

Conflict Resolution Models In Muslim-Hindu Relations In India: An Analysis Of The Modi Administration's Policies (2014-2019)

*Febrian Arif Pratama

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

*Email: febrianarifpratama07@gmail.com

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Abstract

India, as a country with high ethnic and religious diversity, faces prolonged tensions between its two largest communities, Hindus and Muslims. This conflict is influenced by the British colonial legacy that created deep social and political divisions. After independence, even though India adopted a secular ideology, inter-religious tensions continued, especially after Narendra Modi took office as Prime Minister in 2014. Under his leadership, policies that support Hindu identity, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), among others, have fueled greater tensions between Hindus and Muslims. This article aims to analyze the steps taken by Modi in managing the conflict, focusing on the conflict resolution model he applied. Using a qualitative approach through literature study, this research adopts Barry R. Posen's Security Dilemma theory and Paul Brass's Elite Manipulation theory. The results of the study show that policies that prioritize Hindu identity have actually worsened social polarization and strengthened sectarian tensions, thwarting efforts at inclusive social reconciliation. This article suggests the need for a more equitable and inclusive policy approach in order to achieve sustainable reconciliation in India.

Keywords: Hindu-Muslim conflict; Narendra Modi's policies; conflict resolution.

Abstrak

India sebagai negara dengan keragaman etnis dan agama yang tinggi, menghadapi ketegangan yang berkepanjangan antara dua komunitas terbesar, Hindu dan Muslim. Konflik ini dipengaruhi oleh warisan kolonial Inggris yang menciptakan pemisahan strata sosial dan politik yang mendalam. Setelah kemerdekaan, meskipun India mengadopsi ideologi sekuler, ketegangan antaragama tetap berlangsung, terutama setelah Narendra Modi menjabat sebagai Perdana Menteri pada 2014. Di bawah kepemimpinannya, kebijakan-kebijakan yang mendukung identitas Hindu, seperti Undang-Undang Amandemen Kewarganegaraan (CAA) dan National Register of Citizens (NRC), dan lainnya, memicu ketegangan yang lebih besar antara Hindu dan Muslim. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis langkah-langkah yang diambil oleh Modi dalam mengelola konflik tersebut, dengan fokus pada model resolusi konflik yang diterapkannya. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka, penelitian ini mengadopsi teori Dilema Keamanan oleh Barry R. Posen dan teori Manipulasi Elit oleh Paul Brass. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan yang lebih mengutamakan identitas Hindu malah memperburuk polarisasi sosial dan memperkuat ketegangan sektarian, menggagalkan upaya rekonsiliasi sosial yang inklusif. Artikel ini menyarankan perlunya pendekatan kebijakan yang lebih adil dan inklusif guna mencapai rekonsiliasi yang berkelanjutan di India.

Kata Kunci: Konflik Hindu-Muslim; Kebijakan Narendra Modi; Resolusi Konflik.



INTRODUCTION

India is a country with a very diverse population, and it has long experienced prolonged tensions between its two largest communities, namely Hindus and Muslims. This centuries-old religious conflict reflects not only differences in belief, but also deep social, political, and cultural inequalities. These tensions existed during the era of British colonialism in India and have continued into the post-independence era. After India's independence in 1947, the country chose to adopt an ideology of secularism that respects religious diversity. However, even though India ideologically recognizes the importance of pluralism, in reality, tensions between Hindus and Muslims continue, largely as a result of the legacy of British colonial policies that implemented a divide et impera strategy. These policies shaped a social structure that reinforced segregation and distrust between the two groups. (Belmekki, 2007)

Islam and Hinduism still had a good relationship before British colonialism entered India at that time. The beginning of the British colonial era was marked by the collapse of the Mughal Empire in 1858. (Fitrah et al., 2023) It was during this colonial era that India began to experience several significant changes in all aspects of its government. The Mughal Empire, which had brought India to its heyday, was deposed by the British, who changed many aspects of the Indian state. What happened was that India experienced a decline in terms of politics, cultural degradation, and traditional economy. Thus, all the exploitation carried out by the British had an impact on all aspects of India. The decline and destruction were also felt by the Muslim aristocracy, as the British took over their traditional role of power (Hardy, 1972). The British colonial era had a very influential impact on the current state of India. The result of this colonization was the birth of the division between India and Pakistan, which wanted to separate and create Muslim and Hindu territories.

Over time, these tensions have escalated, especially after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India in 2014. The Modi administration, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has promoted the ideology of Hindutva as the basis for state policy. Hindutva, which views Hinduism as the primary identity of the state, leads to policies that prioritize the interests of the Hindu community and marginalize the Muslim community. Several controversial policies that have been introduced, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), have further worsened relations between Hindus and Muslims in India and deepened sectarian tensions that have existed since colonial times. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024)

Policies that reinforce Hindu identity in the public sphere, such as the celebration of Hindu festivals and the strengthening of Hindu symbolism, have had a significant impact on the Muslim community, which feels increasingly marginalized. In an effort to strengthen unity and nationalism, the Modi government tends to ignore the importance of inclusivity and religious diversity, which should be the foundation of a secular state. These policies have sparked massive protests among Muslims who feel that they are being treated unfairly and discriminated against. This has exacerbated feelings of alienation among minorities and further deepened existing social polarization. (Jaffrelot, 2015)

This article analyzes the influence of the Modi administration (2014–2019) on conflict resolution models in Hindu–Muslim relations at the state policy level. The primary research questions directing this analysis are: first, how do significant policies implemented under Modi, including the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, and measures that favor Hindu identity, alter the security and citizenship status of Muslims;

and second, in what ways can these policies be understood, through Posen's security dilemma and Brass's elite manipulation theory, as mechanisms of conflict management that both reproduce and exploit inter-communal tensions. This study focuses exclusively on national-level policies and public narratives from Modi's first term, without aiming to offer a comprehensive social history of Hindu–Muslim conflict in India. This article seeks to contribute analytically to the study of state-led conflict resolution in deeply divided societies by integrating security dilemma theory with elite-manipulation approaches.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method to analyze the dynamics of conflict between the Hindu and Muslim communities in India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's term in office. The main focus of this study is to take a closer look at Modi's steps in handling the conflict, as well as to analyze the conflict resolution model he applied to the Muslim and Hindu conflict in India.

A qualitative, library-based design is appropriate because the primary objects of analysis are state policies, legal instruments, parliamentary debates, party documents, media discourses, and secondary academic interpretations, rather than observable interaction in a single local conflict site. The study therefore relies on close reading and interpretive analysis of texts that shape and reflect the state's approach to Hindu and Muslim relations under Modi's leadership.

Sources were selected purposively. Primary materials include constitutional amendments and acts (such as the CAA and legal provisions related to the NRC), government notifications, Supreme Court decisions, and official speeches and interviews by Narendra Modi and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) figures between 2014 and 2019. These documents are complemented by reports from international and domestic human-rights organisations, policy briefs, and datasets that specifically discuss the impact of these policies on religious minorities. Secondary sources consist of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and reputable media reports on Hindutva politics and Hindu–Muslim relations. Only sources that explicitly engage with Hindu–Muslim conflict dynamics or with the implementation and consequences of the above policies are included in the core sample.

The empirical material is analysed through a theory-driven, thematic reading. Concepts derived from Posen's security dilemma, such as threat perception, pre-emptive action, and spirals of insecurity, guide the coding of passages related to the state's justification of its policies and Muslim perceptions of those measures. Brass's theory of elite manipulation informs the identification of patterns of elite discourse, mobilisation strategies, and the instrumentalisation of communal narratives (for example, around "love jihad" and cow protection). By systematically relating textual evidence to these two theoretical lenses, the study seeks to move beyond description and to clarify how specific policy choices function as a particular model of state-led conflict resolution.

To analyze the conflict between Muslims and Hindus, the researcher intends to use at least two main theories to guide the analysis. The first is Barry R. Posen's (1993) theory of the security dilemma. According to him, concerns about future threats, especially those related to security, lead to an escalation of violence as a preventive or protective measure. Of course, in this conflict, there are measures that can be considered preventive actions. However, this theory helps to see further, how much of these preventive measures are actually being taken.

The next theory used by researchers is the Elite Manipulation theory. This theory was proposed by Paul in his work "The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India" (2004). He explains that violence between ethnic or religious groups can be triggered by the actions or rhetoric of political elites for their own benefit. Brass argues that political elites use violence or tension between groups as a tool to achieve political goals, such as mobilizing their voter base, diverting attention from other important issues, or strengthening their position in power. This approach emphasizes two main things, namely: first, Top-Down Mobilization. Conflicts are often triggered by elite groups who have the power to mobilize the masses. Political, religious, or social elites have a significant influence in shaping public opinion and encouraging collective action. In many cases, they incite the masses to act in ways that harm other groups, with the aim of strengthening their own power. This can occur through hate speech, the creation of common enemies, or the manipulation of narratives about external threats. Second, violence as a political tool. Violence or conflict between groups is often used by elites as a means to strengthen their political position. For example, by creating tension between groups, elites can divert public attention from other more pressing issues or strengthen their group identity to gain greater support in elections. They can claim to be the protectors of certain groups and, in turn, increase their political power by blaming other groups as threats to social or religious welfare.

There are several factors that influence Elite Manipulation; Political Interests: Elites use tensions between groups to secure political support or maintain power; Mass Mobilization: Elites can exploit hatred or fear of other groups to mobilize the masses into collective action; Hate Rhetoric: The spread of narratives that incite or portray certain groups as threats can trigger conflict.

In this article Posen's security dilemma is employed to illuminate how state policies that are presented as defensive measures against terrorism, secessionism, or demographic "imbalance" can be interpreted by Muslim communities as existential threats, thereby deepening rather than reducing mutual insecurity. Brass's elite manipulation framework is used to analyse how political elites and allied organisations construct and disseminate communal narratives, for instance around "love jihad", cow protection, or the alleged disloyalty of Muslims, in ways that convert diffuse anxieties into organised political support. Together, these two perspectives provide the analytical scaffolding for examining the Modi government's conflict resolution model: they allow us to trace how legal and policy instruments, public rhetoric, and patterns of mobilisation interact to both manage and perpetuate Hindu-Muslim conflict.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Colonial Legacy and Its Impact on Muslim-Hindu Relations in India

India is one of the countries that was colonized by Britain. The British colonial legacy in India has had a profound impact that continues to influence relations between Hindu and Muslim communities, not only in the realm of education, but also in political, social, and governmental aspects. (Shukla, 1983) During the colonial period, the British implemented a divide et impera (divide and rule) policy, which aimed to weaken the potential for resistance by exploiting differences in religion, culture, and caste. This system created two separate groups, with Hindus as the majority and Muslims as the minority, each living in separate spaces and often separated administratively and socially. (Sandhu, 2014) This policy not only strained interfaith relations but also shaped a social structure that exacerbated existing tensions. This strategy was exacerbated by the actions of Christian missionaries, who pressured the British government to intervene in Indian

society, leading to reforms that were often viewed negatively by the indigenous population. Such interventions were interpreted as attempts to undermine traditional socio-cultural practices, further straining Hindu-Muslim relations. (Belmekki, 2007)

One of the most influential colonial policies was the separation of administration and government, which created a sharp dividing line between the Hindu and Muslim communities. During colonial rule, the British administered India through a system of "Paramountcy Policy" that allowed for the colonial administration of each community based on religion and caste. This system also affirmed that the British had superiority over everything owned by the natives. (Mukherjee, 1974) In addition, in many regions, even large cities such as Delhi and Lucknow, Hindus and Muslims were often separated in matters of government and administration. (Munoz, 2006) This system gave rise to suspicion and distrust between the two groups, which were structurally separated by administrative policies created by the colonials. Important decisions regarding resource distribution, official appointments, and policy-making often favored one group over the other, exacerbating the sense of injustice rooted in Indian society. And all of this was regulated by the British colonials.

In addition, British colonial policies in India caused social differences in access to education, employment, and public facilities. (Wankhede, 2010) Although Hindus and Muslims continued to share public spaces under British rule, they did not have equal opportunities in terms of resources or better education. Meanwhile, most Hindu communities that were closer to colonial power received more benefits. Often, Muslim communities became marginalized in terms of access to education and political power. This is evidenced by the low average literacy rate among Muslims, especially in urban communities and among women. (Robinson, 2016) The religiously regulated education system caused the Muslim community to become marginalized, as they considered the Muslim community to be damaging to the uniqueness of Indian culture. (Oesterheld, 2004)

The British colonial legacy in post-independence Indian governance is also evident in the ongoing religious tensions. These ongoing tensions undoubtedly stem from what the British colonial government did to the Indian system of governance. This is likely a complex issue. One of the most significant influences was the "Divide and Rule Policy" system, which caused society to create contrasting dividing lines between castes and religions. The impact of this system after Indian independence was recorded in the "Great Divide of 1947" event. This event was the breakup and division of India into a Muslim state (Pakistan) and a Hindu state. (Kurup, 1999) Although India gained independence in 1947 and adopted a secular ideology that recognized diversity as part of its national identity, the policies and trauma left behind by colonialism continued to exacerbate social tensions. Although India is officially recognized as a secular state, in practice, the country is still overshadowed by policies that widen the gap between the Hindu and Muslim communities. This is certainly the result of the social segregation policies inherited from the colonial government.

During Narendra Modi's administration, this legacy resurfaced when Modi became Prime Minister of India in 2014. This tension can be seen through policies that further worsen relations between Hindus and Muslims. Under Modi's leadership, Hindutva (Hindu nationalism) identity has been elevated as the main ideology driving government policy. (Bhatt, 2019) With the use of this ideology, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) became an influential part of Modi's administration. The BJP is a right-wing or hardline Hindu party in India. They are the ones who continue to promote the Hindutva ideology.

In this case, many policies were then made and revised in accordance with the pattern of the Hindutva ideology. These policies are the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The purpose of these policies is to indirectly change the definition of Indian citizenship in a way that benefits the Hindu community and harms Muslims, which is considered by many to be a form of discrimination against the Muslim minority. These policies demonstrate an imbalance in the treatment of the Hindu and Muslim communities, exacerbating feelings of injustice that have existed since colonial times. (Febrian Arif Pratama, 2025)

In addition, policies that reinforce Hindu identity in the public sphere, such as strengthening Hindu symbolism and affirming Hindu celebrations, such as Vijayadashami, create greater tension with the Muslim community. Although the government's intention may be to strengthen unity and national pride among the Hindu majority, these policies actually further alienate Muslims from the public sphere, creating feelings of marginalization and increasing their distrust of the state. (Bhatt, 2019) As a result, even though India is supposed to be a secular country that upholds diversity, these policies have actually worsened the sectarian tensions inherited from the colonial era.

Overall, the colonial legacy in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations in India lies not only in the social segregation or administrative arrangements imposed by the British, but also in the formation of separate religious identities that persist to this day. Colonial influence on education, governance, and social culture policies has created structures that facilitate inequality and inter-religious tensions. In the context of Modi's administration, policies that prioritize Hindu identity have actually exacerbated religious tensions, creating social divisions that are difficult to heal. Therefore, in order to achieve true social reconciliation, a more inclusive policy is needed, one that is able to recognize and respect the religious and cultural diversity that exists in India.

Borrowing Gramsci's view of hegemony, India has been affected by colonial hegemony. This can be seen in how the British colonists used the existing culture in India to dominate. This hegemony became a , a primary tool to convince the Indian people that the ideas and values brought by the British were the best and should be followed. This can be seen from the lack of resistance from the Indian natives in the division of the system and the grouping of Indian society based on caste and religion. It was as if the British colonialists had superiority and truth on their side.

These colonial strategies did not simply generate episodic tensions; they institutionalised categorical distinctions between "majority" and "minority" communities and normalised the framing of Muslims as a potentially disloyal population. In the contemporary period, this legacy provides the structural background for both the security dilemma – whereby state actors can plausibly invoke the spectre of internal threats – and for elite manipulation, insofar as political entrepreneurs can mobilise and reinterpret these inherited categories for partisan purposes.

Modi's Government Policies and Their Impact on Muslim Minorities

Since Narendra Modi took office as Prime Minister of India in 2014, many things have changed, especially in terms of economics and politics. The Indian government system has been adapted to a new philosophy of governance, combining neo-liberalism, global capitalism, and cohesive triad development. (Chakrabarti & Dhar, 2013) This triad concept encourages the government system to focus on development and the creation of new economic movements. This then influences political reforms that encourage resilience in global capitalism. With the strong support of the Hindutva ideology, it is very likely that this development will experience rapid escalation. Modi's name is well

known and strongly associated with the Hindutva ideology. Before he became Prime Minister of India, he led Gujarat. His administration was notorious for the anti-Muslim riots in 2002, which were allegedly the result of Hindu nationalism-based ideology. (Jaffrelot, 2015)

The development of Hindutva ideology has been massive, and has been very well received by India's Hindu community. Under Modi's leadership, he changed the fundamental basis of the Indian state from the pluralistic secularism inherited from PM Nehruvian to majoritarian nationalism. This was due to the influence of the Hindutva ideology itself. (Febrian Arif Pratama, 2025) Modi also emphasized in his speech, "that Hinduism is a way of life, not a religion." (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) This ideology has become increasingly entrenched, as evidenced by a 2019 public survey conducted by K. Alan Kronstadt. He wrote in a Congressional Research Service report titled "India: Religious Freedom Issues" that "nearly two-thirds of Hindus believe that 'being Hindu is essential to being a true Indian.'" (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) Of course, this narrative leads to an exclusive attitude in maintaining identity, as a result of the deep-rooted Hindutva ideology. What is interesting about this ideology is that it targets the lower castes to become supporters. (Joel Lee, 2024)

Under Modi's administration, several policies have been implemented. The controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, which facilitates naturalization for non-Muslim refugees from neighboring countries, effectively marginalizes Muslims as an entity deemed unworthy of occupying India as their Hindu Holy Land. (Human Rights Watch., 2020) This policy is considered highly controversial by non-Hindus, especially Muslims. In 2015 and 2016, the Modi government and the BJP issued a notice that Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis (Zoroastrians), and Christians who came to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Afghanistan before 2015 would be exempt from laws prohibiting citizenship for illegal immigrants. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 confirmed this exemption, allowing immigrants from six religions in three countries to obtain citizenship, while Muslims were excluded. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) Of course, in this case, the big question is why Muslims are excluded, as if this law was made to remove Muslims from India.

In addition to the amendment policy, the Modi administration also saw the emergence of the Ram Temple movement. This movement emerged in 2019, when the Supreme Court ruled that Hindus could use the site of the Babri Mosque, which had been destroyed by Hindu activists in 1992. The mosque was destroyed because the location was believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. At that time, Modi was present to lead the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the "Ram Mandir," which is now a large Hindu temple. The ceremony was broadcast on national television and celebrated by millions of Hindus across the country. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) Critics criticized Modi's support for the groundbreaking ceremony, saying that Modi wanted to tell the Hindu minority that Hinduism was the supreme religion in India. Critics argued that Modi's move would trigger a new wave of attacks against religious minorities in India.

Furthermore, there has been the emergence of militant regional separatist movements in Kashmir and Jammu. Pakistan and India are disputing ownership of these two regions. Both India and Pakistan officially claim the entire territory of the former sultanate of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), with India controlling about two-thirds of the territory, including the fertile and predominantly Muslim Valley region. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) In the Jammu and Kashmir issue, India revoked Article 370 Section 35A, which sparked demonstrations. With the revocation of this article, India no longer allows

non-Jammu and Kashmir residents to purchase property in the state. Additionally, the rise in terrorist attacks disguised as separatist movements has caused significant public concern.

Although some of these policies and systems are capitalist systems that include economic dynamism, this does not rule out the possibility that they contribute to the marginalization and restriction of Muslims in India. The Sachar Committee report highlights the socioeconomic disparities faced by Muslims in India. The report reveals that Muslims in India are underrepresented in education and economic opportunities due to Modi's poor political system, which seems to marginalize Muslims (Unni, 2008). It is this construct that builds a powerful instrument in the attack on Indian citizens who identify as Muslim.

In addition to economic and political policies, the education policy issued by the Narendra Modi administration focuses on strengthening the quality of education that emphasizes a strong Hindu identity. One of the clearest examples of this policy is the change in the education curriculum, which increasingly prioritizes a Hindu nationalist perspective. Hindu nationalists are pursuing a major revision of India's historical narrative. This is reflected in a project to rewrite Indian history by emphasizing the glory and authenticity of Hindu achievements and minimizing the contributions of non-Hindus in history. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) In this context, history lessons often highlight Hindu contributions to the formation of modern India, while topics related to Islam tend to be marginalized or even ignored. The history of India taught to students more often describes Hindu kingdoms and important Hindu figures, while important periods in history that were dominated by Muslim rulers, such as the Mughal era, are often downplayed or ignored. This Hindu nationalist-oriented education curriculum not only undermines a more balanced understanding of history, but can also exacerbate religious tensions between Hindus and Muslims. When these two groups are taught vastly different histories, it reinforces feelings of alienation and inter-religious suspicion. For example, teaching history that emphasizes the role of Hindu figures in the formation of India as a nation can lead to an exclusive view, in which Muslims are positioned as having no significant contribution to the formation of India's national identity. This has an impact on the perceptions of the younger generation, who begin to see Islam as a "foreign religion" or an obstacle to building a nation based on Hindu identity. (Jaffrelot, 2017)

On the other hand, policies that reinforce Hindu identity in the public sphere, such as strengthening Hindu symbolism and affirming Hindu celebrations, such as Vijayadashami, create greater tension with the Muslim community. (Bhatt, 2019) Although the government's intention may be to strengthen unity and national pride among the Hindu majority, these policies have in fact further alienated Muslims from the public sphere, creating feelings of marginalization and increasing their distrust of the state. Furthermore, these policies have exacerbated existing polarization, as the Muslim community feels that these policies not only ignore them, but also close off spaces for them to freely express their religious identity in the public sphere.

Beyond formal policy instruments, the Modi government and the BJP have helped to consolidate a discursive environment that marginalises Muslims through the circulation of specific accusatory narratives. (Febrian Arif Pratama, 2025) One prominent example is the "love jihad" trope, which alleges that Muslim men strategically marry Hindu women in order to convert them to Islam. (Sarkar, 2018) Although empirical studies have repeatedly failed to substantiate these claims, the narrative has been amplified by pro-government media outlets and Hindu nationalist organisations and has circulated widely

as a national concern. Read through Brass's concept of elite manipulation, "love jihad" functions as an elite-constructed threat narrative that reinterprets ordinary interfaith relationships as organised aggression, thereby legitimising social surveillance and sporadic vigilante violence against Muslim men and interfaith couples.

A second, closely related narrative centres on cow protection and the prohibition of cow slaughter. Legal and extra-legal campaigns against cow slaughter disproportionately target Muslims, as well as Christians and Dalit communities, who are more likely to work in cattle-related occupations or consume beef. The rise of "cow vigilantism" since 2014 illustrates how elite discourse and legal changes interact, state-level restrictions and Hindu nationalist rhetoric about the sacredness of cows have provided moral and sometimes legal cover for mobs to attack those suspected of transporting or slaughtering cattle. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) From a security-dilemma perspective, such campaigns are justified by their proponents as protecting Hindu religious identity, but for minorities they reinforce the sense that the state and dominant community are willing to use both law and violence to police their everyday practices. (K. Alan Kronstadt, 2024) Together, these narratives show how elite-driven frames can convert abstract anxieties about religious identity into concrete practices of exclusion and coercion.

These policies and narratives have become a pattern or instrument in targeting minority communities to force them to leave India. Education should be a tool for social reconciliation, but existing education policies have actually exacerbated divisions between Hindu and Muslim communities. When the education curriculum leans toward Hindu nationalism, it leads to the formation of sectarian identities that reinforce exclusivism. In terms of governance and lawmaking, which should be a refuge for the people of the country, it has become a tool to marginalize and allow violence that disregards humanity. The policies taken by the Modi administration are motivated by the goal of strengthening national identity and making non-Hindus "foreigners."

Analysis of Narendra Modi's Conflict Resolution Model and Social Reconciliation Efforts in Indian Society

During his tenure as Prime Minister of India from 2014 to 2019, Narendra Modi faced various major challenges in managing social conflicts involving Hindu and Muslim groups. The Modi administration is known for its more assertive approach in addressing various issues, including policies that are often considered controversial in relation to the Muslim community, such as the Citizenship Act, which sparked massive protests. However, on the other hand, Modi also sought to promote a vision of a united and inclusive India. The conflict resolution model implemented by Modi, both at the policy level and in actions on the ground, had a significant impact on social reconciliation in India. Each decision and measure taken was often controversial and did not always achieve this goal.

When referring to historical events and Modi's policy patterns, it seems that he is putting a lot of pressure on minorities other than Hindus in India. This can be seen from the citizenship law, the revocation of Article 370 J&K, the historical renewal project, and controversial narratives that attempt to build a Hindu superiority identity. Modi's actions and decisions are part of his preventive measures to maintain India as "Hindu Holy Land."

Posen's notion of the security dilemma is useful for understanding how these policies are framed and perceived. The Modi government presents measures such as the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, the CAA and the NRC as necessary steps to protect national security, territorial integrity, and the rights of persecuted non-Muslim minorities. In this official narrative, the Indian state acts defensively in the face

of terrorism, secessionism, and demographic “infiltration”. Yet for many Muslims these same measures signal the possibility of denaturalisation, intensified surveillance, and the erosion of constitutional guarantees. Actions that are justified by state elites as precautionary thus produce heightened insecurity on the side of the minority, generating a classic security dilemma in which each actor interprets the other’s defensive moves as evidence of hostile intent.

The configuration of power that underpins this process corresponds to what Coleman describes as a top-down model reinforced by middle-out and bottom-up dynamics. At the top, Modi and BJP leaders design and authorise legal and policy changes and articulate national narratives about security and Hindu identity. In the middle, party cadres, affiliated organisations, and sympathetic media outlets translate these narratives into everyday discourse, institutional practices, and campaign strategies. At the bottom, segments of the Hindu majority respond to these cues through electoral support and, in some cases, participation in protests or vigilante actions. (Coleman, 2006) Seen through Brass’s lens, this multilayered structure enables elites to manipulate communal identities and grievances while maintaining plausible deniability, elites can disavow direct responsibility for violence even as their rhetoric and policies create the conditions that make it more likely.

Based on all the policy patterns and narratives that have been constructed as instruments, in the period between 2014 and 2019, the government led by Narendra Modi adopted several approaches in managing relations between Hindus and Muslims in India, which included policies that focused more on Hindu identity, as well as several initiatives that attempted to ease tensions. The conflict resolution model applied tended to focus on a top-down approach driven by political, economic, and social policies.

Under Modi's administration, he has strengthened identity politics as a measure to resolve existing conflicts. Modi and his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), promote the strengthening of Hindu identity as part of "Hindutva," which refers to Hindu cultural and religious identity as the basis of the state. Policies that support Hindutva are created and displayed in public spaces. These policies that support Hindu identity, such as promoting Hindu festivals and emphasizing the importance of Hindu symbols in public spaces, aim to exacerbate feelings of marginalization among Muslim communities.

In the mission to strengthen Hindu nationalism, various movements were created in various aspects to exert influence, one of which was in education and curriculum. The mission to strengthen Hindu nationalism has led to revisions of Hindu history that ignore the contributions or existence of the Muslim community in building the Indian state and emphasize the supremacy of Hindus in history. This has exacerbated religious polarization among the younger generation and has had an impact on the demarcation between majority and minority religions.

This model of conflict resolution certainly uses a top-down power pattern. It is dramatic in nature and relies on decisions made by the highest authorities as the holders of the highest authority. Of course, in this case, decisions often appear to be uncooperative and biased towards one side's interests, ignoring the voices of both the majority and the minority.

This is evident in the CAA and NRC policies: One of the most controversial policies introduced is the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The CAA grants citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from neighboring countries, which is considered a discriminatory measure against Muslims, as they were

not involved in the policy. The NRC implemented in Assam has led to the revocation of citizenship status for a large number of Muslims who cannot prove their citizenship.

This poses a challenge for the Muslim community. This policy has caused social uncertainty among the Muslim community, who feel threatened by the loss of their citizenship identity. This has exacerbated religious and social tensions between Hindus and Muslims, which are increasingly difficult to resolve through government policy.

In policies with a pattern of supremacy, Modi refers to the theory of Elite Manipulation. This theory, proposed by Paul in his work "The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India" (2004), states that violence between ethnic or religious groups can be triggered by the actions or rhetoric of political elites for their own benefit. Modi uses tensions between groups to gain political support or maintain power. This support is achieved by promoting the Hindutva ideology as a tool for mass mobilization. This success is marked by the widespread support of the majority of the population in carrying out various actions, even if it involves violence.

The weakness of Modi's resolution model is that it is not cooperative towards minorities and majorities. It tends not to consider anyone's interests except those of the elite supporters. However, its advantage in resolving conflicts is that it tends to be quick and fast. Narendra Modi's conflict resolution model prioritizes policies that strengthen Hindu identity and increase the dominance of the Hindu majority in various aspects of life, from education to social and religious policies. Although there are efforts to build social cohesion, this top-down approach is not effective enough in easing inter-religious tensions. On the contrary, discriminatory policies against Muslims, such as the CAA and NRC, exacerbate social and religious polarization and undermine the potential for more inclusive interfaith dialogue. In this case, the conflict resolution model applied by Modi tends to worsen tensions between Hindus and Muslims by prioritizing the interests of the majority, while neglecting integration and reconciliation between more pluralistic groups.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined how the Modi administration's approach to Hindu-Muslim relations between 2014 and 2019 constitutes a distinctive model of state-led conflict resolution and management. Rather than reducing tensions, policies that prioritise Hindutva, including the CAA and NRC, the abrogation of Article 370, curricular revisions, and the symbolic privileging of Hindu identity in public space, have deepened Muslim perceptions of exclusion and vulnerability. The state has sought to regulate conflict through law and security-oriented measures, but in doing so it has reconfigured the very terms of citizenship and belonging in ways that entrench communal boundaries.

Analytically, the article has shown that Posen's security dilemma and Brass's elite manipulation theory together provide a productive lens for understanding these developments. The security-dilemma framework helps to explain how measures framed by the state as defensive responses to terrorism, secessionism, or irregular migration can be interpreted by Muslims as existential threats, thereby producing spirals of mistrust and resistance. At the same time, elite manipulation captures the ways in which BJP leaders, Hindutva organisations, and aligned media outlets construct narratives such as "love jihad" and cow protection that mobilise the Hindu majority and legitimise forms of everyday and episodic violence. The combination of these dynamics reveals a conflict resolution model in which the state is not an external mediator but an interested party that manages, instrumentalises, and sometimes amplifies communal tensions.

From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that sustainable reconciliation in India requires a reorientation away from majoritarian conflict management toward

inclusive, rights-based approaches. First, legal and administrative frameworks such as the CAA and NRC need to be revised or implemented in ways that remove explicit and implicit religious discrimination and provide robust safeguards against arbitrary deprivation of citizenship. Second, independent institutions for monitoring and responding to communal violence, for example, a national or state level interfaith commission with investigative powers, should be strengthened to ensure accountability for both state and non state actors. Third, education policy and school curricula need to reflect India's multi religious history by including the contributions of Muslim and other minority communities, thereby reducing the scope for exclusivist national narratives. Finally, consistent enforcement of laws against hate speech and incitement, including when such rhetoric is produced by political and religious elites, is crucial to limiting the space for elite manipulation of communal identities. Only with such measures can the Indian state move from managing Hindu and Muslim conflict through majoritarian power to facilitating a more equitable and dialogical form of social reconciliation.

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