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National identity and economic development in India: Cherry picking from the tree of history

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Abstract:

Economic development and nationalism are deeply connected topics. This thesis will research the utilization of historical aspects of Indian nationalism and the Indian national identity in the discourse on economic development. By utilizing a framework that is based on the reiteration, recapture, reinterpretation and repudiation of historical aspects with in the discourse on economic development this thesis is arguing that PM Modi is mobilizing nationalism in order to aid his development plan. By researching how the PM is addressing difference audiences this thesis shows how there is not one single nationalism/ national identity but multiple and these can be used to reach specific goals. By applying an established framework on a new region this thesis ties to open up the discussion of contemporary nationalism and engage with the question of western vs eastern nationalism.

Key words: Nationalism, National identity, India, BJP, Modi, economic development,

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Introduction

"This thing called nationalism is a treasure that a country uses to try to develop"

Sun Yat-Sen

Nations try to portray themselves as safe places with happy people living in them. Arguably, the most famous example of a country trying to promote its own culture and by doing so increasing their soft power is Japan. Japan's campaign called "Cool Japan" is a promotion of Japanese culture; more precisely, it is a celebration of Japanese comics and Japanese music. Other countries have their own formalized campaigns to promote their countries, often to attract more tourists or foreign direct investment (FDI). Examples for this are the campaigns of the Malaysian Tourism Ministry "Malaysia Truly Asia" or the Taiwan External Trade Development Council's "Taiwan Excellence". India's answer to these campaigns are "Incredible India" launched in 2002 by the Ministry of Tourism to promote tourism and "Make in India" launched by Prime Minister (PM) Modi in 2014 to transform India into a global design and manufacturing hub. All the above-mentioned campaigns need to portray their country as something special and unique. By employing the language of marketing, Fan (2006) argues that nations are branded just like companies or products. They reproduce some knowledge about their countries while omitting some for a specific goal. In the case of the above-mentioned "Cool Japan", Japanese comics and music are promoted while the nationalist and imperial past of Japan is omitted. This means that the campaign is trying to promote the uniqueness of Japan abroad. When talking about the uniqueness of a nation questions of nationalism and national identity gain inherent importance.

The election of Narendra Modi to Prime Minister in India in 2014 represents a break with the previous dominance of the Indian National Congress (subsequently called Congress) party. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Modi's party, has a different approach to India as a nation than Congress. This is exemplified by the various academic articles and books that have been published in English since the 1990s that discuss the relationship between the BJP and Hindutva ideology (R. Das, 2003; Desai, 2011; Hansen, 1996; Palshikar, 2015; Prakash, 2007). Here the past plays a major role as the past is of vital importance to the construction of nationalism and national identity (Bond, McCrone, & Brown, 2003). Apart from being characterized as Hindu nationalist at home and abroad (Colvin & Bhattacharjya, 2013; Kazmin, 2019) Modi also is portrayed as "Mr Development" (Dhume, 2016). Hence, both nationalism and economic development are important for the platform of the PM. In this sense, this thesis tries to answer the following question: How is PM Modi mobilizing historical aspects of Indian nationalism and national identity in relation to the discourse on economic development? The

following sub questions will lead the analysis. What are the differences between the way nationalism is invoked for a domestic and for an international audience? What are the reasons for the differences in the approach to Indian history? What role does continuity play in the portrayal of Indian nationalism and history? Throughout the thesis, I will argue that the Indian PM is adapting the historical aspects of Indian nationalism and the Indian national identity to fit the audience and by doing so is promoting his development agenda.

The existing literature on national branding was instrumental for the conception of this thesis. National branding and its updated framework of nation image management (Fan, 2010) focus on the performance and reproduction of the nation on the international stage. Furthermore national branding as a framework is interested in the deliberate attempts of a government to brand the nation. This often includes employing the help of brand consultants (Aronczyk, 2013). I hope to add to this literature by showing how this mechanism is also working without the directness that national branding assumes. By taking into account how PM Modi is addressing difference audiences in order to promote economic development I like to show that, there is not one nationalism, one national identity, one national brand but multiple. The theoretical framework offered by Bond et al. (2003) in their paper *national identity and economic Development: reiteration, recapture, reinterpretation and repudiation* makes it possible to analyse speeches and other texts of the Indian PM abroad and at home. In their analysis, the authors are putting emphasis on the role of history within the understanding of national identity. As the understanding of history varies this makes it possible to highlight potential differences when approaching a different audience.

The other important school of thought on nationalism that informed much of this thesis was the concept of banal nationalism. The concept was first presented in Michael Billig's book published in 1995 under the same name. In the book, Billig argues that small symbolic gestures are reproducing the nation and national identity constantly. However, as Skey (2009) argued the scope of the framework is relatively limited as it focuses first and foremost on the national audience. In its approach to the level of intention to nationalism, banal nationalism is on the opposite side of the spectrum compared to national branding. Banal nationalism assumes no intention in the way the nation is reproduced by for example including flags in adverts. However, as Modi is the PM of India it is safe to assume that he is aware that he is perceived as representing the nation and by extend also the Indian national identity, especially when he speaks for all Indians. Therefore, by using Bond et al.'s framework to national identity within the discourse on economic development I am able to analyse texts of the PM without questioning the level of intent.

Lastly, by incorporating the Indian diaspora into the research design the results of this thesis will be relevant for researchers dealing with diaspora populations. Due to the specific question at hand, this

might be done thought the relationship between diaspora and nationalism. The relation between overseas Chinese and economic development has been discussed widely in the academic literature however there is little academic research on the economic importance of the Indian diaspora. Furthermore, the results of this thesis will inform the way that the Indian imagined community is imagined by PM Modi. In general, this thesis will add to the literature on Indian nationalism. While the topic has been discussed already in various publications. The approach to the nation as an economic concept will in relation to nationalism has not been analysed in any South Asian context.

Arguably, one weakness of the original publication of Bond et al. is that the authors used a too broad array of sources. By using examples from both Wales and Scotland in addition to texts from various agencies within one essay length publication, their results might be questioned concerning the level of representation of all of these agencies. To avoid this pitfall this thesis will focus on everything directly said by Modi. In some cases, I will use the way ministries are then repeating the words of the PM and subsequently cases crate initiatives based on his advice. By analysing the content of the PM's words qualitatively, I hope to show how the Indian national identity is mobilized to promote economic development, either directly or indirectly. The most important source for my research will be the website of PM Modi where all of the speeches and Modi's monthly radio show Mann Ki Baat are published. Overall, the audiences are categorized into three different categories. First is the national audience. As Mann Ki Baat is first and foremost seen as a way for the PM to continuously engage with the Indian electorate I will assume that the target audience is mostly domestic. When Modi is speaking in other countries, the audience will be separated into two distinct types of foreign audiences. One is that of directly addressing dignitaries of other nations. This includes joint press statements with other leaders or speeches at regional meetings. The other important not domestic group are Indian diasporas across the world. This group is very important as it is often seen as an important driver of economic development. The previously mentioned sources will then be read through the lens of reiteration, recapture, reinterpretation and repudiation of historical aspects of the Indian national identity.

In this thesis, I hope to show the way that national identity is mobilized in different ways for different audiences while still trying to achieve the same goal, that is promoting economic development. Therefore, this thesis should not be understood as a general study of Indian nationalism or Indian national identity. Furthermore, I am not writing about nationalism within economic development but instead only focus on the discourse on econimic development and ways to bring development. This means that I am looking at the symbolic and less tangible aspects of nationalism and economic development. Lastly, I would like to mention that due to my language skills I have limited myself to the analysis of materials that were published in the English language. This means that my research

into the domestic sphere is mostly limited to Modi's Mann Ki Baat show. Further research should add to the arguments made in this thesis by including the speeches given during campaign events. In addition, this would make it possible to analyse potential differences in the way nationalism is used by different actors within the same government.

Literature Review

This thesis understands nations as a modern concept. The two arguably most important text that proposed frameworks on the nation as a modern endeavour are Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* first published in 1983 and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* published in the same year. Gellner understands the nation as a political concept. The overall argument in Gellner's work is that nationalism predates the nation. Hence, without first the creation and then the reproduction of the nationalism, nations could not exist. One important aspect of Gellner's understanding of nationalism is equalization and homogenization. According to the author, this is due to the relation between nationalism and the industrial society (pp. 22-23). In his assessment, the industrial society is the only society that has a fixation on perpetual growth and one way to achieve that is through on-going homogenization as homogenization is aiding the capitalist system. It is important to mention that homogenization in this case is describing aspects like standardized school curricular and language rather than the dystopian Orwellian imagery that the term might invoke. This homogenization needs a universal high culture and is according to Gellner constructed and led by the elites.

Anderson on the other hand understands nationalism as a cultural concept that moves bottom up rather than Gellner's top down approach. For Anderson the nation is an imagined community. In other words, the one member of a nation will never know everyone else who is part of the same nation but still considers the other part of the same group. Instrumental for the understanding for Anderson's approach to nationalism is print-capitalism (Anderson, 2006, p. 50). Print capitalism refers to the emergence of a capitalist market for newspapers and books in particular in the Americas in the 18th and 19th century. According to Anderson, this led to the emergence of the communal experience that is the bases for nationalism. In his research, Anderson shows how American creoles defined themselves against the "other" of the elites in Spain or Europe in general.

Both approaches to nationalism have a direct connection to capitalism. While Anderson argues that capitalism leads to nationalism, Gellner argues that nationalism is used to aid capitalism. The other difference Anderson's bottom up and vs Gellner's top down might be explainable by examining who is understood as an elite in the two works. Both understand the European nobility and merchants to some extend as the elites (Anderson, 2006, p. 51; Gellner, 2008, p. 16). This means however that when

shrinking the scope of Anderson's analysis on just the Americas the ones who were able to engage with print capitalism were also the elites in their environment. Hence, nationalism is in both approaches lead by the local elite to achieve either, for the European nationalism economic growth (Gellner) and in the Americas sovereignty (Anderson). From this discussion, there are two important insights for the following analysis. On the one hand, nationalism can be used to achieve different goals, on the other hand, there is a direct connection between capitalism/economic development and nationalism. The connection between capitalism and nationalism has since been described by different researchers in various localities (D'Costa, 2012; Ebohon, 2013; Marshall, 1968; Ong, 1997; Pajnik, Fabbro, & Kamenova, 2016). However, arguably one of the most straight forwards understanding of the nation and nationalism as an economic constructs comes from Immanuel Wallerstein, according to him nations are the political expression of capitalist competition between different geographies (1987, pp. 381-382).

While Anderson and Gellner both claim some degree of universality for their concepts of nationalism there are researchers who contest such an approach. This relates to a difference between what some call Eastern and Western nationalism, or another term often associated with Eastern nationalism is post-colonial nationalism. Arguably, one of the most impactful on this topic was Chatterjee's *Nationalist thought and the colonial world* (1999). In his analysis, the author identifies three distinct moments in eastern nationalism that gives it its particular non-western flavour. These are the moment of departure, the moment of manoeuvre and the moment arrival. During the moment of departure, a non-western nationalist movement would become aware of the essential cultural differences between East and West and nationalism is constructed as a post-enlightenment idea. Simultaneously the West is constructed as superior due to its materialism. The moment of manoeuvre is characterized by incorporating some of the enlightenment criticism in the nationalist thought itself. The final moment, the moment of arrival, represents the change towards a nationalist thought as a discourse on order and the rational organization of power and opening the space who can produce nationalist thought (Ibid., p. 50ff). While this definition does not directly refer to who the nation stands for (something that is done purposefully by Chatterjee), post-enlightenment in the first moment plays an important role. In this case, western nationalism is also directly related to capitalism and the modern liberal world order. In an article that analyses nationalism today Chatterjee (2012) also mentions the tendency of modern nations to stand in competition to each other, especially after the global financial crises in 2008. This change to the previous held wisdoms on Indian nationalism is also signified by the emergence of populist politics in India. Paula Chakravartty and Srirupa (2015) discussed the populism that Modi utilized in the 2014 elections. Chatterjee also discussed the emergence of identity politics in connection to populism and that no nationalism is free of this spectre. Hence, one can argue that

with the emergence of populism and the idea of the economic development that PM Modi is championing that the current nationalism of the Modi led BJP is closer to the economic understanding of the nation of the West rather than reactionary post-colonial nationalism.

The concept that gives each nationalism its particular characteristics is the idea of national identity. Alongside a historic territory or homeland Anthony Smith names common myths and historical memories a common, mass public culture common legal rights and duties for all members and a common economy with territorial mobility for all members the most defining features of any nation and national identity (Smith, 1991, p. 14). However, in the particular case of India this definition is arguably too structuralist. The case of diasporas and their identity questions the Smithian approach to national identity. As diasporas have a strong connection to their homeland and subscribe to the historical memories and often have a culture that is, if not identical, a derivative of the mass culture form the homeland. One of the most famous publications on diaspora identity comes from Stuart Hall. Hall uses the word cultural identity to describe the identity of people with an Afro-Caribbean heritage in the UK. The researcher argues that there are two fundamental ways to understand cultural identity, first as the glue that binds a group together, i.e. a common historical understanding , common cultural codes. He goes on saying that "[t]his 'oneness', underlying all the other more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence of 'Caribbeaness', the black experience" (Hall, 1990, p. 223). The second understanding of cultural identity that Hall offers highlights that even within one identity there are differences and stresses that identity is not only what one is but also what one wants to become (Ibid. , p. 226). This is the important place of meeting for the understanding of nationalism and identity. The cultural identity has enough signifiers that the one who has the discursive power to define who is part of the nation can choose to include diaspora populations within their understanding of the nation. While Hall wrote about 'Caribbeaness' for this thesis the term would be Indianess. This Indianess can be mobilized to some specific goals. That this Indianess exists and is more difficult to define has been demonstrated in an article by Bardhan (2011) on the topic of reception of Indian movies within the Indian diaspora in the UK. In an article by Kinnvall and Svensson (2010) the authors showed how politicians in India are referring to historic memories, especially the role of important freedom fighters, and religion to invoke the feeling of Indianess with the diaspora. Hence, for this thesis national identity is understood closer to the concept used by Hall "the cultural glue" rather than Smith's approach to identity.

At this point, it is important to mention that what is used to invoke the feeling of Indianess is highly curated and selective. To understand this selection process the concept of nation branding becomes important. In the text that first introduced the topic Fan (2006) differentiates between nation branding and country branding. While nation branding refers to the branding of the people who make

up a nation, country branding refers to the branding of the territory that is claimed by a nation. Furthermore, Fan argues that a nations brand exists even without anyone consciously branding it. In this sense only intentional attempts to change the image of the nation are understood as nation branding (Ibid., p. 11). However, as Fan (2010) admits that under close scrutiny that all forms of nation branding in the end are just export or destination branding (like the programs mentioned in the introduction of this thesis). Nevertheless, as the literature on nationalism and national or cultural identity has shown there is the need to reproduce the nation even on the national level. A less centralized approach to this offers the concept of banal nationalism. Michael Billig (1995) argues that the nation is reproduced in everyday life and therefore nationalism is not an intermittent mood in established nations but an endemic condition. Further, the author argues that while the nationalism might be banal the effects of it might not be, Billig offers the examples the Gulf and Falkland Wars. Hence, the author argues that thanks to an underlying not planned banal nationalism (the unwaved flag) a more extreme version of nationalism is possible (the waved flag) (Ibid., p. 10). However, the concept suffers from its grand approach to nationalism. This means that without a centre that holds discursive power to guide banal nationalism becomes hard to clearly define as the author mentions in the introduction. In addition, this also lead to questions of multiple identities and contesting these. A way to escape these conceptual problems is applying the framework used by Bond et al. (2003). In their research the authors use a combined understanding of national reputation, external mobilization and internal mobilization in the analysis of national identity and economic development. The base assumptions of this framework are nationalism has an economic dimension, the nation is constantly made and remade, the past plays an integral part in that process and that this takes place on the whole spectrum from banal to high politics (Ibid., p. 374). Also the multitude of different identities is incorporated within the framework, this means that the shifting perceptions of the past represent various identities and parallel nationalism. These are utilized for the specific goal of economic development. The following four methods are employed to reach this goal: reiteration, an agents' believe that a historic attribute confers contemporary economic benefits. Recapture, a historical attribute is still considered an economic benefit but less so than in the past. Reinterpretation, turning a historic disadvantage into a contemporary advantage. Repudiation refers to the omission of aspects an identity that are perceived as inappropriate or deleterious in the contemporary context (Ibid., p. 377). While this framework has been used for various research projects in Europe (Angell & Mordhorst, 2015; Fox & Ward, 2008; McCrone, 2005; Peel & Lloyd, 2008; Willett & Giovannini, 2014) the framework has not been used in a post-colonial context and not with special attention to the role of diaspora groups.

Overall, the literature on nationalism agrees that there is a relationship between the nation and the economy. How close this relation is depends on the particular point of view that an author takes. The relationship between nationalism and identity is a difficult one, especially when community of people who hold a shared identity do not hold the same citizenship. However, the past plays an important role and through the use of the past an identity can be mobilized for a specific goal, this might be preparation for war or an appeal to promote the national economy. In the next chapters, I hope to show how PM Modi is utilizing reiteration, recapture, reinterpretation and repudiation of historical aspects of the Indian national identity, or Indianess, to promote economic development in India.

Cherry picking history and identity in Modi's discourse on economic development

Reiteration

Reiteration refers to the reiteration of the historical positive aspects and situating these in a modern context to promote economic development (Bond et al., 2003, p. 377). Bond et al. take the example of the importance of the Scottish education system. In their analysis they argue that through the reiteration of the positive aspects of the Scottish education system Scottish politicians are pronouncing the important role that Scottish education plays in the way Scotland is prepared to face the challenges of a modern economy.

The reiteration of the historical connection between India and other countries can be seen as a clear asset. This trend has already been research to some degree, for example in one chapter that explored the connection between India and Africa was published by Dubey (2016). In the text, Dubey argues that the historical ties between India and Africa as former colonized regions have created good will, especially from Africa towards India. However, the historical connection is not limited to the colonial era but also extends to the precolonial. That historical connections are seen as something positive can also be seen in the connection between Africa and China. In an Article by Zhang Jin, the author stresses that the establishment of the *Forum of China- Africa Cooperation* in 2000 heavily emphasized the historical connection between the two areas (Jin, 2015). This shows that even the establishment of institutions is framed in a way that the cooperation is not something new but is based on previous already established links. At the same time, it is important to mention that especially South-South cooperation is understood as an inherent asset. This is especially important when it comes to agricultural and rural development (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2017). Therefore, the reiteration of these historical ties can be seen as an attempt to promote not only the historical ties for their own value but also for the goal of strengthening the ties between two countries and through that establish deeper cooperation, especially in areas that are seen as win-win situations

for example the realm of economic development. Furthermore, while these forms of connections have been mostly studies in the contemporary context, it is arguable that these connections already constituted an asset historically. Hence, the appeal towards these connections, even if their exact form might have changed, embody a form of reiteration rather than reinterpretation.

The historical ties between India and Africa are connected to the Indian national identity. This becomes clear when reviewing the lives of some of India's most famous and most celebrated national figures, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi[1]. According to Davis (2018) the 2015 *India-Africa Forum Summit* drew heavily from the historical connection between India and Africa. In a speech by PM Modi addressing the Indian diaspora in Kampala, Uganda he said the following:

> Today, all of you have been providing your energy in all the fields here whether it is development of Uganda, or the business, arts, sports, in all the sectors of the societyyou [sic] people have beendedicating [sic] your lives. Ashes of Mahatma Gandhi were immersed here in Jinja.Several [sic] Indians have made active contribution to the politics of this country and they have still been doing it today. Late Narendra Bhai Patel was the first Non-European Speaker of the parliament of Independent Uganda. And he had been elected unanimously. (Modi, 2018a)

This quote is interesting for two reasons. First Modi is directly refereeing to the diaspora and their importance to the development of Uganda. This is not only limited to the economic realm but rather to the importance of all Ugandan society. In this he is promoting the idea that they are helping the new country and offering something to Uganda that the country would be missing without them. This indirectly means that the Indians living in Uganda are an asset to the development of India. Furthermore, as I will expand in the chapter on reinterpretation, a diaspora is not only helping to develop one country but rather has the potential to be an economic asset to both; the host country as well as the country of origin.

The second interesting aspect of this speech excerpt is connected to the history that connects Uganda and India through Gandhi. This notion is even more promoted by linking it in the next sentence to democracy. While democracy is not only seen as a positive force for the society as a whole. At this point I would like to remind the reader that India is the most populated democracy in the world and by some researchers democracy is considered 'the only game in town' in India (Kohli, Breman, & Hawthorn, 2001; Ruud & Heierstad, 2016). While it might be disputed if democracy is an actual force to achieve economic development, nevertheless one can also not dismiss the large discourse on the

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[1] However, it must be mentioned that the BJP and Modi in particular are not promoting Nehru as part of the Indian national identity like previous governments. Something I will elaborate in a later chapter.

topic that claims so (Barro, 1996; Feng, 1997; Huntington, 1996; Saint-Paul & Verdier, 1993)[2]. By reiterating the positive changed that Indians brought to Uganda, Modi is linking democracy and the history of the relation between India and the African nation as a positive force for both countries. While this might be a just a claim that needs further investigation, it is the perception that is important here. In addition, this claim appeals to the notion that democracy is a positive good for both countries' economic development.

The idea that India is a democratic nation and through this democratic history is connected to other countries is not limited to Africa. This can be seen in the joint press statement with Kyrgyz President Atamzbek in 2016. In the introduction Modi claims that this visit will bring more cooperation and high-level contacts. This claim is then followed up by stating that the Kyrgyz Republic and India are bound by goodwill and centuries of historical links. And then Modi starts to mention their shared believe in democratic values and traditions. Later, Modi directly links this to their planned future economic relationship in form of "greater people-to-people exchanges" (Modi, 2016e). This time Modi is not promoting the ideas that form part of the Indian national identity, especially India as a democracy, not to an Indian audience but to an international audience. By reiterating this part of the history and national identity, Modi is invoking a sense of stability and continuity in their relationship. That will have will form the basis of the economic development of both India and Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, democracy and the already established ties will be positive features for both their future development.

This form of historical ties that binds regions together to invoke a feeling of continuity is a form of reiteration that is used for different areas in the world. Another example for this is a speech of Modi at the 14th ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) India Summit in Vientiane. Right away in the opening of the statement PM Modi is referring not only to the link between the regional organisation ASEAN and India but also to the cultural connection between India and Laos in particular: "the beautiful heritage city of Vientiane reminds me of deep historical and cultural links that the city shares with India". And before talking about how in the contemporary the strategic goals of ASEAN and India align Modi mentions how the connection between Southeast Asia is based on civilizational heritage (Modi, 2016a). The view that India is a civilization with a long history has been part of the Indian national identity from the beginning of the nationalist movements. While this might not be the most important part of the identity today it still forms a backbone in how the nation is understood (Parekh, 2006). That this connection is at least to some extend real can be seen in the Ramayana, as the epic is well known in both India and much of Southeast Asia (Manguin, 2011, p. xxv). Like

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[2] These four references alone have been referenced over 5000 times according to google scholar.

mentioned before the reiteration of old already established links are seen as an economic asset for both sides. In a congratulatory message from Modi to Filipino President Duterte this narrative can be seen again as Modi pronounces the importance of the long heritage of cooperation between the ASEAN region and India while also mentioning the "people-to people" contacts nurtured though the millennia. This message is then connected to goal that both geographies can achieve a shared future that includes shared prosperity (Modi, 2017a).

This message of a shared history with a now institutionalized regionalist organization is not limited to ASEAN. In his address to other leaders during the 2018 BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) meeting is a prime example for that. In this address the Indian PM reiterates the claims of the shared culture between all the member nations. After the welcoming words to the other members, Modi frames the organization as connected through "civilization, history, art, language, food and unbreakable bonds of our shared culture". This is later even more explicit when the Indian PM is revering to their shared identity though Buddhism and compassion (Modi, 2018e). While these topics might not have been positive forces for economic development in the historical or contemporary context, the connection that these facilitated are. As the historical connection between India and other BIMSTEC members is seen as the basis for the establishment of the regional grouping and also has been a force for trade in historical times these connections were and are an economic asset. That regionalism especially for developing nations is an economic asset has been argued by Percy Mistry in his chapter *New Regionalism and Economic Development* (2003). Buddhism, while still being subordinated to Hinduism is seen as a vital part of the heritage of India and is in contrast to a Muslim identity that is seen by some as foreign and led to suffering in India (Bandyopadhyay, Morais, & Chick, 2008). Therefore, the reiteration of the connection between to BIMSTEC nations especially though something that is seen as a positive aspect of Indian identity facilitates a cooperation that has direct influence over the possible economic development in the region.

The reiteration of shared historical experience also goes beyond the connection between India and other Asian or Global South nations. One example for this can be observed in the Joint statement given in 2015 with the PM of Ireland of the time Enda Kenny. In this case, the reiteration of historical features is not limited to the colonial past of both countries. While this is mentioned, Indian PM Modi is also directly referencing the similarities in the constitutions of Ireland and India. But also mentioning the role that Irish experts played in the establishment of the Geological and Linguistic Surveys in India. (Modi, 2015). These appeals to shared experiences and historical links are then later put into a narrative that promotes closer economic ties with the Indian PM stating: "India can be Ireland's anchor in Asia & Ireland can be India's vital gateway to Europe:". In this appeal the reiteration of a close

relationship and goodwill from both nations towards the other, like with the nations and regions mentioned before, the prospect of economic development is seen as the natural outcome of the history that these countries already share. The statement also mentions the personal relationship between Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats. This relationship is framed as a proof of the close people to people connection that the two countries have (ibid.). In this Modi is referring to two men who had great influence on the nationalism of both countries and celebrated in their home country.

But the appeal of notable figures in the nationalist struggle in colonial India is an even more powerful image when used for a domestic audience. By reiteration the importance that a place played during the struggle for independence Modi is able to justify on the one hand why this region is part of the country and at the same time also can appeal for a special status in his development plan. How this is done can be seen in Modi's address to the 75-year anniversary of the hosting of the Indian flag in Port Blair in 2018. In the words of the Indian PM:

> I salute this land that had been purified by the sacrifice and heroism of innumerable patriots who had put their lives at stake for freedom. The Andaman and Nicobar group of islands are not only a symbol of natural beauty but also like a pilgrimage centre for the Indians […] Our government is committed to empower this group of islands that is significant in terms of the country's past, present and the future and to ensure that it becomes an important part of the country's development story. (Modi, 2018f)

By reiterating the historical role that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands played Modi is referring to the importance of the national heroes during the impudence struggle. That these heroes play an important role in the way many Indian politicians see the country has been argued by Rai who studies Indian politics by focusing on the ascetics of murals and statures in the Indian parliament in his 2014 published paper. The author argues that the murals and statures are depicting a strong while victimized people during the time of the independence struggle. By reiterating part of the history of the freedom fighters Modi puts a special emphasis on geography that these people visited. By then connecting this idea of the history to a modern approach to economic development PM Modi is using this narrative to establish the areas as areas of special interest. That areas of special interest can be seen as a positive force in the development of the whole country can be observed in many different countries most famously in the PRC with their multiple special economic zones[3] (Zeng, 2011). Through the reiteration of history Modi is able to justify why these places should get a specific treatment and

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[3] I am not arguing that the same level of special economic focus is given to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the PRC gave to its SEZ (special economic zones) but rather that this form of development is a clear asset for the development of the country as a whole

through that earn this status. In the end the history can be understood as the framing for the establishment of the new areas.

The reiteration of historical links between India and other countries can be seen in nearly all of the statements of Indian PM on an international stage. What is important is that this is not a specific case for India but other countries also use the past to reaffirm their commitment for the future. When, as I have discussed in the literature review, that nations can be understood as an economic unit that stands in direct competition to other nations on a global level this becomes important. This would mean that through appealing to the previous established ties a nation is through this perception not a competitor but rather a friend in this "dog eat dog" world. This form of belonging together through history is not limited to the international stage as shown in this chapter. By appealing to the closeness within a region like done in the BIMSTEC speech by Modi the whole region is elevated to the level of an economic unit and that they would compete against the world. On the lowest level, as there is also competition for foreign direct investment within a nation the special status of a particular region can be justified by appealing to their special place within their history as done in Modis speech in Port Blair. Through this a region that is not part of the Indian mainland is elevated to the status of one of its most important regions.

Furthermore, the reiteration of history on the international stage as a second effect: Promoting a specific view of the nation abroad. Direct people to people contacts is promoted by saying that both nations went through the same experiences and therefore can identify with each other. By carefully selecting which part of the history is repeated a specific view of the nation, in this case India, is promoted to further economic development, mostly portrayed in the liberal view that economic cooperation is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Recapture

According to Bond et al. (2003) recapture refers to the aspiration to recover features of national identity that were historically regarded as positive aspects but are now seen as problematic. The example that the authors offer is how Scottish education, while perceived as a positive aspect when mobilized externally is perceived problematic internally. This means while presenting Scottish education externally as aiding the economic development, as high class education, internally Scottish and Welsh education seems to be perceived as not preparing its students for the real economic challenges of the 21st century (pp. 380-381).

Religion plays an important role in the national identity in India, as in many other countries. On the international stage this can be understood as aid to economic development as shown in the previous

chapter. However, a strong connection to religion also can be understood as an obstacle for economic development. This can be seen in the realm of tourism. Tourists from western countries who flock to holy sites in India often do not behave in accordance with local customs and at points unquestionably disrespectful to the places that are visited. Natalia Bloch showed the impact that this behaviour can have on the local population using the example of Hampi. Religiousness does not only impact the relationship between foreigners and the people living in the area but also drives a wedge between local residence who profit from the tourists and the ones who do not (Bloch, 2017). The people who are profiting from tourism are seen as immoral and going against the national character for their personal profit. This idea that religion is seen as hinderance for economic growth has been argued in a study by Barro and McCleary (Barro & McCleary, 2003). However, this study is quite reductive as it only understands religiousness though the attendance of services, furthermore it does not have any mention about the importance of pilgrims as spenders in holy sites.

The understanding that the Indian government under the leadership of Modi is trying to go away from the previous highly celebrated concept of secularism can be seen in multiple places. In addition to that, the commodification of religion and heritage can actually be seen as a way boost local industries. One example for this is Yoga. The practised has been championed by PM Modi as he talks extensively about the practice during one instalment of Mann Ki Baat. In May 2016, relating to the international Yoga day, Modi tells his listeners that everyone should practise Yoga for 25 to 30 minutes every day (Modi, 2016d). The importance of Yoga for the economy is two-fold: for once it promotes a new industry in India for the domestic middle class while at the same time also attracting foreign tourists to flock to these centres. Sneha Annavarapu studied the case of one specific centre in Chennai. What she found is that the centre uses nationalistic language in the centre while at catering to a consumer class of Indians (Annavarapu, 2018). As the heritage of India has been promoted as an asset on the international stage as it formed the basis of connections that are now exploited for their economic possibility, this heritage is recaptured in a way that is can also be mobilized to domestic consumption. Annavarapu also interprets the use of Yoga as a nationalist endeavour. The strengthening of the body would allow Indians to fight back against any enemy (Ibid, p. 8). The importance of Yoga as a national symbol can also be seen by the way the RSS values Yoga and involved itself when trying to make the international Yoga day an success (Verma, 2015). This clearly shows how part of the Indian national identity is recaptured to drive consumption.

Tourism is an important part of the Indian economy and the promotion of Yoga, as a part of wellness tourism, which is part of medical tourism, has the potential to grow this sector even further. In an Article on Indian tourism and the importance that it holds for the possibility for GDP growth the authors also directly relate yoga to Indian heritage and other important symbols of national

identification e.g. temples (Vedapradha, Hariharan, & Niha, 2017, p. 141). This idea is also reprised This shows that by promoting yoga tourism part of the national heritage is recaptured for foreign tourists and mobilized as an economic driver. Furthermore, another study characterizes the tourist seeking yoga retreats as self-centred and not wanting to forego materialistic pleasures and comfort they are accustomed to at home. In this the authors see as a clear indication of the commodification of the practise. At the same time the authors also point out that the foreign tourists who are visiting yoga centres tend to visit other places of India therefore also supporting other parts of the tourism industry (Bowers & Cheer, 2017). Hence, by promoting yoga on an international stage all parts of the Indian tourism industry are profiting from the recapture of the practice. That is not something that only happened by change becomes clear in the 2015 draft of the national tourism policy by the Ministry of Tourism: It characterizes Yoga as "India's gift to the world" and recognizes that the practise has drawn followers from all over the world. At the same time, the document also explores the potential to draw tourists who will stay for a long period in India. This potential is recognized and the draft suggests that the tourist market should be adapting to the demands (Government of India: Ministry of Tourism, 2015, p. 14). The document is even more explicit in regards to Ayurveda / Holistic Health Systems / Wellness. These practices are seen as bringing in "high yield tourists" and significantly increase the average duration of stay (Ibid.). It is very clear that these forms of heritage might be understood as an asset in India in the historical sense for their inherit value, this has changed however and in modern times as the government is recapturing them and mobilizing them as ways to promote economic growth and development[4].

Practices like Ayurveda can be understood as problematic in the modern context as much of modern medicine is fully based on clinical trials. In an article from the journal *Current Science* the authors acknowledge that the practise has been under scrutiny from various parts and was a system "lacking in evidence base" (Patwardhan & Vaidya, 2009, p. 117). In a comparison between Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine a group of other researcher also introduced both systems as not on par with modern medical practises (Patwardhan, Warude, Pushpangadan, & Bhatt, 2005). Nevertheless, the authors also mention the importance that Ayurveda can play in modern medicine as well as its growing economic impact. This shows that while Ayurveda can be seen as having a negative effect on the growth of Western style medicine it became important in its own path. In an article that states the importance of the body and how it is perceived, specifically in the relation to Ayurveda in the Indian context one researcher found that there is a close connection. In the sense that through the use of

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[4] At this point I would like to mention that the previous paragraphs should not be read as any form of condemnation. For once this form of commodification can be understood as a broker between different cultures (Bunten, 2008) and also is not specific to India as this example on Viking heritage shows (Halewood & Hannam, 2001).

traditional healing methods the body of the individual practitioner is linked not only to the ecology of the nation but also to other practitioners within the nation (Alter, 2015). In sum by mobilising this specific part of the national identity of India, the birth place of this specific medical method, the Indian government is able to recapture the positive side of Ayurveda on the one hand as treatment but at the same time also promoting nationalism as well as the economy in the context of the domestic consumer.

Another example of recapture is the promotion of Sanskrit. PM Modi himself promoted learning the ancient language during one episode of Mann Ki Baat. He connected the language to all forms of science: "[s]cience & technology, agriculture & health, Mathematics & Management, economy & environment" (Modi, 2018d). Interestingly what is missing is from this list are the humanities that have always benefitted from having a broader understanding of languages, however these are also not as prominent when it comes to the prospect of economic development. Sanskrit was looked down upon, especially during the colonial period, and the pay cuts that teachers of the language had to endure were kept after the independence (Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, 2015). A road map that was endorsed by Sukhbir Singh Sandu, a bureau head within the Ministry of Human development, also states that Sanskrit has the power to work as economic driver, the documents specifically also states that a better understanding of Sanskrit will lead to more innovations are help to protect intellectual property rights (Ibid., p. 3).

Religion and a worldwide known alternative (to the Western) medical approach clearly are important elements of the Indian, or any, national identity. However, both religion and medicine are not inherently connected to economic development. This does not mean that there is no economic potential. This mean that depending on the strategy how one promotes these aspects of culture, a country will see more or less economic growth that can be attributed to them. The case of India shows that through commodification and targeting particular groups parts of the Indian identity can be recaptured. In the case of India and particular the Modi led BJP is profiting twofold form this. One the one hand there is the direct economic development that comes with it. On the other, as the BJP is seen as one of the most nationalist of the major parties in India promoting these aspects of Indian culture and connecting them to nationalism would in the long term also enlarge the BJP voting base.

Reinterpretation

Reinterpretation refers to the reinterpretation of a negative feature of national identity as contemporary advantageous or at the very least as largely neutral. The example that Bond et al. provide for this case is the discourse on Scotland's geographical location. Due to the long distances

from the Scottish highlands to other European centres of commerce combined with the extremely rough terrain made Scotland what the authors call 'the periphery of the periphery' (Bond et al., 2003, p. 381). A second example for this is Scotland's position as a country with negative population flow, but this is now interpreted as an advantage from the perspective national reputation and the possibility of technology transfer due to former emigrants returning to Scotland (Ibid., p. 383).

An article by the Pew Research Center showed that in 2015 more than 15 and a half million people who were born in India are now living in other countries. This very high level of emigration can be seen as a as a problem as it has been for a long time. This problem is then exacerbated by the fact that the people with the best education and marketable skills are also the people who are the most mobile in regards to the places where they live and work. This concept is often called 'brain drain' and refers to the loss of skilled individuals. This phenomenon has been studied for years in various geographical locations. With specific regards to India, Jaspertap Singh and V.V. Krishna have described the brain drain that India experienced through the 1970s and 1980s as alarming (2015, p. 301). However, skilled individuals leaving the country is not an isolated problem: with regards to the factors that facilitate these individuals leaving the country, inadequate working conditions, economical issues, inadequacy of research facilities in addition to a demand and supply mismatch of skilled workforce are seen are the major reasons that push people to leave India.

The existence of the diaspora has been reinterpreted in recent years from a negative that hinders the economic development to a positive force that aids India's overall development. In a previous chapter I described and analysed the reiteration of historical ties between India and other countries. As these historical ties are often built upon people to people relations the Indian diasporas built the fundamental stepping stone that can create these connections on the grassroot level. This means that through an indirect way the diaspora is aiding the economic development effort in India. Thanks to the groundwork that the diaspora Indians are carrying out by just being in other countries later official partnerships between either businesses or governments can build upon these connections rather than having to create these from scratch. PM Modi presents this interpretation of the Indian diaspora in an address to Indians living in the Philippines in Manila. According to his website, the Indian PM put special emphasis on the way the diaspora is nurturing a mutual heritage through the Ramayana and the Buddha (Modi, 2017b). While I already mentioned this with regards to reiteration, there is a clear difference here: The connections between India and the other countries was reiterated while the underlying process that laid the foundation for these connections has been reinterpreted by the current BJP government.

But the reinterpretation of what the diaspora represents is not limited to doing the leg work for future cultural connections. In mid-2018 the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, more precisely the subdivision that is tasked with overseas Indian affairs, organized a panel on the "role of Indian Diaspora in Capacity Building for Affordable Solar Power". The panel was comprised of academics, innovators, industrialists, entrepreneurs and renowned experts from the Indian diaspora as well as India. The panellist were presenting their recommendations to PM Modi who said he would reference these recommendations in future policy making (narendramodi.in, 2018). This is just one example on how the diaspora is used in more direct ways to aid economic development. That this shift does not constitute an isolated case can be derived from the fact that the expertise that overseas Indians bring to India is also referenced in the news media. Prerna Malhotra wrote about this shift in an article for *news18.com*. In the article the author, while not refering to a particular speech, wrote that Modi called on diaspora Indians to take part in 'Make in India' and other start up programmes and FDI should mean "first develop India" (Malhotra, 2019). But the importance of the diaspora is not only stressed in relation to new development as it also helps with disaster relief as S. Irudaya Rajan, chair professor with the Ministry of External Affairs Research Unit, wrote in an article for *The Hindu*. In the wake of the 2018 Kerala flood, according to *The Hindu*, the diaspora was mobilized and could source a significant amount that helped rebuilding some of the most devastated regions (Rajan, 2019).

The approach to the Indian diaspora is also reflected in the approach to India's colonial past. India's colonial past is now reinterpreted as the facilitator of connections between India and other former colonies. This is understandable as the horrors that are inherent to colonialism do not make for a great sales pitch especially on the international stage. However, appealing to a shared aspect in the realm of national identity does appeal to the shared historical experiences that can be the base for deeper involvement. In an address to the Ugandan Parliament PM Modi references the connection between Africa and India that is based on the shared experiences of former colonialized nations. The Indian PM references the Bandung conference and Afro-Asian solidarity. Right after these statements Modi then states that the last seven decades of economic partnership between Uganda and India has been based on economic impulses as well as moral principles and emotional bonds (Modi, 2018b). While the connection between India and Uganda itself has been reiterated the underlying reason for this connection, namely colonialism, has been reinterpreted. Here colonialism is presented as a driver for cooperation between the colonized. That the colonial history of India is part of the national identity is observable in many different places. As Laura Dudley Jenkins wrote in her book on identity in India: "[c]olonial legacies shape contemporary identity politics" (2003, p. 11). Another example of how important the colonial era is for the Indian national identity is the way freedom fighters are celebrated in the country and they are also often mentioned by Modi during speeches on the international stage.

In the previously mentioned speech of Modi in front of the Ugandan parliament, the Indian PM mentions Gandhi multiple times (and not only his personal relationship with Africa). Just like with the perspective on the Indian diaspora the approach to India's colonial history is reinterpreted in a way that it changes from a process that inherently hinders economic development in the past to something that created the foundation for contemporary economic cooperation.

The importance of the national heroes that emerged during the independence struggle changes when they are mentioned for a domestic audience. While the existence of these freedom fighters is reiterated, the colonial context that created them is reinterpreted. In a speech in the Lok Sabha at the 75th anniversary of the 'Quit India Movement' the PM mentions the colonial time and the freedom struggle that ended in the light of a great unifier. According to the summery available in English on the Prime Minister's website, this movement was comprised of Indian's from all walks of life bounded together by the injustices that the subcontinent as whole faced by colonizers. This feeling of unity is needed again but the new evils that shall quit India are: corruption, illiteracy, barriers to women empowerment and poverty (narendramodi.in, 2017). These problems are not only social issues but also hinder further development. Therefore, by reinterpreting the colonial era through from a universal evil to a great unifier, the PM is mobilizing emotions that are connected to this period to promote social change that will further India's economic development. In the introduction to the speech Modi quotes Gandhi's clarion call of "Do or Die" (Ibid.). This radical approach to development and change can be seen as an appropriate response to the pressure that the modern world wide capitalist system is putting on any country. In this case, the struggle of independence can be reduced to the struggle for a better live for the individual. This is also what economic development promises. Hence, by reinterpreting the colonial time as time of individual struggle is aiding Modi's developmental goals.

The role of scheduled tribes (STs) and their role in economic development has been reinterpreted in recent years. While formerly STs were seen as a burden for economic development, in the sense that these groups needed assistance to develop from the central government. This tendency to see development of STs, often called indigenous peoples in other countries, as a burden is reflected on a world-wide scale as Kevin Macdonald concluded after a review of the developmental state of STs and indigenous people. The author points to the divergence between the developmental state of these groups and main group in a specific nation, Macdonald uses India as an example for a nation with a particularly pronounced difference between Indians and STs (Macdonald, 2012). In the same publication A group of researchers and consultants analyses the state of development of India's STs in more detail. The narrative that forms around STs is that these groups are lagging behind in terms of development (i.e. poverty reduction, health and education) (M. B. Das, Hall, Kapoor, & Nikitin, 2010).

This also means that these groups need further attention and assistance for further development for them just being able to catch up. This notion is also reinforced through the existence of multiple schemes in India that are targeting the development of STs. In the October 2018 instalment of Mann Ki Baat the Modi challenged this perception of STs. The Indian PM praised these groups for their approach to the environment and that this is something India as a whole can learn from (Modi, 2018c). In the same episode of Mann Ki Baat Modi also describes the tenacity of the STs in regards to the protection of their home areas. This, he links to the independence struggle and mentions the freedom fighters that identify as part of one of the STs. This also shows that the STs are part of the Indian national identity. In a publication about the societal role of STs in India Virginius XaXa described the perception of STs by the central government. The author concludes that while the resources that can be found in the areas different STs are highly valued, the tribes themselves are omitted from the development benefits that the exploitation of natural resources can facilitate (Xaxa, 2005). This shows that the Modi government, at least on the symbolic level, changed their approach to the STs and reinterpreted them from only being the people who inhabit valuable geographies to cultural communities that can influence the national culture in regards to environmental protection. Environmental protection is nowadays often seen as a benefitting factor for growth. On the one hand, a well-protected environment can attract eco tourists, a group that India is specifically targeting, as mentioned in a previous chapter. On the other hand, as a group of researchers showed using Bhutan as a case study, environmental protection (i.e. forest protection) can facilitate regional trade and aid economic development.

In sum, reinterpretation in the Indian contexts appears to focus on different aspects of the Indian national identity depending on the intended audience and is strongly connected to reiteration. On the international stage, who diaspora Indians are part of, the colonial history of India is reinterpreted in a way that stressed the connection between the different former colonies under the same colonial overlord. For a domestic audience the colonial period is reinterpreted as a time of group struggle that bond Indians from all walks of life together. Furthermore, the connection between reinterpretation and reiteration cannot be denied. In the cases that I have analysed in this chapter, a specific mode became apparent: While the connection between India and other countries are reiterated the underlying mechanisms that facilitated these connections have been reinterpreted.

Repudiation

Repudiation, according to Bond et. al. refers to omitting, specific parts of the national identity as they are perceived to be incompatible with the contemporary economic development goals. These aspects, either historical or contemporary, cannot be reinterpreted in a way that they would be aiding or at least be largely neutral in respect to economic development. Bond et. al. are using the example of

what is considered the entrepreneurial deficit in Scotland and the role of the Welsh language in Wales (Bond et al., 2003, pp. 385-387).

The global economic system during the Indian independence struggle, and more specifically at the end of the independence struggle (early to mid-20th century) was very different to the contemporary one. In particular, the dominance of some specific western European countries was arguably more pronounced as it is today. Furthermore, the rift between developed countries and developing countries was even larger than today. Therefore, the mid-19th century was a time of various ideas regarding the best way to achieve economic progress. As Bipan Chandra argued in his book on post-independence India, the independence struggle was deeply connected to free India from the underdevelopment that was caused by the colonial era (Chandra, 2000). Arguably, the best-known Indian freedom fighter is Gandhi. This statement is supported by the argument in Majeed's book that understands Gandhi as one of the three main personalities influencing Indian national identity (together with Nehru and Iqbal) (Majeed, 2007). Gandhi did not favour the same form of economic development as for example Nehru. Ishii wrote about Gandhi's development model, which rejected both capitalism and Marxism, and furthermore it aimed for self-reliance outside of the modern globalized world economy (Ishii, 2001). This form of economic development is in stark opposition to the economic plan that was presented and then followed by India's first Pm Nehru. As described by Balakrishnan, Nehru's approach to develop the Indian economy after independence focused on the creating of a heavy industry that was supported by a strong (arguably even more important) agricultural sector. Furthermore, the author argues, that while Nehru did support and implemented a planned economy he still promoted the idea of integrating India to some extend into the international economy (Balakrishnan, 2007). In the end both approached to economic development, Gandhi's anti-modernism and Nehru's planned economy would be considered radical and go against the discourse on economic growth in the 21st century.

Therefore is not surprising that references to the two competing models for economic development are missing from Modi's speeches. Modi also known as "Mr Development" can hardly argue for a development that is entirely based on, either the anti-modern approach by Gandhi or the planned economy that Nehru promoted. However as these two figures still play an important role as freedom fighters in the Indian national identity, their works are still held in high respect. Nevertheless, their specific ideas about how to approach the economy have been repudiated. In the August 2019 edition of Mann Ki Baat PM Modi is paying tribute to the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. In his speech, the PM frames Gandhi's life from the perspective of servitude. In this sense, Modi appeals to all Indians to offer their services to others:

> This would be the real way of paying true tributes to Mahatma Gandhi, the Karyanjali,
> the offering of deeds. Opportunities like these come often & we get associated with
> them. But should Gandhi 150 just come & go; will it be acceptable to us? No dear
> countrymen. All of us should introspect, dwell upon it, discuss it, bring it into collective
> discourse. Joining hands with more people of the society, from all strata, from all age
> groups; people from villages, cities, men, women, we should ask ourselves (Modi,
> 2018d).

In this part of his speech, the PM is clearly reiterating some aspects of Gandhi's live and by doing so is promoting social cohesion. There is evidence that social cohesion attracts investment(Stanley & Smeltzer, 2003). Therefore, by reiterating Gandhi's appeal towards service for others Modi is at least on the surface promoting a more coherent understanding of Indian society. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that suggest that the an increase in voluntary work is associated with "less tolerance of social deviance" and "only a small proportion of voluntary activity appears to create bridging social networks" (Woolley, 2003, p. 178). While this might be interpreted as an appeal towards a connected society it also demonstrates the clear acceptance of the capitalist system. As this from of voluntarism is clearly meant as an exception of the norm, it shows that for-profit thinking in the realm of services is still the most important. The September 2016 edition of Mann Ki Baat Modi also interpreted Gandhi's economic strategy as helping the poor while repudiating what form the economy should take to reach this goal (Modi, 2016c). This ideal was reiterated in the next episode as well. This time it was even introduced with the words "Mahatma Gandhi is our guide forever" (Modi, 2016b). In this case, the reiteration of Modi's understanding of the importance of Gandhian development has to be understood as a form of repudiation. Hence, while Modi is invoking the personality of Gandhi, he is first and foremost doing that was a reiteration of a historical figure he wants to be associated with even if the content does not match or like it was done in this case is completely missing.

While Gandhi and an adherence to Gandhian ideas is mentioned in Modi's speeches abroad and at home Nehru takes a different role. Nehru, at least for a domestic audience, is mentioned multiple times by the prime minister, however Nehru is not mentioned so much in connection to the freedom struggle of India or a knowledge producer but rather as the first in a line of many Congress politicians. In this sense, the ideas of the first Indian prime minster are repudiated from Modi's discourse on economic development. This becomes quite apparent in an interview that Modi gave to the Hindustan Times and was published on his personal web side:

> Since [former prime minister Jawaharlal] Nehru's time, the Congress has claimed
> poverty eradication is their goal. However, the Congress party has paid lip service to

> it — Nehru used the slogan, then Indira Gandhi used it, Rajiv Gandhi spoke about it,
> Sonia Gandhi too said poverty eradication is their goal and now, her son too speaks
> about poverty eradication. For five generations, the Congress has used this slogan
> (Modi, 2019b).

In another interview, the PM gave to the right-wing orientated news caster *Republic Bharat ,*Modi reiterated this view and added: "These are the people who have ruled for 55 years. It has been only them ruling for 55 years. Despite that, their track record shows that the poor have become poorer" [emphasis changed by author] (Modi, 2019a). Here Modi is constructing himself as a break with previous traditions. He clearly repudiates Nehru and his ideals from the current discourse on economic development. That this is not a new position for the Indian PM has been documented by William Gould (2018, p. 81), according to whom Modi made the same statements at an rally in Uttar Pradesh in 2014. By actually engaging with the topic of Nehru and his legacy, Modi is recognizing that Nehru was a major part of Indian history, however that these ideas are not part of the current economic development discourse.

The historical connection between India and other countries or regions has been a staple of Modi's approach to foster international relations. That the way these historical connections are invoked do change depending on the audience. As I have shown in the previous chapters this might take the form of reiteration of the historical ties, for example in the India-Africa relationship, or a reinterpretation of a shared colonial history. Still not all connections to other countries and their opposition to colonialism are equal. The case of Subhas Chandra Bose exemplifies this. While Modi celebrates the Indian freedom fighter at home (narendramodi.in, 2020), he is more careful to mention the history of Bose abroad. Bose tried to mobilize help from the axis powers before the Second World War even though he was opposed to the ideology of ultranationalist Japan and Nazi Germany in the struggle for Indian independence (Werth, 1996, p. 102). While the context and means of Bose to gain independence are repudiated the existence of the person is used to reiterate connections between India and other non-western countries. This is shown in the meeting between Modi and Sauchiro Misumi, an associate of Bose. The meeting is used to reiterate the importance of the connection between Japan and India both as non-western countries, while mentioning that Nehru's approach was to western-centric (Sharma, 2015). In Germany on the other hand, Modi mentions Bose only when talking directly to his grandnephew, who is now head of the Indo-German Association (EconomicTimes, 2015). Here it is important to mention that is clearly shows how the personality of Bose is used in different ways for different audiences. While in Japan Bose represents an anti-western freedom fighter, who is prove that the relationship between India and Japan has always been strong (under not Congress politicians) and the connection to Japan's ultranationalism of the early 20th

century is repudiated. As the discourse on WWII in Germany is more likely to criticise anything related to the state apparatus of Nazi Germany (Lind, 2009) Modi did not mention Bose in Germany at all towards German officials. Omitting such connection can result in a strong backlash in Germany as Coca Cola experienced when the company tried to celebrate the 70s anniversary of Fanta (Campbell, 2015). Hence, Modi is aware to what audience he is talking to and understands not only what to say but what might even be more important that he also understands what not to say in front of an international audience.

The way that the life of important personalities is remembers will never be a perfect representation of history. With this in mind, it is only natural that some parts of their lives will be repudiated while others are exaggerated. At the same time history and the people who will be remembered in history books (and on bank notes) do not exist in a vacuum. In addition, the approach to the same history might differ regarding time and space. Therefore, one must be careful what to invoke when and where. Modi showed an understanding of this in the way he repudiates parts of the lives and works of some of India's most famous freedom fighters. For the domestic audience Modi uses the names of the freedom fighters to "rally around the flag" while repudiating some parts of their works that would be in direct opposition to his development agenda. On the international stage, Modi is using the image of Bose to either promote international cooperation with Japan while not mentioning Bose at all to German officials. That shows that by understanding how one's own history, and the people who made this happen, is perceived in other countries can be vital importance to invoke the image of continuous cooperation.

Conclusion

Continuity was a recurring concept throughout this thesis. Continuity represents security and stability, both of these concepts aid economic development. By showing that the both the nationalism as well as the economic development plan that the BJP under Modi is promoting are the continuation of (positive) historical developments the Indian PM is promoting his narrative on economic development. By reiterating, recapturing, reinterpreting and repudiating historical aspects of history PM Modi is able to customize Indian nationalism in a way that it fits not only his specific goal, promoting economic development, but also tailor it in a way that it is appealing to whatever audience he is speaking to. By appealing to specific sensitivities of different groups Modi is promoting economic development. This might take the form of constructing Indianess in a way that includes people who are according to some approaches to nationalism not actually part of the nation, namely the Indian diaspora, or using a specific narrative on a national hero that emphasises connection over more differentiated approaches to their personality. A major difference in the way Modi approaches a

domestic audience compared to an international one is the role of the colonial legacy in India. On the international stage the colonial time is reinterpreted in a way that it emphasises the connections that colonialism facilitated without speaking about the horrors that are connected to it. On the national stage however, colonialism is closer connected to the independent struggle while omitting the previously mentioned perspective. The Indian diaspora plays is situated between these two camps. As a group that definitely has emotional connections to the Indian independence struggle but at the same time is not residing in India anymore they bridge the gap between the domestic and the foreign. Modi, when speaking to overseas Indians, mentioned them in a narrative that started with the freedom fighters who went abroad to fight international imperialism and ends with a plea for investment in India, both ways to promote the country. Lastly, by constructing a narrative that promotes a continuity of Indian history from the independence struggle to the current BJP rule that was broken by the dominance of Congress over the last decades Modi is legitimizing his power position in historical terms. All this shows how nationalism and national identity are extremely fluid concepts that can be moulded in a way to aid any specific goal.

By showing how Indian nationalism can be changed by the PM I hope to emphasize the approach to nationalism as a tool. As arguably the one with the most discursive power on the topic, Modi shows in his appearances that he will not change history to fit his goals but he will apply a rather selective approach to it. This situates this thesis within the literature on national branding. Modi is promoting different brands of nationalism while often doing so in a banal way. Using the framework of Bond et al. (2003) in a post-colonial setting with an emphasis on history I hoped to aid to the generality of the framework and applicability. By including a former colonial nation the research was able to show how historical aspects of the national identity are changed depending on the audience in an obvious way. Further research should investigate potential differences in the way history in portrayed in difference regions within India. This should add to the thesis at hand by adding to the foreign-diaspora-national model employed here. In addition, this thesis also let questions regarding other levels of government and their approach to history unanswered. Finally, a larger scope in relation to time would aid the arguments made in this thesis. For once as this thesis assumes a difference between BJP and Congress politics a comparison between the two parties' approaches to history would show how a regime change effects history. Lastly, there are other matters of history that have not been addressed in this thesis, for example how is history mobilized by Modi when it is not related to economic development? In the realm of post-colonial studies other questions arise, for example how are different modern nations treating their colonial past in comparison and what are the effects of that.

If the overall questions of the academic study of nationalism is "why is nationalism?", the arguments of this thesis would answer this question by referring to James Carville's famous statement "The

economy, stupid". Even if one does not agree with the nation as an economic structure, nationalism always seems to serve the ones who are able to define it. This might be American creoles fighting for independence over 200 years ago or the Indian PM promoting FDI in 2020. Hence, the most important word in Carville's statement is not economy but stupid. In a time when the economy is the most important issue it is the economy but another time it might change to "independence, stupid" or "Hindutva, stupid".

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