as an extremist organization. With time, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh regrouped as the Bharatiya Janata Party and was led by Vajpayee, Murali Manohar Joshi, and Lal Krishan Advani (McDonnell, 2019). With the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party; Hindutva started taking center stage in Indian politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party has been a big advocate of Hindutva ideology; this ideology is in strong contrast to the Indian National Congress's secular ideology and is focused more on Hindu Culture and trying to define Hindu values. No populist government is complete without a defining ideology, and Hindutva is that ideology for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The populist notion of being a Hindutva nation leads the party policy tilted towards an anti-secular stance that is against the idea of a homogenous Indian population. Hindutva discards liberal democracy by opposing pluralism and canceling out any adversaries in the making of nationhood. In doing so the Bharatiya Janata Party pursued a majoritarian rule that is carried out by Hindus or Indians that aligned themselves with the populist policies, thus confining the minorities to the corner. Modi clarifies the divide between the 'true citizens', aka the Hindus, and the 'courtesy citizen', referring to the minorities. He portrays minorities as a threat to the building of nationhood, which helps him create an anti-minority narrative among the majority, and this way he can create populist votes (Raychaudhury, 2023).

Populism in India has three main actors, which are as follows (Eatwell & Godwin, 2018):

- *The Elite:* In this case, the Bharatiya Janata Party portrays elites as actors who are against the Hindutva Agenda, basically the liberal factions. This entails the higher class and rich minorities. This form of populism is often referred to as 'ethno-populism' as it is based on the identity of the people and the leader. These elites are often presented as anti-state agents harboring goodwill towards Pakistan.
- *General Will:* In the same context, the collective will of the people is constructed, that aligns with the will of the nationalist agenda of the party. For this purpose, various tools are used to make the minds of the general populace, for example using media to construct Hindutva narratives.

The People: The most important factor in Populism is the People. The people in populism are referred to as the common individuals. In India's case, the common man is associated with the Hindu majority, which has perceived that the Bharti Jantiya Party is guardian of the Hindu values. Thus, to keep the Bharti Janta Party in power is necessary for people to restore Hindu values. Prime Minister Modi and his party accomplished this by creating a divide between the common man and the minorities and also making sure the common man is against the minorities. In doing so, they also portray Pakistan as an enemy of Hindutva and are interfering in Indian matters by sponsoring the aforementioned elites and minority groups.

Table 1: Hindutva as the Causal Mechanism

Action	How Populist Leaders Consolidate Power	How PM Modi Consolidated Power
Alienation	Through alienation, they are scared of the loss of their ethnonational identity.	PM Modi exploited the already existing differences between Hindus and Muslims, claiming that they could not coexist, thus leading to alienation.
Victimization of the Majority	Through the victimization of the majority and making them feel like they are the marginalized community.	Muslims posed a threat to their culture, religion, and identity. This made the Hindus perceive themselves as a marginalized community.
Drive to be "Great Again"	The creation of the drive to be 'Great Again' in the masses can lead to structural and systematic changes in the Political System by the Populist Party with the help of the media and the people.	Saffronization talks about the glorious past of India. Modi believes it's his destiny to undo it and make India "Great Again".

Source: Compiled by the author.

PM Modi's Use of Media as an Action Transformation Mechanism

The media is one of the driving mechanisms for populism, and the Bharatiya Janata Party has made effective use of that. Modi took full advantage of new forms of media to communicate directly with the people. He made use of WhatsApp, SMS, MMS, 3D holograms, radio shows, and TV channels to connect and mobilize the masses. These strategies were heavily used during his election campaign in 2014. This extensive use of social media to mobilize his followers has been labeled 'high-tech populism'. (Bhattacharya A., 2020). Modi established a strong media presence through Institutionalizing Hindutva policies.

Table 2: Bharatiya Janata Party and INC performance in the general elections of 2014 and 2019

YEAR	GENERAL ELECTION	SEATS WON BY Bharatiya Janata Party	SEATS WON BY INC
2014 Indian General Election	16 th Lok Sabha	336	59
2019 Indian General Election	17 th Lok Sabha	352	91

Source: Economic Times of India. (2019). *Election results 2019: Narendra Modi secures landslide win.*

Ever since becoming Prime Minister, Modi's used media in a very effective and efficient manner. Moreover, a continuous rise was observed in both media usage and reliance on it. But instead of relying on the traditional methods of the press, he adopted modern trends like the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook as well. (Calléja, 2020). By March 2022, PM Modi's followers on different social media apps were:

- Twitter: 90.2 million
- Instagram: 77 million
- Facebook: 48 million
- YouTube: 16.3 million

The way PM Modi has centered his image on right-wing Hinduism and presented himself as a leader to whom the common people can relate. His anti-secular stance has made him a mobilizing force in his own right. The table below compares the qualities of Populist leaders in the light of Bharatiya Janata Party members and Congress members:

Table 3: Qualities of a Populist Leader

Characteristics of Populist Leaders	Characteristics of PM Modi that make him a Populist Leader (Bharatiya Janata Party)	Characteristics of previous leaders under the Indian National Congress (INC)
A Common Leader.	Modi portrayed the INC as an elitist party and himself as a commoner person who came from a humble background. He positioned himself	The previous leaders under INC belonged to the ruling elite class, and their lifestyle had little in

	as a leader representing the common people.	common with the masses.
Security from the 'others'.	By taking a solid anti-Muslim stance, Modi promises that he will eliminate the perceived threats posed by Muslims.	The policies of the INC were less harsh towards Muslims, and India was promoted as a secular state.
Ideology	Modi has been advocating Hindutva ideology since day one.	The leaders of the INC never adopted an official ideology.
Engage with masses	Modi tries to engage with his followers through social media but refrains from giving press interviews.	The INC leaders tried to engage with the people through their speeches and interviews.
A populist leader is expected to be more authoritarian.	The Bharatiya Janata Party has a centralized approach to decision-making.	The INC had a decentralized approach to decision-making.

Source: Compiled by the Author.

Anti-Minority Laws Introduced Since 2018

A populist leader requires constant support from the masses in order to stay in power. Hence, they attain majority support by exploiting minorities, depicting them as a perceived threat. Under the banner of populism, minority groups frequently experience limitations imposed by stringent laws, and these regulations have a diverse range of effects on minority communities. A populist leader asserts that only they or their political party can effectively address the perceived threats. In the Indian context, the BJP has achieved success in portraying itself as the guardian against minority-related threats. Consequently, this strategy fosters contentment among the general populace, ensuring continued support for the populist leader and the popular narrative they have cultivated.

Keeping this fact in mind, the Modi regime has introduced the following laws:

Citizenship Amendment Bill 2019. The enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) introduced by the BJP in 2019 was on rigid populist move. Although the bill was originally designed in 2016 but it took the government three years to pass it, as the bill faced substantial opposition, a number of people protested that the law was illegal and went against India's secular values that are protected by the constitution.

Indian National Register of Citizens 2019. Right after the enactment of CAB, another law was passed, the Indian National Register of Citizens. The basics of the NRC are that it is a record of all legal Indian citizens. It contains demographic information about all those people who, according to the 1955 Citizenship Act, are legal inhabitants of India. The information was first gathered in 1951, was only recently updated, and was only limited to the state of Assam. However, it was announced in November 2019 that the register would now be stretched to the whole country (Raj, 2020). The aim was to identify all those people who have been illegally living in India so they could be

detained and deported. It was a way to counter the high Muslim demographics in Assam, and to make sure the Muslims remained a low minority legally.

Article 370, Revoking Kashmir's Autonomy. The populist government of Modi was against Article 370 as it gave an advantage to "the other" at the expense of "the people". In addition to this, the Hindu nationalists believed that Article 370 was a factor enabling terrorism in Kashmir. They further asserted that this article should have never come into force in the first place and labeled it as one of those acts that were put forward by the corrupt elites of INC to please the Muslims (Srivastava, 2019). Therefore, by diluting this Article, the Modi regime claimed that it was fixing a past mistake, and this move was widely appreciated by many Hindus. India also labeled this undemocratic move as an 'Internal Matter' and that Pakistan had no right to discuss it at any International Forums (Al Jazeera, 2019).

India's Agenda and Narrative towards Pakistan

The friendly neighborhood policy through which India is establishing good relations with the neighboring countries is their way of encircling Pakistan. India under Prime Minister Modi had specifically improved her bilateral relations with Afghanistan and Iran, two neighboring countries of Pakistan on its western borders. India and Iran had been working on naval collaborations in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, this move was mostly to counter Pakistan and China's economic cooperation in Gwadar. India had also been heavily investing in Iran's Chabahar port for similar reasons.

The Chabahar port was supposed to further create ease for India to conduct trade with Afghanistan. But after the 2018 reimposition of sanctions by the US, the IRCON deal fizzled out (Haidar, 2020). When talking about Afghanistan India has always supported it in its claim over Pashtuns and has tried to assist Afghanistan economically as well. So, by improving relations with Pakistan's neighbors, Iran and Afghanistan, India was trying to contain Pakistan's influence, and this relationship with both neighbors made it easier for India to fund terrorism in Pakistan, due to the economic influence that India held over these two states (Bhatti, Waris & Muhammad, 2019).

The table below explains the relationship between India and Pakistan:

Table 4. Roots of Rivalry between India and Pakistan

Roots of rivalry	India's Stance	Pakistan's Stance	Bharatiya Janata Party's Narrative
Different religion	The majority of people in India are Hindus.	The subcontinent was divided based on religion, and Pakistan was formed as a Muslim-majority state.	In line with the ideology of Hindutva, the Bharatiya Janata Party believes that the partition of the subcontinent should never have taken place.
Territorial conflict	Kashmir was a princely state in the Indian Subcontinent during British rule. Asserting that The	Pakistan wants a plebiscite to be held in Kashmir and supports Kashmiris'	In 2019, the Bharatiya Janata Party revoked Articles 370 and 35 A, which granted

	Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession (October 1947).	Right to self-determination.	Kashmir autonomy and made the Indian constitution applicable there.
Geopolitical Conflict	India wants to be the regional hegemon, but its position is threatened by the rising influence of neighboring China.	Pakistan and China have a strong alliance and are involved in several developmental projects, such as CPEC.	To counter the Sino-Pakistan alliance India, under the Bharatiya Janata Party, has been solidifying her alliance with the US e.g., the QUAD Security Dialogue.

Source: Compiled by the author using: the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (2019). *History of Conflict in India and Pakistan*.

Sponsoring Terrorism in Pakistan

India has been funding terrorism in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan. The province of Baluchistan not only covers 42% of the country but also has immense strategic importance. It is home to Gwadar Port, which has the potential to transport a significantly large portion of global oil. It also serves as an energy corridor between the Central Asian States and the Arabian Sea for shipping oil and gas. Balochistan has also witnessed insurgency movements that were and are being backed by India. to create problems for Pakistan (Khetran, 2017). Moreover, the Indian government is also trying to hamper Chinese-funded CPEC projects going on in Balochistan. Consequently, PM Modi has tried to use the Balochistan insurgency to defame Pakistan on numerous occasions, for example.

- i. During his speech on Independence Day in 2016, he pointed out how Pakistan has been abusing human rights in Balochistan. While in 2016, Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian naval officer, was arrested in Balochistan and he admitted that he was working with the insurgents to destabilize Balochistan as well as to disrupt the CPEC advances made there.
- ii. To promote its propaganda, India's foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), launched a web radio in the Balochi language (Venugopal, 2016).
- iii. In 2018, it also established a "Free Balochistan" office in New Delhi; several insurgents from Baluchistan, along with the members of RAW, work for this office (Khan, 2021).

Portraying Pakistan as a Terrorist State

Ever since 9/11, Pakistan has been associated with allegations of sponsoring terrorism. In defaming Pakistan, India has played a significant role. India has made sure to capitalize on the situation to its advantage; a recent example is the Pulwama attacks of 2019. In the suicide attack carried out in the Pulwama district of Indian-Occupied Kashmir, 40 Indian police officers lost their lives. While it was reported that Jaish-e-Muhammad, an extremist Islamic group operating from Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack. The Indian government asserted that the Pakistani government had a

role in this matter. Despite Pakistan's denial of any involvement in the attacks, the Indian Prime Minister continued to blame Pakistan for the attack. (BBC, 2019).

Challenges for Pakistan's Security Due to India's Populist Agenda

India's domestic politics have a direct impact on its foreign policy regarding Pakistan. This is because the BJP government has been using Pakistan to justify its draconian laws, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act or the revocation of Article 370. These fascist government policies that aim to turn Muslims of India into second-class citizens have a direct negative impact on India's image as the world's biggest democracy as well. Furthermore, India's domestic issues, exacerbated by the Narendra Modi government's harsh tactics, have become the primary obstacle to its foreign policy successes (Pritam, 2020).

Emerging Ethnic Genocide in India and Potential Refugee Problem for Pakistan

The rise of Hindutva Politics in India has led The Genocide Watch Group, founded by Gregory Stanton, to sound alarm bells to inform the world about the potential ethnic cleansing and genocide of Muslims in India. A global summit from February 26th to February 28th was held in New Delhi titled 'India on the Brink: Preventing Genocide'. Former Attorney Greg Gordon, who had worked with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and Human Rights Activists from around the world, concluded the summit by saying that the genocide in India is already underway (Sen, 2022). The spread of false information, the dehumanizing of the minorities, and the calls for violence against them were all proof of the fact that the ethnic conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India had resulted in the start of genocide, targeting the Muslims.

Indian False Information Campaign and Cyberwarfare Against Pakistan and Their Implications

The Bharatiya Janata Party argues that the present corrupt elite cannot be trusted to represent the pure people of India, that is, the Hindus. Additionally, they emphasized these elites do not exhibit enough firmness toward the neighboring country Pakistan, which is considered a significant adversary under Hindutva ideology (Varshney, 2021). According to them, an Islamic country being born out of India is the height of disrespect and something against which all Hindus need to unite. In propagating Hindutva ideology, the spread of disinformation is considered to be an important instrument of the state's policy. The deliberate deceiving of the masses through the help of mass media is referred to as the spread of disinformation. The BJP Government used media actively to spread their propaganda to create situations that benefit them (Saleem, 2021). One prominent instance of India disseminating propaganda to undermine Pakistan on a global stage was revealed in 2020 by a European NGO named 'Disinfo Lab.' They disclosed their 15-year-old operation referred to as 'Indian Chronicles,' which began in 2005. India was exposed, manipulating information, spreading fake news, and conducting research on ways to create anti-Pakistan sentiments.

The DisinfoLab reported that more than seven hundred media channels across more than a hundred countries were being operated by the Indian Government with the sole purpose of spreading misinformation against Pakistan. The Indian Government strategically utilized registered non-governmental organizations to serve its interests. Specifically, it aimed to garner support from international governmental organizations such as the UN or IMF by tarnishing Pakistan's reputation. This operation also dug out dark secrets used by the Indian Government, such as identity theft and the hijacking of dead NGOs. These media outlets and NGOs worked to create dissent in Pakistan and

aimed to damage Pakistan's reputation in the international arena. The dissemination of disinformation against Pakistan was aimed at isolating the country within the global system while also seeking to weaken its financial conditions. A prominent example involves the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), where India lobbied against Pakistan's interests to have it blacklisted. (Shukla, 2019).

Pakistan's National Security Policy in Response to Rising Populism in India

The policies, legislations, and political actions of the Bharatiya Janata Party government are all pointing toward the gradual erosion of Indian secularism. India is home to 1.41 billion people, out of which 19% are comprised of minorities (Sahoo, 2022). The Hindutva government and its aim of having a majoritarian government in place will lead to the loss of religious freedom for minorities in the state. Indeed, the impact of this trend is already evident through the laws that have been implemented by BJP's government.

On the 14th of January 2022, Pakistan launched its first public National Security Policy. This NSP deals with six main aspects of the state, which are as follows: Economy, Defense, National Cohesion, Foreign Policy, Internal Security, and Territorial Integrity. The NSP was created after seven years of consultation and analysis by the National Security Committee. This policy was introduced as the first-ever strategy that is both inclusive and citizen-centric in its basis. The National Security Policy (NSP) is set to undergo annual revisions, and its primary emphasis lies in deterring conflicts and actively pursuing peaceful resolutions.

In the National Security Policy (NSP), within the "Neighborhood" section, it is highlighted that the rise of Hindutva-driven politics in India is a matter of profound concern, and it has a direct impact on Pakistan's immediate security. Moreover, the section, also discussed about the unilateralism that India has taken up under Prime Minister Modi and how these actions are expected to create hurdles for the development of peace in the region ("National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026", 2022, p.36). The use of media and cyberspace to create and spread false information about Pakistan has also been cited in the document as a key hurdle for the development of peace and cordial relationships between the two neighbors.

The NSP credits India with limiting Pakistan's 'eastward connectivity' with the help of its regressive approach. This regressive approach is also a major hurdle in the way of cordial relationships between both states. For lasting peace, India needs to involve the international community in addressing the Jammu and Kashmir issue. However, India sees it as an internal matter. Pakistan holds that it will renew trade ties with India only after they resolve the crisis in Jammu and Kashmir. While India claims it will only renew trade alliances with Pakistan after Pakistan effectively deals with its terrorist problems (National Security Division, 2022).

Impediments to Sustainable Peace in South Asia

Sustainable Peace means the presence of options such as collaborative problem-solving, dialogue, and cooperation among the states. This means that the states don't have the likelihood of opting for violence, oppression, or conflict among themselves. Sustainable Peace in a region can be measured by the fair and equal distribution of resources, highly functional governments, low levels of corruption, high education levels, good relationships among neighboring states, and a free flow of information (Coleman, 2022). If all of these factors are present, a region has sustainable peace, but

the absence of all of these factors in the South Asian region shows us how sustainable peace is lacking in the region. Instead, we can see the presence of negative peace among the South Asian states. Negative Peace is the lack of violence due to a ceasefire. The conflict has not been transformed but instead has been prevented (Dačić, 2018).

Conclusion

Populism, akin to other ideologies, possesses a defined structure and driving force. The primary objective of populist regimes is the pursuit of an 'illiberal democracy,' where the populace is repressed and lacks genuine power. Populism often revolves around the notion of the 'People' mobilizing against 'the Elite,' becoming the prevailing agenda for the majority. However, in the case of India, changes to foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi have remained relatively modest. For the most part, he has continued the legacy of previous leaders, focusing on core objectives such as becoming a regional power, expanding India's economic influence, and addressing the threats from China and Pakistan.

Two discernible ways in which the impact of populism on Indian foreign policy manifests are the increased centralization in decision-making and a more assertive approach toward Pakistan. It is not surprising that the relationship between India and Pakistan has deteriorated under the Bharatiya Janata Party government, given the challenges this presents for Pakistan. The effects of rising populism in India are evident, from the majority-centric government to calls for the ethnic genocide of minorities. Incidents like the Karnataka Hijab Ban, the Haridwar Hindutva Conference, and the blatant boycott of Muslim-owned shops in India depict the rise of right-wing populism.

These incidents, among others, have raised global concerns about the surge in hate crimes against Muslims. India has faced criticism from Pakistan, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and numerous states and prominent NGOs concerned with the potential genocide against Muslims. This has already impacted Pakistan, ranging from the potential refugee crisis that could create chaos to the use of cyber warfare against Pakistan by right-wing Hindutva media outlets, fostering an 'Us Versus Them' narrative that negatively affects Pakistan's reputation.

However, it appears that tensions between the two nations will persist as long as the Kashmir conflict endures. The resolution of the Kashmir Issue is contingent upon both states actively listening to each other and moving towards cooperation. The prospect of resolving the Kashmir Issue hinges on both states consciously opting for positive peace or if its resolution aligns with the national interests of both parties. In this anarchic world, states are likely to prioritize national interest, and currently, the interests of both states and their governments involve exploiting the Kashmir issue to garner mass support.

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