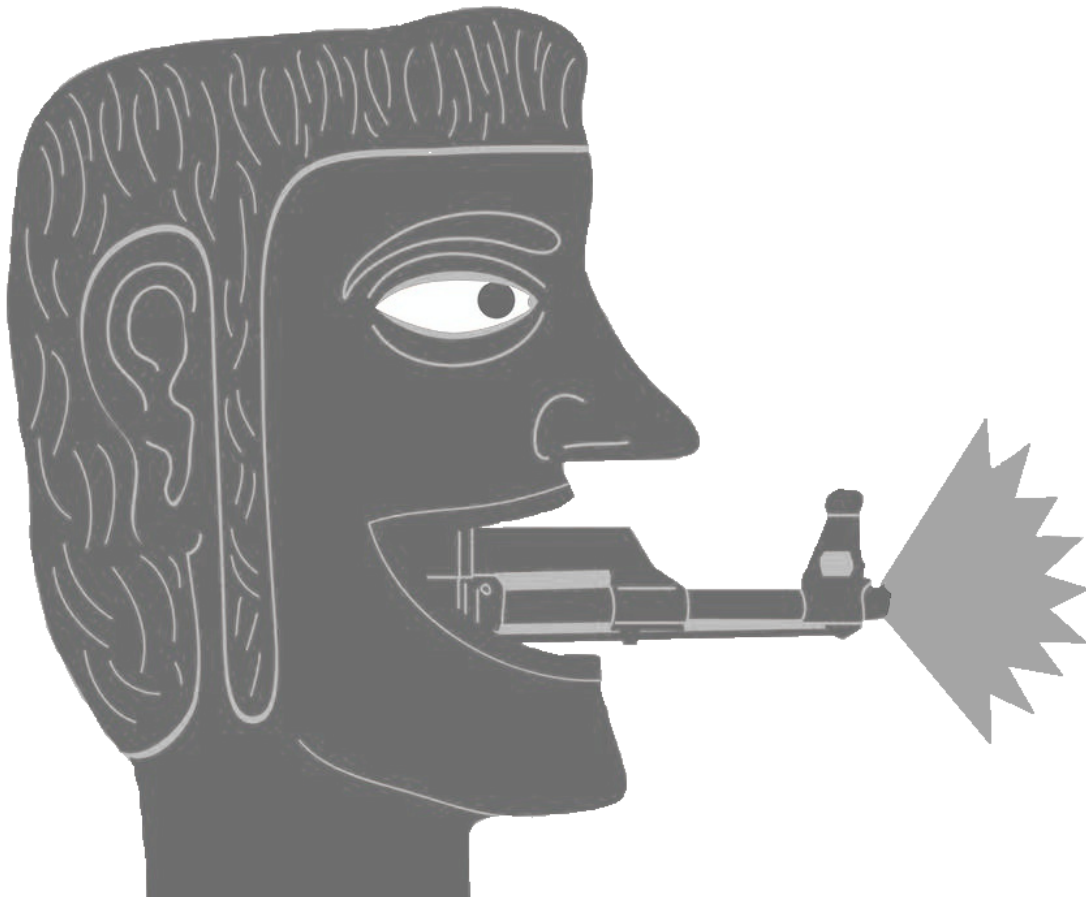


At War with Corona Jihadists

How threat Metaphors were used to demonise and construct violence against Muslims in India, during the COVID-19 Outbreak



Lia Kleuskens
6634974
Utrecht University
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The drawing on the cover of this thesis is titled “It’s a linguistic battlefield out there”. The artist is unknown. Published on <https://theconversation.com/the-warspeak-permeating-everyday-language-puts-us-all-in-the-trenches-121356>

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Abstract

In March 2020, when the world grappled with Covid-19, in India a story about reality surfaced. This story metaphorically constructed Muslims as weaponising Covid-19 in order to infect and kill the Hindu population. These stories, in turn, resulted in violent instances perpetrated against Muslims. The aim of this thesis is to uncover the relations between these emerging stories about reality in India that construct Muslims as the source of Covid-19, and the violent instances that were reported within the same time frame of March until July 2020. Grounded in the realm of social constructivism, this study argues that the meaning given to the Covid-19 outbreak and spread in India, was socially constructed.

This thesis, through the combination of a Critical Metaphor Analysis, and conducting semi-structured interviews, studied these representations of Muslims as the culprits of Covid-19, as well as related ideological performances. By substituting elements of emotions and performances to the analytical frame of ‘framing theory’, this thesis aims to move beyond the ‘cognitive bias’ of classical framing studies. As such, the study aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the complex dynamics of the framing practices central to this case study. The results analysis showed three dominant threat metaphors that construct Muslims as the culprits of Covid-19: Muslims as Covid-19, Muslims as the enemy in the war against Covid-19, and Covid-19 as a form of Islamic bioterrorism. I argue that these threat metaphors were as effective in demonising the Muslim community because they consisted of re-invented long-standing ideas and cultural narratives. Through this process of re-invention, Hindu nationalist parties were able to merge the long-standing emotions related to historical frames, with the newfound emotions arising during the Covid-19 outbreak.

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Introduction

The men who attacked the 22-year old Muslim Mehboob Ali in March 2020 in India, did so without mercy. After the group dragged him into the fields near his house in Harewali, in the district of Uttar Pradesh, they started hitting him with sticks and shoes. They did not stop until blood came out of his nose and ears. After the beatings, Ali was taken to the nearest Hindu temple, forced to convert to Hinduism. Only after Ali had agreed to these conditions, they allowed him to go to the hospital (Ellis-Petersen & Rahman, 2020).

The violent attack on Mehboob Ali was not an arbitrary event. In fact, the mob targeted him due to his attendance at a religious gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat¹. According to video footage, as well as his family's accounts, the mob was convinced that Ali had partaken in 'Corona Jihadism'. This 'Corona Jihad' narrative entails the idea that Indian Muslims are deliberately spreading Covid-19 aiming to infect as many Hindus as possible. 'Tell us your plan!' a man shouts in the video. 'Was your plan to spread corona?'. The camera focuses on Ali, who is laying in the field, cowering and shaking his head (Ellis-Petersen & Rahman 2020; Gettleman, Schultz, & Raj 2020).

The Tablighi Jamaat is a Sunni Islamic missionary movement that held an event from 13 to 15 March in the Nizamuddin area in New Delhi. The event counted thousands of visitors from various countries. Within a week after the event had ended, the first cases of Covid-19 in India were linked to the religious gathering. Soon, it was labelled as the biggest hotspot of Covid-19, with the Indian government convinced that the majority of coronavirus cases were linked to the members of Tablighi Jamaat (Bisht & Naqvi 2020).

The Hindu-nationalist parties of India accused the movement of being 'careless' and 'highly irresponsible' while casting blame and accountability on the Islamic movement ("Coronavirus in India" 2020; "Yogi Adityanath Says Role" 2020). Not only did the government file a case against the leaders of the Tablighi Jamaat for culpable homicide and violation of government instructions (Epidemic Diseases Act 1897) (Bhattacharya 2020; "Coronavirus: Tablighi Jamaat Centre" 2020), they called for a punishment of the organisation and its attendees. Several government officials stated that the organisation carried out a 'Talibani crime' and 'such people should be shot' (Venugopal 2020; Sutar 2020).

¹ A Sunni Islamic missionary movement. The Tablighi Jamaat held a religious gathering from 13-15 March 2020. An event that attracted thousands of worshippers from a variety of countries. The start of the outbreak of Covid-19 is largely linked to the attendees of the religious event.

It did not take much time before the boundaries between the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims in general, started to fade (Bisht & Naqvi, 2020). Virtually overnight, Muslims became the sole culprits of the spread of Covid-19 in India. Within 1,5 weeks after it was brought into existence, the hashtag #CoronaJihad was shared over 300.000 times on social media channels and seen by over 165 million people, with members of the currently ruling Hindu Nationalist party the Bharatiya Janata Party² (BJP) claiming that Muslims were deliberately spreading Covid-19 as a form of bioterrorism. These tweets shared multiplicity of political cartoons or fake videos of, for example, Muslim vendors spitting on fruit, thereby infecting it with Covid-19. Unfortunately, by the time that these videos were debunked as fake, they were already circulating the internet (Bisht & Naqvi 2020; Perrigo 2020; Ellis-Petersen & Rahman 2020).

This (online) hate-campaign was accompanied by a wave of violence against Muslims in India, similar to the case of Mehboob Ali. Reports of young Muslims distributing food that were assaulted with cricket bats, Muslims being lynched, beaten, banned from their neighbourhoods, and refused to be admitted into the hospitals started emerging (Ayyub 2020; Gittleman, Schultz & Raj 2020; Hasan 2020). Moreover, due to the fake videos of Muslim vendors spitting on their products, BJP politicians have called for a ‘social boycott’ and urging people not to buy products from Muslim vendors anymore (Ayyub 2020).

In the preceding paragraphs, I have painted a picture of the situation in India at the time this thesis was written. This empirical observation sparks several questions: How come the Muslims minorities are represented as culprits of the spread of Covid-19? How is it that these representations of reality like ‘Corona Jihad’ resonate with the Indian public? How do they legitimise violence? And why do people decide to act upon these representations?

Grounded in the realm of constructivism, this research argues that social phenomena, such as the empirical complication presented in this research, are social constructs rather than objective truth (Jabri 1996). The Covid-19 outbreak in India is given a particular meaning by the framings, words, and metaphors used by politicians and media, which seem to be sparking instances of violence all over India. As such, communities construct their limits: “their relationship to that which they are not or what threatens them; and the narratives which produce the founding past of a community, its identity, and its projections of the future” (Sayyid & Zac, 1998, p. 261).

² English translation: India’s People Party

Consistent with the angle, this thesis views the discursive practices of the Hindu nationalist parties and the media as a type of ‘framing’ (Benford & Snow, 2000). A frame is defined as ‘interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the “world out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within one’s present or past environments’ (Goffman (1974) in Benford and Snow 1992, p.137). As such, a frame, constructed by people that not only have the capacity, but also the political will to do so, provides a way of interpreting the world and guide action. Hence, framing theory will serve as an analytical tool to uncover the ‘reality’ that is presented by Hindu nationalist parties.

These framing practices scapegoating the Muslim community are not seen as a new phenomenon in the context of India. In fact, Hindu-Muslim relations in India have been violent and conflictual for a very long time (Appadurai 2006; Brass 2003). These tensions have been rising over the last few years, due to the growing support for the Hindu-nationalist government. Moreover, Islamophobia³ is seen to be rising over the last couple of years, reflecting in several policies that are seen as discriminatory in nature. Therefore, the framings central to this thesis are viewed as another way of accentuating these long-standing grievances in the interest of demonising the Muslim community of India.

It wouldn’t take long for us to establish that the empirical complication of this research is dripping with emotions. After all, grievances “are only grievances because they upset or outrage people” (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta 2001). Whereas framing theory (Benford and Snow 2000), solely focuses on the cognitive congruence between the frames and the audience, this thesis takes a cognitive-emotional approach towards framing theory by incorporating literature on emotions into the analytical frame.

As such, this thesis builds on the premise that “emotions give ideas, ideologies, identities, and even interests their power to motivate” (Jasper 1997, p.127). Therefore, complementary to the fact that these framings of Muslims as the culprits of the Covid-19 outbreak as spread must respond to cognitive grids and moral vision, the Hindu nationalist parties aim to appeal to and build upon pre-existing affects and emotional responses. All with the final goal of mobilising supporters that engage in action against Muslims.

In this representation of reality, the Hindu nationalist parties, as well as the media, systematically rely on metaphors. I have identified three dominant metaphorical themes within the coverage of the Covid-19 outbreak and spread, which are Muslims as the Covid-19 virus

³ Definition: Irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against Islam or people who practice Islam.

itself, Muslims as the enemy within the war against Covid-19, and Muslims as bioterrorists using Covid-19 as a weapon. As a common denominator, these metaphors all rely on the description of Muslims as a threat.

In this context of unrest, fear, violence, and instability, I have formulated the following puzzle statement central to this thesis: *How did Hindu Nationalist parties in India create Covid-19 threat metaphors, in order to demonise and construct violence against Muslims minorities in India, from March until July 2020?* I am aiming to unpack this puzzle statement using the following, interrelated research questions:

1. What threat metaphors are constructed by Hindu nationalist parties that serve as a representation of the ‘reality’ of the Muslim community’s role in the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India?
2. Why do these ‘threat metaphors’ resonate with the Indian Hindu population on a cognitive and emotional level?
3. How did ideological performances, informed by these frames emerge, while simultaneously reiterating them?

Relevance

The significance of this research is described in twofold. First of all, this thesis contributes to the theoretical debate by moving beyond the widely used ‘framing theory’ (Benford & Snow, 2000), by merging this analytical frame with the concepts of emotions and performances. By combining these analytical concepts, the analytical frame presented in this thesis aims for a more holistic understanding of framing practices. Although authors within framing theory acknowledge the importance of these elements of emotions and performances (Benford & Snow, 2000), there has been limited research on the combination of these aspects. Thus, this research aims provide new insights on the topic of framing, from the original angle of emotions and performances.

Secondly, this thesis has an irrefutable social relevance, as the topic of Islamophobia in India has been marked by several NGOs as a topic of international concern (“India: end bias” 2020, “India: hate crimes” 2017). The highly topical nature of this study is reflected in recent relevant developments (i.e. the CAA law, article 370, NRC, NPR⁴) that have been increasing

⁴ For more information on these recent developments, please see Chapter Four on India’s empirical context, or consult Venkataramakrishnan, 2019; Gettleman & Raj, 2019.

communal Hindu-Muslim tensions within the country. As Islamophobia in India has been increasing rapidly over the last years, Muslims have been put in a precarious situation. By taking a critical look at the constructed threat metaphors and the role of emotions, this thesis aims to shed light on this precarious situation and how these inequalities are exacerbated through the discursive processes described in this thesis.

Chapter outline

This thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter will elaborate on the theoretical foundation of this research. It will engage in a critical discussion of the theoretical debate in which the empirical complication is situated, as well as underscore the theoretical gap in which my research puzzle is positioned. Additionally, it will provide the sensitising concepts that were used to guide the analysis.

In Chapter Two, I describe and justify all methodological steps that were taken in order to systematically provide an answer to the posed research puzzle. The chapter elaborates on the strategy, sampling method, and research method of the research. Moreover, in this chapter, I will engage in the operationalisation of the sensitising concepts provided in Chapter One, as I will outline how I have turned these abstract concepts into concrete and researchable entities.

In Chapter Three, I will succinctly describe the empirical context of the case study that will serve as a point of reference for the following chapters. Chapter Four, Five, and Six, will present the findings of the research, structured by the sub-questions posed within this introduction. Chapter Four will aim to answer the first sub-question, by identifying the dominant threat metaphors, that serve as a frame to interpret the reality of the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India.

Chapter Five will answer the second sub-question by analysing why these frames presented in Chapter Four resonate with the Indian public as much on a cognitive and emotional level, while others might not have. While engaging in this analysis, the chapter will use the concepts of frame resonance and emotional resonance to guide the analyses.

Chapter Six will then look at how these threat metaphors, as types of affective frames, have been translated into ideological performances in India, that are enacted and interpreted within the previously established meaning systems of the Hindu nationalist parties in India. Furthermore, this chapter will engage in a brief description of how these threat metaphors are possibly contributing to increased forms of cultural domination and oppression within India,

using the concepts of structural and symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2004, Galtung 1996).

Finally, this thesis concludes with a critical reflection and discussion, which not only provides an answer to the research statement posed in this introduction but also reflects on the limitations of this research and poses suggestions for future research.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will situate the empirical complication within the existing academic literature. As such, it will answer the questions: what theoretical ideas might help in understanding the empirical complication of this research? In which theoretical debate is this research situated? And lastly, what is the analytical frame used to understand the case study presented in the introduction and answer the research puzzle? For reasons that will become clear throughout this chapter, the empirical complication of this thesis will be explored through ‘frame analysis’, as it will allow me to uncover how Hindu nationalist parties give meaning to the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India. To understand this approach, I will first situate the empirical case study in the broader academic debate on the Discursive Approach towards violence and Critical Discourse Analysis.

1.1 The Discursive Approach towards Violence

At the most fundamental level, this thesis is about discourses. In her book *Discourses on Violence*, Vivienne Jabri (1996, pp. 94-95) defines discourses as “social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation”. I argue that the threat metaphors, defined in the introduction⁵, that are central to the empirical complication, can be seen as discourses. These metaphorical narratives, apparent in text or talk, are used to represent Muslims as the culprits aiming to deliberately spread Covid-19 in order to infect as many innocent Hindus as possible. Therefore, by constructing these threat metaphors, a specific meaning is given to the outbreak of Covid-19 in India.

The analysis of discourses, as presented in this thesis, is built on the assumption that discursive practices do not only passively illustrate, but also actively construct a version of what is seen to be the reality. This notion is articulated by discourse analysts like Vivienne Jabri (1996), Ingo Schröder and Bettina Schmidt (2001), Bobby Sayyid and Lillian Zac (1998), Paul Brass (1996), Teun van Dijk (1997) and Norman Fairclough (1992; 2001). Sayyid and Zac, state that ‘discourse theorists maintain that descriptions of the world are the means by which we socially construct reality’ (1998: 255). This is consistent with Jabri’s (1996, pp. 94-95) definition of the function of discourses. She argues that discourses do not just serve as a

⁵ A threat metaphor in this thesis are understood as a type of affective frame, based on social meaning (i.e. already existing frames), which is politically functional in the sense that it is used to construct the Muslim minorities as a threat to the lives of Hindus

mirror that reflects reality. Instead, they ‘do’ things, and being active, discourses can have social and political implications.

This capacity to construct meaning holds great power. In fact, the political functionality of discourses is based on their ability to give meaning to a particular situation. Bhatia (2005), in his article on the ‘politics of naming’, illustrates how the construction of discourses can be viewed as a form of politics. Bhatia focuses on the construction of names, and how they are assigned and disputed, in the process of reality construction. The ‘power’ of assigning this name, Bhatia argues, is that normative associations, motives, and characteristics are attached to the subject that has been named as such “this subject becomes known in a manner which may permit certain forms of inquiry and engagement, while forbidding or excluding others” (2005, p. 8). In other words, the name provides a way of interpreting the subject, but through normative meaning that is given to this subject, also guides action.

Taking into account these arguments, since discourses actively construct a version of reality and therefore are seen to possess a transformative power, they have the potential of becoming a powerful tool. Pascale (2019) argues how discourses can become weaponised since they have the ability to affect the perception, opinion and behaviour of the public. Discourses construct a version of what is understood to be reality. They can therefore be used to, amongst others, “attack people that are perceived to be disloyal or dehumanise minority groups all under the heading of serving a homogeneous nation-state” (Pascale 2019, p. 900).

The political functionality of discourses is also articulated by Jolle Demmers in her book *Theories of Violent Conflict* (2017) when she states that “Discourses [...] are most powerful when they are both meaningful and politically functional”. This statement is vital while understanding the empirical complication presented in the introduction, as will become increasingly evident throughout this thesis. As Hindu nationalist parties construct a version of reality, they do not only aim to exploit the political functionality by demonising and constructing violence against Muslims, they also draw on social meaning by using deep-rooted grievances and historically established frames. Since the political function of discourses has been described in the previous paragraph, the next paragraph will elaborate on the social meaningfulness of discourses.

While constructing discourses, actors depend on already existing structures and symbolic orders. As such, discourses are seen as ‘historically situated practise’, which means that while constructing meaning, discourses depend on historical structures and cultural structures of meaning (Schröder & Schmidt 2000, p. 3). Therefore, the construction of meaning is never solely instrumental, since discourses are captured within society, and in a way, society

is thus captured within them. The way in which social structures inform the construction of meaning is also illustrated by Steuter and Wills (2008) who discuss the use of metaphor, as a form of discourses. They argue how ‘individuality of interpretation must be balanced with the recognition that there are dominant tropes which are broadly shared across a given community [...] long-standing, communal associations of the snake as something evil, deceptive and deadly will inevitably dominate any reading of the metaphor’ (2008, p. 107).

What stands at the core of all of the arguments mentioned above is that ontologically, discourse theory moves beyond the agency-structure dichotomy. Discourse theorists argue that agents and structures are mutually constitutive entities, which entails that we are born into certain structures that constrain, as well as enable us. This dialectical relationship is what Giddens refers to as ‘structuration’ (1984). Structures here are defined as ‘rules that are articulated in social interaction and tell people how to “do” social life, and the resources on which people can call to achieve their objectives’ (Wallace & Wolf 1999, p. 181). These rules on how to do social life, become visible and thus researchable in discourses and institutions (Jabri 1996), wherein these discourses serve as the focus of this research.

However, following the definition of Jabri, the role of language within this process still needs some further explanation. As Sayyid and Zac (1998, p. 254) argue, “discourse theorists do not claim that things are created simply by uttering words; language does not create entities. But discourse theorists do maintain that reality is only accessible through descriptions made in language, and descriptions have to be located in some signifying process”. In other words, the creation of discourses will result in frameworks that give meaning to a social situation. This representation of social reality becomes embedded within our society by communicating this representation with others. Hence, discourses construct a scheme by which we understand and interpret the world around us, to make sense of reality.

Lastly, although discourses are seen to hold a transformative power, and are active in constructing a version of reality, discourses in and of themselves do not have agency. Instead, as a social activity, discourses are produced as ‘social truths’ that are socially meaningful, by actors that do not only have the capacity but also the political will to produce these discourses. When these constructed ‘social truths’, signified within discourse are understood to be true, they become a reference system; a framework to interpret reality by and make sense of the highly complex social life that we are finding ourselves in (Demmers 2017).

1.2 Framing and Frame Analysis

Benford and Snow's Collective Action Frames (2000) serves as the point of departure for the analytical frame of this research. Benford and Snow view social movement actors as "signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" (p. 613). The frames they produce are seen to construct not only meanings and beliefs but also legitimate actions and campaigns. As such, a frame is defined as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within one's present or past environments" (Goffman (1974) in Benford and Snow 2000, p.137)⁶. When translating this to the case study presented in this thesis, this means that this frame will allow me to understand how Hindu-nationalist political parties in India are actively engaging in the production of meaning, and constructing frames for possible supporters to interpret and understand the Covid-19 outbreak, as well as guide action as to how to solve this. Frame analysis will help me unravel the frames they are re-inventing, what meaning is given to the situation, and what actions are legitimised through these frames.

Frames, according to Benford and Snow (2000) are used to negotiate a shared understanding of a perceived problem, make attributions as to who is to blame for this problematic condition, articulate a possible solution to this problem, and to urge others to act up in order to change the situation. Within this process, the authors have identified three tasks: 'diagnostic framing', 'prognostic framing', and 'motivational framing' (p. 615). Whereas diagnostic framing describes the constructed problem and attributions, prognostic framing is concerned with the articulation of a proposed solution to this problem. Lastly, motivational framing is used to provide a 'call to arms' in order to affect people to stand up and initiate the change of the problematic situation.

These concepts will be used within this research to answer the questions 'what have right-wing political parties in India constructed as the problem?' 'What attributions are made regarding who is to blame for this problematic situation?' 'What is the rationale that is provided for people to engage in action to change the problematic situation?' and 'what collective action has been undertaken in order to achieve this goal?'

However, my interest in this case study moves beyond solely describing these core framing tasks. Although these frames provide great analytical utility in the process of

⁶ For an elaborate glossary providing all the sensitising concepts that were used as an analytical frame, please see Appendix C

understanding what meaning is given to the outbreak and spread of Covid-19, it still leaves me puzzled as to why these frames seem to resonate this much with the Indian public, while others might not have. Snow and Benford (1988) have posed a similar question within their article on frame resonance, which they define as the effectiveness of mobilising potency of proffered framings. More recently, the same authors have established an interrelated set of factors (i.e. credibility and relative salience) that will function within this research to guide the analysis on the effectiveness of the previously established frames (Benford and Snow 2000).

However, critique toward the approach of Benford and Snow (2000) is articulated by several academics. Framing theorists emphasise the thought that frame resonance is the result of the cognitive congruence between frames on one side, and cultural narratives, beliefs, or knowledge of events on the other side (Benford & Snow 2000). However, like Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta (2001, p.6) argue “cognitive agreement alone does not result in action”. Rather, people need to be inspired in order to take action. Heise argues that emotions are crucial to take into account while analysing framing. He states that humans act in order to confirm their underlying sentiments (Heise 1989). Therefore, agency is tightly linked to emotions. By elaborating on the affective dimension of framing, analysts are able to move away from this cognitive bias of framing (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006).

The previously defined concept of motivational framing seems to be tightly connected to emotions, as emotions are seen to motivate people and eventually get them to partake in action. However, the analytical frame of Benford and Snow (2000), and framing theory in general, has been downplaying the role of emotions by not including them in their analysis (Jasper & Polletta 2000).

That is why, I have included the concepts of ‘emotional resonance’ and ‘ideological performances’ into the analytical frame, to overcome this limitation in order to create a more comprehensive idea of the potency of frames to mobilise supporters. However, before I delve into the literature on emotions dramaturgy, I will first devote a small section of the theoretical frame towards the explanation of the type of affective frame that is central to this thesis, namely ‘threat metaphors’. As will become clear throughout the rest of this thesis, what makes the identified ‘threat metaphors’ so interesting, is that they tap into the emotional lives of the targets.

As hinted previously, the frames that are constructed by the Hindu-nationalist parties in India are not new. Instead, the right-wing political parties are seen to be ‘both consumers of existing cultural meanings, and producers of new meanings’ (Tarrow 1992, p. 189). Thus, they take advantage of the Covid-19 outbreak to re-invent certain long-standing beliefs and frames

in order to make sense and give meaning to this new situation. Within this process of re-inventing existing frames, the evidence yielded within this research has indicated that the political parties are using existing metaphors of threat.

1.3 Metaphor of Threat

Within the frames we use to describe and give meaning to a particular situation; often, we can discover linguistic patterns (Steuter and Wills 2008). In the case presented in this thesis, the data showed a systematic use of metaphors. These metaphors that were imported into the public discourses and used to describe the Covid-19 outbreak in India have an essential role in the way they shape people's perception and cognition.

Contrary to the threat metaphors central to this thesis, metaphors in itself are neutral. The definition of a metaphor is 'understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another' (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, p.5). We make use of metaphor because it simplifies the highly complex world around us. New, vague, or complicated experiences are simplified by using more familiar concepts. As Hülse and Spencer describe in their article 'by projecting the known onto the unknown, metaphors create reality; they constitute the object they signify' (2008, p. 578). In this light, metaphors can be viewed as a type of frame since they engage in the process of meaning construction.

Within the transfer of meaning in metaphors, the characteristics, emotions, and other aspects of this concept that are used to describe a new phenomenon, are transferred as well (Bhatia 2005; Steuter & Wills 2008). Linking this to the case study within this research, this means that when Hindu nationalist parties metaphorically refer to Muslims infected with Covid-19 as suicide bombers, the characteristics and emotional charge one feels regarding suicide bombers is transferred onto the infected Muslim.

Demonstrated by the example of the suicide bomber, the metaphors used in this thesis are not neutral. In fact, they are 'threat metaphors'. I have identified them as such because the common denominator between all of these metaphors is that they all portray the Muslims community as posing a severe threat to the health and lives of innocent Hindu citizens. Within this thesis, I understand these 'threat metaphors' as a form of affective framing. More specifically, informed by the previously mentioned theories, 'metaphors of threat' within this thesis are seen to be a affective types of frame, based on social meaning (i.e. already existing frames), which are politically functional in the sense that they are used to construct the Muslim minorities as a threat to the lives of Hindus.

1.4 Emotions

Although emotions are part of all social actions, they have not been adequately included in most social-scientific theories. This is mostly due to the tendency to reduce emotions to strictly biological processes, the body, and the brain (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta 2004). More recently, emotions are increasingly seen as socially constructed. Jasper (1997, p. 109) defines emotions as ‘an action or state of mind that makes sense only in particular circumstances. He states that while there might be primary emotions that are tied to bodily states and psychological processes, there are also secondary emotions that are seen as socially constructed and culturally variable. As such, emotions are constituted by shared social meanings and therefore tied to beliefs and context (Jasper 1997).

However, I argue that to include emoticons into analyses does not mean we need to discard our existing conceptual toolkits and focus on the cognitive. Instead, throughout this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that the cognitive and the emotional element within framings processes are interconnected and work complementary to each other. I will do so, by including the concept of ‘emotional resonance’ (Schrock et al. 2004) into my analytical frame and combine it with the previously defined frame resonance. Emotional resonance is defined as “the link between targeted recruits’ emotional lives and the emotional messages encoded in SMO framing” (Schrock et al. 2004, p. 62).

I argue that the importance of including emotions into the analytical frame of this research more precisely is to be found in the nature of the empirical complication. The framing processes in this thesis centre around *threat metaphors* that blame the Muslim population for the outbreak and spread of Covid-19. As asserted by, amongst others Jaspers (1997, p.126), “the complex interplay of threat and blame has an enormous emotional component”. Moral, emotion, and cognition all fuse together at the intersection of threat and blame. In other words, through the rhetoric of threat and blame, the powerful interplay of emotion, cognition and emotion will help me understand the empirical complication posed in the introduction.

1.5 Performances

However, after we have established the cognitive, as well as emotional resonance of the targets of mobilisation with the previously established frame, this leaves us with the question of ‘how do social actors express their ‘cognitive, moral, and emotional connection’ with the movement they are a part of? If these framings are then seen as effective, how is this made visible, or how is this enacted?

The answer to these questions is to be found in the last addition to the analytical frame employed in this thesis: the concept of performing. The concept of performing will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the framing practices of Hindu nationalist parties since it sheds light on displays of the previously established meaning systems. The inclusion of performances mainly centres around the social relevance of this thesis, since the concept aims to unravel the interaction of frames with the micro-level of agency.

In order to get more insight into this micro-level, I will use the concept of 'ideological performances' by Fuist (2013, p. 430). In his article, Fuist argues that this concept allows us to view a performance as an enactment of identities. This concept therefore contrasts previous work on performances, which generally tended to focus on either the macro level, tactical claim-making, or public performances (Alexander 2006; Tilly 2008)

The concept of 'ideological performances' by Fuist (2013, p. 430), is defined as 'how a performer's beliefs, values, and allegiances are displayed for an audience via her behaviour, language, movement, use of props, and aesthetics. Put simply, it is the way one "codes" one's ideology into behaviour and aesthetics (perhaps unconsciously) in a way that can then be read and interpreted by others based on knowledge of the referenced meaning systems". So, performances are used by people to understand themselves and the world around them, similar to the previous definition of a frame. This way, these performances themselves become part of the shared meaning systems and the process of meaning making central to this study.

As I have indicated in the introduction of this thesis, a wave of violence against Muslims has accompanied the outbreak of Covid-19. By looking at some of these performances as ideological performances, I will analyse these instances as an enactment of his or her social identity, beliefs, and values, within a certain meaning system. The meaning system that is referred to in this sense is the combination of the previously established threat metaphors, the Hindu nationalist political parties and their supporters.

These performances can be defined as how one looks and how one communicates plays an active role in the drawing of symbolic boundaries between various groups (Polletta, 2005). This way, these ideological performances, interpreted by the audience situated within the same meaning system, in and of themselves are reiterating social relations manifested in the threat metaphors.

1.6 Chapter summary

In sum, the first chapter aimed to situate the empirical complication central to this thesis in the existing academic literature, as well as highlight the theoretical contribution of the research puzzle. The empirical complication of this thesis centres at the most fundamental level around discourses. However, since discourses in and of themselves do not have agency, social actors such as the Hindu nationalist parties of India exercise their agency through framing. This chapter has demonstrated that ‘framing theory’ (Benford & Snow, 2000) therefore, is deemed as an appropriate lens through which I can understand the research puzzle.

However, since the empirical complication of this research hints at the role of emotions, which is congruent with recent critiques towards the traditional framing theory, the analytical frame of this research is substituted with the concept of emotional resonance, in order to shed light on the emotional messages encoded in the proffered frames. Lastly, to circle back to the social relevance of this thesis, I will incorporate the concept of ‘ideological performances’ into the analytical frame. This will allow me to look at the interaction of the targets of mobilisation and the proffered frames by reviewing how they have enacted their collective identity within the previously established meaning systems. Before moving on to the analysis of the framing practices of Hindu nationalist parties, it is necessary first to review how I have operationalised the constituent concepts discussed in the current chapters, into concrete and researchable indicators, as well as elaborate on the design, methodology and strategy of this research.

Chapter 2. Methodology

This chapter aims to answer the question: how did I design and operationalise research around abstract concepts like discourses, framing, emotions and performances? In answering this question, it aims to justify all methodological steps taken in the process of answering my research puzzle. Therefore, this chapter lays out the research strategy, design, and methods adopted in this thesis.

2.1 Research strategy

Ontologically, this thesis is grounded in the realm of social constructivism, which assumes that reality is not objective. Rather, this stance argues that the way we perceive the world ‘out there’ is socially constructed. This assumption is in line with the analytical frame, since ‘framing theory’ is concerned with the construction of meaning. As asserted by Benford and Snow (2000) “frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organise experience and guide action”. More specifically, this study is interested in the relational interaction between the proffered threat metaphors, as the construction of the ‘reality’ of the Covid-19 outbreak, interact with ideological performances.

The epistemological stance of this research is multi-layered. First and foremost, this thesis seeks to uncover the dynamics and interactions between framing, emotions, and performances in the process of meaning-making. However, meaning is seen not just to attach itself to events but is socially constructed through interactional and interpretive processes (Snow 2003). Therefore, this research takes a symbolic interactionist stance. Which is defined by Mason (2018, p. 8) as “meaning is found in situations and interactions”.

Secondly, this study takes a critical stance towards the discursive practices of Hindu nationalist parties, thereby taking into account the structures of inequalities and long-standing disputes between Hindu and Muslim. This is congruent with the following definition of critical theory by Mason (2018, p.8) “life is determined through social and historical processes and power relations”.

Consistent with the ontological and epistemological approach, I deem a qualitative research strategy most appropriate, which is “directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 3). As this thesis assumes that reality is a social construct, only this in-depth and interpretive analysis will help us understand the dynamics of this process of ‘meaning-making’. Therefore, a qualitative research strategy will allow me to understand this case study in all its richness.

2.2 Sampling method

This section will elaborate on the data gathering techniques of this thesis and will be guided by the questions of ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘what’, and ‘who’. With regards to ‘where’, this research took place in the Netherlands, mostly in the online spheres. Due to the global travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, I was not able to physically go to India; therefore, the interviews were conducted via Zoom.

The question of ‘when’ refers to the chosen timeframe of this research. I have chosen a timeframe of March 2020 until June 2020. This start date is chosen based on the fact that the Tablighi Jamaat held a religious gathering from 1-21 March. From this point on, the Hindu-nationalist parties, as well as the media, started discursively constructing a link between Muslims and the spread of Covid-19, the interest of this study. Due to the limited time of this research project, the date of June 2020 served as the end date.

With regards to the ‘what’ and ‘who’, I will discuss the units of analysis of this research in threefold. As I am interested in how Hindu nationalist parties construct metaphors of threat, I have used newspaper articles, as well as cartoons to understand these ‘threat metaphors’ and the discourses they are situated in. The unit of analysis will consist of newspaper articles from several widely known Indian newspapers, all seen to have a Hindu nationalist leaning, i.e. *The Hindu*, *Aajtak*, *Zee News*, *India Today*, *Republic News*, *Times Now News* and some small local newspapers. Additionally, these threat metaphors are displayed in political cartoons, which were used on a large scale by Hindu nationalist parties and media during the outbreak of Covid-19 in India (Sounderajan et al. 2020)., These political cartoons are added into the analysis since discourses are represented in text *and* image. This way, this thesis will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the functions of threat metaphors.

Moreover, in order to gain an understanding of the performances that are seen to engage in an interactional process with these proffered frames in the process of meaning making, I have conducted interviews with nine young Indian citizens who identify themselves as Muslims⁷. In order to guarantee full anonymity, the names used in this research are pseudonyms. The interviews were conducted via Zoom.

⁷ Appendix A shows a full overview of the participants

The interviews were semi-structured⁸ to ensure that the participants were provided with the opportunity to highlight their own experiences as they deemed appropriate. This interview strategy is chosen because as ideological performances centre around the enactment of a collective identity, they enact a particular ideology, belief, or idea that reveals to the audience their emotional, cognitive and moral connection with the organisation. The performers are, in this case, defined as the Hindu population. The semi-structured nature allowed the Muslim participants to freely interpret the message and the emotional or cognitive connections that were communicated, based on the shared meaning system. This way, the data already provided an interesting interpretation of the performance.

The selection of these units of analysis will be described in the next sections. Sampling and selection are defined by Mason (2018, p. 53) as “the principles and procedures used to identify and gain access to relevant data sources that are potentially generative in relation to a wider universe, and to select from them for the purposes of gaining meaningful insights to your intellectual puzzle”. So, now that we have established the type of necessary data sources, the next section describes the steps by which these data sources were selected. In my case, this means that I will elaborate on how three relevant samples were selected for this research.

2.2.1 Newspaper articles

First of all, previously discussed, newspapers were chosen as data source. I have selected newspaper articles using ‘strategic sampling’ as defined by Mason (2018), which argues that the sample of data that I selected has a strategic relationship with its wider universe. Strategic sampling can take a variety of forms. Therefore, I have used the specific strategy of ‘theoretical sampling’, which entails the selection of units of analysis based on their relevance to the research puzzle and the analytical frame (Glaser & Strauss 1967). The purpose of this data sampling technique is to create a sample that is both theoretically and empirically meaningful.

For establishing a sample of newspaper articles, I have consulted Nexis Uni, a database that offers national and international newspaper articles, which is publicly accessible online. This database contains many popular English-language Indian newspapers. In order to create a theoretically and empirically relevant sample, I had to set filters (i.e. Indian-based, timeframe, relevant terms such as ‘Corona Jihad’, ‘Super Spreader’ and ‘Tablighi Jamaat’). Whether the articles were classified as relevant was based on the content of the articles. The article had to discuss the theme of the spread of Coronavirus in India, linked to the Muslim community or

⁸ Appendix B shows an overview of the topics discussed during the interviews

the Tablighi Jamaat. Since it is not the goal of this thesis to produce statistically representative research, the size of the sample is based on the theoretical significance rather than representative significance⁹.

2.2.2 Political cartoons

The political cartoons were sampled through the same method. The only difference being there was no publicly accessible database of political cartoons. Therefore, I have used the website of some very prominent Indian newspapers like ‘The Hindu’, ‘India Today’, and ‘Times Now’, and applied the same criteria as the newspaper articles within the cartoon section of their websites. Additionally, I have used a report of the Indian NGO equality labs on ‘Corona Jihad’. They have performed a social media analysis on the use of the term ‘Corona Jihad’ and display many political cartoons and their sources in their report that were shared publicly. This report was used as an indicator of where to find cartoons¹⁰ (Soundararajan et al. 2020).

2.2.3. Interviews

Lastly, to sample the participants, I have again used theoretical sampling, to ensure that the information provided by the participants is theoretically and empirically relevant to answer my research puzzle. Criteria that were used to select participants for this research were the fact that they had to be Muslim, living in India at the time of the Covid-19 outbreak, and speak English. Moreover, within this sampling strategy, that describes how my sample relates to the wider universe, I have used the ‘snowball technique’ due to my limited network in India. This technique is defined as ‘asking people who already have been interviewed to identify other people they know who fit the research population’ (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston 2013, p.94).

2.3 Research method

The research method lays out how I engaged in the collection and analysis of my data and will be described in the sections below. The method is divided into four phases.

⁹ A list of all newspaper articles that were analysed for the purpose of this research is attached as Appendix C.

¹⁰ A list of all political cartoons that were analysed for the purpose of this research is attached as Appendix D

Phase 1: Description of the context

First of all, in order to understand the emergence of threat metaphors in the light of the Covid-19 outbreak, we need to obtain a basic understanding of the current developments with regards to the conflictual Hindu-Muslim relationship in India, the political climate, and relevant historical events. The contextualisation of the empirical complication will serve as a point of reference for the following chapters. I have gained this understanding of the empirical context by reading relevant academic articles and conducting informal conversations with young Muslims living in India. The triangulated data will be presented in Chapter Three.

Phase 2: Identification of frames and Threat Metaphors

Secondly, aiming to answer the first research question, I will use the concepts of ‘diagnostic framing’, ‘prognostic framing’, and ‘motivational framing’ (Benford & Snow 2000, p.615) as an analytical tool to define respectively: what is the constructed problem? What is the perceived solution? And what is the proffered rationale for engaging in action? These concepts already serve as clear indicators for analysing the data. Guided by these theoretically informed indicators, I will ‘code’ these articles, in the NVivo 12 software in order to identify patterns¹¹.

After I have coded all the newspaper articles, I will use the coded fragments in a Critical Metaphor Analysis in order to define the dominant threat metaphors central to this thesis, thereby aiming to answer the first sub-question (Carteris-Black 2014). I will do so by using not only the coded fragments of newspaper articles but also political cartoons. CMA argues that metaphors can serve as “a gateway through which persuasive and emotive ways of thinking about the world mould the language that we use and through which thoughts about the world are moulded by language use” (p. 2). In other words, these metaphors are seen to conceal emotional or persuasive messages that CMA seeks to unravel.

Informed by Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, CMA is structured in three stages. First of all, examples of linguistic metaphors that talk about the subject are identified and generalised into the conceptual metaphor they exemplify. These results are then used to unravel thought patterns or cognitive frames which construct or constrain people’s beliefs and actions (Cameron and Low 1999).

¹¹ For a full overview of the coded used in this research, please view Appendix E

Level 1: identification

More specifically, in the first level of the CMA, I will identify if a metaphor is present in the text or image by establishing whether or not there is tension between the literal source domain and the metaphorical (Charteris-Black, 2004). For the newspaper articles, I have employed a strategy of metaphor identification consisting of two stages. In the first stage, I have closely read all the codes in the sample texts that were coded in Nvivo12 and identified the candidate metaphors. In the second stage, I have examined these candidate metaphors in relation to the definition and analytical criteria as defined by Charteris-Black¹² (2004). Additionally, I have identified the conceptual key underlying these metaphors and the broader discourses these metaphors are situated in, to establish the fields of knowledge the metaphors are referring to.

Secondly, political cartoons are analysed on the level of identification. This analysis is based on the article of El Refaie (2003) in which she explores the ‘grammar’ of the visual metaphor. The main point of visual metaphor analysis is to identify a visual metaphor by referring to the thoughts or concepts that appear to underlie it. She argues from the assumption that the “visual metaphor must be considered as the visual representation of metaphorical thoughts or concepts” (p.75). In this analysis of the thoughts or concepts that underlie the cartoon, I will focus on visual signs, textual signs, and captions. Afterwards, these elements are analysed based on the same criteria of textual metaphor.

Level 2: interpretation

The second level of analysis is involved with interpersonal meaning. Social relations constructed through the use of metaphor will be identified within this phase. I will try and understand these social relations by posing questions like ‘who is using these metaphors?’ or ‘who is representing the audience?’ In order to answer these questions, the background and political leaning of the producer (i.e. newspaper or, in case of a quote, politician) will be analysed.

Subsequently, I will examine the social context in which these metaphors are employed. In doing so, I will aim to answer the question: ‘why is this metaphor used at this specific point in time?’ ‘what cultural narratives inform these metaphors?’. The previously established empirical context can serve as a point of reference in this phase. In this phase, through examining the relationships between cognitive and pragmatic factors, I will review if, and to

¹² See appendix F for the list of the criteria to establish the metaphor

what extent, the choice for a metaphor is proactive in constructing a representation that is seen as socially important. The phase is strongly interconnected with the next phase.

Level 3: explanation

This level is concerned with contextual meaning. That is, the way that metaphors are interrelated and become coherent with reference to the situation in which they occur. Explanation of metaphors involves the process of identifying agency that is involved in the production and their social role in persuasion. In a sense, this stage is about the identification of the discursive function of metaphors that helps me to establish the ideological motivation of the metaphor. Evidence for the ideological and rhetorical motivation was found in the context that the metaphors occur in.

In light of this last phase, a note on the interpretation should be made. Metaphors do not always predetermine an interpretation. However, they create a predisposition towards one interpretation over another. This predisposition can be identified by closely examining the choice of certain words and phrases because of the particular connotations they convey. However, this last phase is always part of an interpretive process, which is characterised by the risk of a plurality of readings.

Phase 3: Cognitive and emotional frame resonance

In the third phase, I have conducted an analysis which centres around the question of why these frames seem to resonate with the Indian Hindu population. In this phase, I will use the concept of ‘frame resonance’ (Benford & Snow, 1988) to understand the cognitive dimension. Moreover, considering the central role of emotions in this case study, I will use the concept of ‘emotional resonance’ (Schrock et al. 2004) to establish the emotional processes that might have increased the effectiveness of the frames.

The concept of frame resonance is operationalised based on two interrelated factors that will prove to be relevant to the case study of this thesis, the credibility of the proffered frame, and relative salience (Benford & Snow 2000). In order to establish the credibility of the frames, I guided the analysis by using three interrelated questions as indicators: is there congruence between what Hindu nationalist parties say and what they do?¹³ Is there evidence that supports

¹³ This is referred to as frame consistency

the claims that Hindu nationalist parties make within these framings?¹⁴ and are the frame articulators perceived to be credible?¹⁵.

With regards to the notion of relative salience, I will guide the analysis by using the following three questions that will serve as indicators for this factor: how essential are the beliefs, values, and ideas communicated through these framings, for the lives of the Hindu targets?¹⁶ To what extent are these framings congruent with cultural narratives?¹⁷ And lastly, are these framings congruent with everyday experiences of the target?¹⁸

Moreover, the concept of emotional resonance is defined as “the link between targeted recruits’ emotional lives and the emotional messages encoded in SMO framing” (Schrock et al. 2004, p. 62). The goal of emotional resonance is for the emotional lives of targets of recruitment to become congruent to the emotional messages encoded in the frames. This concept is operationalised using the concept of ‘emotional channelling’, defined as “reshaping certain emotions into other emotions that are more adequate for the social movement activity at hand” (Ruiz-Junco 2006, p. 47).

In order to gain more insight into this, somewhat abstract, concept, I will first look for information that shapes an idea of the emotional lives of the targets of the framing processes (i.e. contextual factors, such as the Covid-19 outbreak play an essential role). Secondly, I will look at the emotional messages encoded in the framings. As several authors state that emotional channelling of fears into anger often happens through the medium of the language of injustice, I will use the concept of ‘justice frames’ by (Benford and Hunt, 1992) to “identify ‘victims’ of a particular injustice and to amplify their victimisation”. Lastly, I will look at how these two factors are connected, and if there has been an effective use of the process of ‘emotional channelling’ in order to establish congruence between the emotional lives of the targets and the emotional messages.

These operationalised concepts were used to guide the analysis of the cognitive and emotional dynamics of the effectiveness of frames. The primary data source for this phase consists of the second and third level of the CMA that has analysed the deeper meaning of the three metaphors (i.e. their emotive and persuasive functions), as well as contextualise them. This is consistent with this phase of the method since it also engages in a more in-depth analysis of the identified threat metaphors.

¹⁴ This is referred to as empirical credibility

¹⁵ This is referred to as the credibility of frame articulators

¹⁶ This is referred to as centrality

¹⁷ This is referred to as narrative fidelity

¹⁸ This is referred to as experiential commensurability

Phase 4: Ideological performances

Lastly, this phase will engage in the examination of how ‘ideological performances’ are reflected in the data. Ideological performances are defined as “how a performer’s beliefs, values, and allegiances are displayed for an audience via her behaviour, language, movement, use of props, and aesthetics. Put simply, it is the way one ‘codes’ one’s ideology into behaviour and aesthetics (perhaps unconsciously) in a way that can then be read and interpreted by others based on knowledge of the referenced meaning systems” (Fuist 2013, p. 430).

The referenced meaning system is one that I have already established within the previous phases, consisting of the threat metaphors and the Hindu nationalist parties. The ideological performances then reflect how someone enacts their collective identity within this meaning system. A collective identity is defined as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” (Polletta & Jasper 2001, p. 285). So, what I will do in this phase is look at several performances of Hindu individuals in India, since they are defined as the targets of the threat metaphors. I will look at certain actions, props, or language that are informed by the previously established frames, and the message that the individual is communicated through this performance and interpreted by the audience (Fuist 2013).

To examine ideological performances, I have used the data yielded by the semi-structured interviews. These interviews consisted of nine young Muslims currently living in India¹⁹. The transcriptions of these interviews were uploaded into NVivo, and I have used theoretically informed nodes, based on the above-mentioned indicators to identify patterns.

2.5 Ethical considerations and limitations

Since it is essential for a researcher to reflect on the conducted research, in this section, I will reflect on the politics as well as the analysis of the conducted research. First of all, since the topic of this research is sensitive to the participants, I will briefly reflect on the ethical considerations that were taken into account prior to conducting the interviews. First of all, building on the notion of ‘informed consent’, I have informed the participants of the interviews openly about the goals of the research, the structure, the way the data was stored and analysed and their rights concerning withdrawal (Boeije 2010, p.45). They were offered the opportunity to ask all additional questions, which I responded to openly and honestly. Additionally, I asked the participants for permission to record the interview for transcribing purposes. Since the

¹⁹ For a complete list of the participants, please see appendix A

interviews took place in the online spheres, I decided to use Zoom, because this was the software that my participants felt most comfortable with, and it succeeded my requirements concerning the guarantees of privacy. Lastly, I have anonymised all participants in this research, using pseudonyms.

The first limitation of this research is defined as the ‘aporia of complicity’, as defined by Regmi (2014). This limitation revolves around the statement that research of Western scholars on the Global South often does not provide a contribution towards social justice and emancipation. This research has planned on tackling this limitation by using the notion of relational research, as theorised by Chilisa (2012). She argues that Critical Discourse Analysts should bring some kind of participatory element into their research in order to close the gap between researchers and the ones being researched. This research has included participants by interviewing young Muslims from India. As Alcoff claims in her article “if the dangers of speaking for others result from the possibility of misrepresentation, expanding one’s own authority and privilege, and a generally imperialist speaking ritual, then speaking with and to can lessen these dangers” (Alcoff 1991, p.491).

Connected to this point, is that the Critical Metaphor Analysis presses for a reflection on the positionality of the researcher. As a white, Dutch woman, I am far removed from the Indian culture and the complex dynamics this thesis aims to describe. I am aware that, due to this positionality, it is impossible for me to fully grasp the historical complexities, the social structures, and the power dynamics this thesis aims to understand. Nonetheless, I have engaged in a systematic analysis of a variety of triangulated empirical data, to attempt to tackle this limitation to the extent that lies within my capabilities. Moreover, I assess this section as a chance for me to demonstrate awareness of this limitation of this study.

The last limitation, centres around the notion that the participants of the research all self-identify as ‘privileged’ within Indian society. Most of the participants are (PhD)students at a university and relatively wealthy. This limitation is complicated to tackle, due to the travel restrictions in light of Covid-19. I had to rely on my limited network and the willingness of my participants to introduce me to friends or acquaintances. Moreover, participants within lower classes of Indian society either did not have the electronic resources or were not interested in talking to me. Although discourses and their effects are visible in all layers of society, my participants stated that, especially in light of the Covid-19 outbreak, they were not the ones that were hit the hardest. Still, I am convinced that the quality of the interviews that I have conducted, shape an insightful image.

Chapter 3. Empirical Context

As briefly indicated in the introduction of this thesis, Hindu-Muslim relations in India have been violent and conflictual for a long time. In fact, these violent relations date back to before the British colonial times. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to provide an excessive description of this history²⁰. This chapter will highlight the historical events, recent developments and the current political climate of India, relevant to understanding the further analysis of this research.

3.1 Relevant Historical Events

The complex historical phenomenon that is the Partition of India in 1947 describes the division of British India into two independent nation-states: the Hindu-majority nation of India and the Muslim-majority nation of Pakistan. As such, the state of Pakistan was meant to become a political haven for the Muslims that were previously living in the Britain Indian Empire (Appadurai 2006). Brass (2003) describes how the memory of the Partition and the violence that is associated with it, is deep-rooted in the minds of people in contemporary India. This memory, he argues, is part of modern identity in India, and kept alive through the consistent tensions between India and Pakistan (Brass 2003).

This highly complex phenomenon of the partition of India resulted in a permanent state of war that has been going on for over three decades, located in the state of Kashmir. This long-standing dispute of the Kashmir region has been resulting in military escalation between Pakistan and India, from time to time. Kashmir is an Indian-administered region with a Muslim majority population. It held a special status within the Indian constitution, thanks to Article 370. This clause grants the region considerable autonomy (i.e. its own flag, constitution, and independence except for foreign affairs, military, and communication matters) (Appadurai 2006; International Crisis Group 2020).

The partition and permanent state of war led to a new-found feeling of nationalism and the rise of a Hindu political coalition (Appadurai 2006). This Hindu nationalist coalition has been systematically attempting to frame India as a Hindu nation. There has been a wide variety of scholarly and journalistic attention towards the story of how India, the largest democracy of the world, within 40 years of its emergence, has shifted into a strictly Hinduism polity

²⁰ For more literature on the history of Hindu-Muslim violence, see Brass (1996), Appadurai (2006), Brass (1996), Van der Veer (1994).

especially because the constitution of India is paying a lot of attention to religious inclusion and protecting weaker communities within society (Appadurai 2006; Brass 2003).

Another category of impactful historical events is the 9/11 attacks and the global War on Terror that followed. Apart from a military and political event, the global War on Terror has also marked a discursive event. Within the first term, the BJP was in power (i.e. 1998 until 2004), the War on Terror marked a golden opportunity for the BJP, and its Hindu-centred allies to pursue their political agendas. They engaged in discursive practices, infused with the language of terrorism, aiming to link the Indian Muslims to Pakistan based terrorists. Moreover, the government attempted to rewrite the history of India (e.g. rewriting children's textbooks) to reflect their view that India is, in fact, a Hindu nation, invaded by the Muslims and under significant threat of Pakistan and Islamic terrorism today (Appadurai 2006, pp. 94-95).

3.2 Current political Climate

The Hindu-right, which consists of president Modi's BJP, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh²¹ (RSS), has convincingly risen to power during the 2014 elections. Since they have won the general election, with a majority in Parliament (which has not happened since 1980), they can rule the country without the support of regional coalitions. This demonstrates the trend of increasing support for Hindu nationalism in India (Flåten 2007).

The government's ideology, 'Hindutva', is characterised by the pursuit of a pure Hindu state, where its citizens live according to Hindu values. As such, the parties are aiming to reform India according to its Hindu cultural legacy, and actively trying to redefine who belongs to the Hindu country of India and who falls outside of the boundaries. While engaging in these processes, Muslims within India has commonly been defined as a threat by the ruling government (Flåten 2007; Appadurai 2006).

Authors like Flåten (2007), Appadurai (2006), and Ramachandran (2020) have been conducting research towards this Hindutva ideology and how it is used to frame the Muslim population, but also other minorities (e.g. Christians) as a 'threat' to the pure Hindu nation of India. Since their religious fatherland is not India, they are seen as not really Indian at heart. Therefore, the leaders of the RSS have been arguing that "they either have to adapt completely to the Hindu culture and religion, or stay in the country, subordinated to the Hindu Nation,

²¹ English translation: National Volunteer Organisation

claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen's rights" (Golwalkar 1939).

3.3 Recent Developments

Under the ruling of Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Modi, the already precarious situation for Muslim minorities in India has been exacerbated, demonstrated in a few recent developments that have increased Islamophobia and put the Hindu-Muslim relations under pressure. The events that shortly will be elaborated upon in this section are the revocation of the special status of Kashmir, the CAA protests, and the Delhi riots that followed the CAA protests.

First of all, the revocation of article 370, in August 2019, put an end to the special status of the semi-autonomous state of Kashmir, as described in the previous section. Although the government claimed that this decision would bring peace and development to the region, it has only increased the alienation of the region, as well as raised tensions with Pakistan (International Crisis Group 2020). Moreover, the revocation is seen as another step towards the Hindu-nationalist's goals of establishing a Hindu-state (Ramachandran 2020).

Secondly, the CAA law, which received passage in 2019, provides an update to the already existing Citizenship Act of 1955. This act was created to grant Indian citizenship to refugees from neighbouring countries. With the new CAA law, citizenship is offered to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Christians, and Parsis from Muslim-majority countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, while excluding Muslims. The law is nationally and internationally critiqued for its' discriminatory nature (Raj 2020). Never before has religion been a criterion for Indian citizenship (Ramachandran 2020).

Additionally, after the implementation of the CAA law, the implementation of a pan-Indian National Register of Citizens was announced. The function of the NRC is to prevent Muslim immigrants from acquiring rights and benefits in India. To get registered on the NRC, people were asked to prove their Indian descentance by showing lineage and legacy data. This sparked widespread protests around India, claiming that the NRC and CAA are used as a political tool, to identify and harass Muslims in India (Raj 2020).

These events are examples of how the Hindutva agenda of the Hindu nationalist government is reflected in policies. As Raj (2020, p.33) states, "the 'chronology' of amending CAA first for providing citizenship to non-Muslim refugees, and then introducing NRC to identify intruders not only targets and excludes a huge chunk of Muslim population regardless of their ancestry by snatching their citizenship rights but also enlarges the category of stateless

people. It is unclear what will happen to them next, how to deal with their problems, as neither can they be deported to India, Bangladesh, Pakistan or any other South Asian country due to lack of arrangements.”

Thirdly, the peaceful protests of the CAA law, combined with the rapidly increasing tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities, resulted in the Delhi riots in February 2020. Large waves of destruction characterised the Delhi riots, and violence against Muslims, perpetrated by the Hindu community (Nagarwal 2020). It resulted in 53 deaths and over 200 injured (Human Rights Watch 2020).

A month after the Delhi riots, the Covid-19 virus reached India, which left the country in a state of chaos and fear. As such, I argue that the global pandemic can be defined as a state of 'ontological insecurity' in the experience of Indian citizens. Ontological security is defined by Giddens (1984, p.375) as the "confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be". A state of ontological insecurity therefore often is a result of disaster. The importance of ontological security is most visible, in situations where it is removed. I argue in line with its definition; the Covid-19 pandemic is such a situation. This situation, in which the presuppositions of social environments are broken, not only frustrates peoples but outrages their sense of justice. Processes that are seen to awaken passionate emotions.

According to Erikson (1976), there is something particularly unsettling about threats that cannot be grasped or defined by our senses. By its very nature, Covid-19 cannot be smelled, seen, or heard. It could be at any point, at any time, without a clear ending. The virus works its way into the human body, without us knowing what future effects might be. These processes spark complex emotional dynamics within the human body and mind, often led by fear (Giddens 1976).

Also, in India, the Covid-19 pandemic has been disrupting the social worlds as they were known to its population. India was faced with millions of migrant workers and daily wage earners rendered jobless after the lock-down, causing a migrant flow of millions of people across India, as well as a major hunger crisis. The social anxiety levels are high, and the communal tensions were at a peak.

As this empirical contextualisation has shown, there has been extensive research on discursive, and framing practices of Hindu-nationalist parties in India, targeting the minorities of India. However, what the specific case of Covid-19 has shown, is that the emotional lives of the Indian public are severely disrupted during the Covid-19 outbreak. Therefore, consistent with the previously established theoretical gap, I argue for the importance of including these emotional dynamics in the analysis.

3.4 Chapter summary

The current chapter has demonstrated how the long-standing, hostile and violent Hindu-Muslim relations, led by the Modi-administration, have worsened over these last years. The chapter reviews how Hindu-nationalist parties in India have been historically engaging in framing practices, defining Muslims as a threat. Moreover, the government's strong Hindu-nationalist 'Hindutva' ideology has been reflected in several policies since 2019. These recent Islamophobic events, aim to demonstrate the current, precarious situation of Muslims in India and serve as a point of reference for the following chapters.

Lastly, the chapter has defined the outbreak of Covid-19 in India as a situation of ontological insecurity, which is seen to spark passionate emotions due to the removal of the presuppositions of social life. In conjunction with the theoretical relevance of the inclusion of emotions, this emphasises once again the importance of emotional dynamics in understanding the empirical complication central to this thesis.

Chapter 4. Identifying Threat Metaphors

As became apparent in the preceding chapters, during the outbreak of Covid-19 in India, Hindu Nationalist parties have been engaging in the construction of meaning through the use of threat metaphors. These threat metaphors are understood as a type of affective frames, based on social meaning (i.e. already existing frames), which are politically functional in the sense that they are used to construct the Muslim minorities as a threat to the lives of Hindus.

The current chapter provides an answer to the first sub-question: "What are the threat metaphors that construct a representation of the 'reality' of the Muslim community's role in the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India?". Aiming to answer this sub-question, I will use the three core framing tasks as identified by Benford and Snow (2000, pp. 615-618) 'diagnostic', 'prognostic', and 'motivational framing' to unravel the meaning that has been given to the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India by the Hindu nationalist parties. This chapter will present the evidence and findings surrounding these framing practices. This chapter is necessary whereas before I can explore how the threat metaphors were able to demonise and construct violence against Muslims, I first need to establish the proffered frames and analyse how they have given meaning to the phenomenon of the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 central to this thesis.

4.1 The problem: It's the Muslims

This section aims to answer the following question: what is the perceived problem articulated by the Hindu nationalist political parties? To identify the constructed problem, the concepts of 'injustice frame' (Benford & Hunt 1992) and 'boundary frame' (Hunt, Benford, & Snow 1994, p. 194) will be used. The combined analysis of newspaper articles and political cartoons showed three dominant diagnostic framings, consisting of Muslims portrayed as the Covid-19 virus itself, Covid-19 as a weapon of Islamic terrorism, and Muslims as the enemy in the war against Covid-19. These three diagnostic framings are all infused with metaphorical rhetoric. For reasons that will become apparent throughout this chapter, I have defined these affective diagnostic frames as 'threat metaphors'. The data showed other diagnostic frames as well, but since these were existent to a lesser extent, I have decided against their inclusion into the analysis. Therefore, I have chosen the three most common and recurring diagnostic frames emerging from the data.

4.1.1 Muslims as Covid-19

The first manner in which Muslims are metaphorically constructed as a problem is that of Muslims as the Covid-19 virus itself. Consistent with this representation, the data showed political cartoons that display Covid-19 particles dressed in Muslim attire, newspaper articles that refer to coronavirus by conceptualising Muslims as an 'infection' (Gowda 2020), and many other interpretations of this threat metaphor. The threat metaphor of Muslims as the Covid-19 virus itself was most dominantly represented within political cartoons, portraying an angry-looking male Muslims in the shape of the Covid-19 particle.

An example of an article that relied on this threat metaphor is an article of the *Star of Mysore*, a local English-language Indian newspaper, referring to Muslims as 'rotten apples' (Gowda 2020). Throughout the article, the author talks about how Muslims, by being infected themselves, are spreading the infection throughout the whole country. However, instead of making this statement explicitly, he uses the analogy of a rotten apple. The author states "referred to as a rotten apple, a bad apple is a negative person who infects those around him with his bad influence. The term bad apple or rotten apple comes with a proverb: one bad apple spoils the whole basket, an ancient saying that has stood the test of time. The nation is currently hosting an annoying 18 per cent of its population self-identifying as rotten apples" (Gowda 2020).

This quote, infused with metaphorical language, refers to 'rotten apples' as recognisable by their "faith and other features including their attire" (Gowda 2020). Now, as a Hindu himself, the author is making a clear reference to India's Muslim population and the dominant discourse surrounding them, which states that Muslims are the source of the Covid-19 infection in India. As such, the article reiterates the diagnostic frame in which Muslims are constructed as the source of the outbreak and spread of Covid-19. The article casts blame on the infected Muslim population and the way in which they are spreading Covid-19, thereby constructing their existence in the country as problematic.

A more explicit way in which Muslims are metaphorically represented as a virus becomes evident after an analysis of the political cartoons. Multiple cartoons depict an (often angry looking) Muslim male as a Covid-19 particle, thereby constructing a direct link between the virus and Muslims. Figure 1²² shows an example of this representation which was published by one of the most prominent Indian newspapers, *The Hindu*, on 26 March 2020. Although this

²² Harichandan Deepak. *The Hindu Cartoonscape, Covid-19*. 2020. Accessed on May 19, 2020, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/cartoon/cartoonscape-march-26-2020/article31167023.ece>

cartoon was removed by The Hindu Cartoonscape several days after its publication, due to international and national critique on its Islamophobic nature, the cartoon has been shared on a massive scale. It has been circulating in social media ever since (Soundararajan, Kumar, Nair, & Greely, 2020).

This cartoon displays the globe, on its knees, wearing a mask while being held at gunpoint by a Covid-19 particle dressed in Muslim attire. As such, it is showing a villain - victim dichotomy, in which the Muslim is presented as the villain and the rest of the world as the victims. This dichotomy is created by representing the world as threatened, wearing a mask, and positioned harmless on its knees. On the contrary, the Muslim-looking Covid-19 particles are depicted as violent and in control through the possession of weapons.

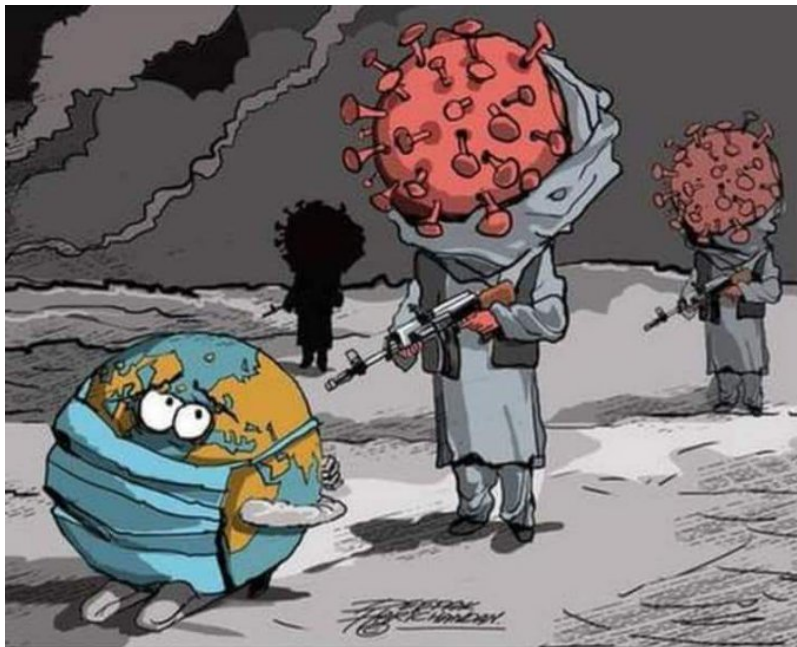


Fig. 1. Political cartoon on the Covid-19 outbreak in India. Created by Harichandan Deepak. 2020. The Hindu.

I argue that the overarching process that the article of "a star of Mysore", as well as the cartoon are taking part in, is defined as 'boundary framing' by Hunt et al. (1994, p.194). Boundary frames seek to delineate boundaries between 'good' and 'evil', thereby making a distinction between the roles of victims and villains. Within this threat metaphor, the Muslim community is understood in terms of a virus to which certain normative features are attached. Often, infections are associated with contamination, sickness, impurity, or spoliation, and implies the need for controlling this pernicious spread (Steuter & Wills 2008).

When further examining the boundary frames within this threat metaphor, I argue that supplementary to these normative characteristics associated with this threat metaphor, the threat metaphors also make a distinction between human and animal. Thereby, these diagnostic frames are engaging in the process of dehumanising the Muslim community. In the representation of the Muslim as a virus, the enemy is seen as something utterly alien, as lower than life. I argue that this dehumanising metaphor of Muslims as the Covid-19 virus is particularly dangerous, because, in line with Steuter and Wills (2008, p. 82) "when the enemy is a disease-bug, as when he is an insect-bug, extermination and eradication become the logical, responsible, even humane response". In this process of dehumanising a community, we view them as fundamentally different from ourselves, which, in the long term, causes us to become indifferent to their suffering (Steuter & Wills 2008).

Another example of Muslims being depicted as the virus is shown in Figure 2²³. This cartoon was drawn by Manoj Kureel, an Indian cartoonist who mostly produces Hindu-nationalist drawings. The cartoon shows a Muslim man, spreading Covid-19 by blowing bubbles. The bubbles that are spreading are Covid-19 particles shaped like angry-looking Muslims. The instrument that the Muslim man is used to blow bubbles with is shaped as the flag of Pakistan.

²³ Kureel Manoj [Angry Muslim-looking Covid-19 particles are spreading]. 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58347d04beba9bb1e66df84c/t/5ed86655611dc04dc4c48e7f/1591240284877/CORONAJIHAD_EqualityLabs_Report2020.pdf



Fig. 2. Political Cartoon of Muslim that is spreading Covid-19 particles, disguised as Muslims. Created by Manoj Kureel. 2020. Report of Equality Labs. <https://www.equalitylabs.org/coronajihad>

Within this last example, the process of boundary framing not only presents Muslims as the Covid-19 virus but refers to Pakistan as well. As highlighted in the contextualising chapter, Pakistan is a long-standing enemy of India. The Muslims community in India has been systematically linked to Pakistan and seen as the enemy within. This way, through this visual metaphor, I argue that boundaries between the good Hindu population and the evil Muslim population, inherently connected to the historical enemy of Pakistan are reiterated.

4.1.2. Muslims as the enemy in the war against Covid-19

This idea of Muslims as the enemy within is constructed through the second dominant threat metaphor. In this threat metaphor, Muslims portrayed as the enemy within the war against Covid-19. First and foremost, this idea of a war against Covid-19 is articulated by Prime Minister Modi who systematically refers to the outbreak of coronavirus as a war ("India striving

for" 2020; Shreshtha 2020; "Coronavirus crisis' biggest invisible war" 2020). He compliments the citizens of India for fighting this "war as soldiers" (Shreshtha 2020). Media have been recycling this metaphorical rhetoric in their reporting on the crisis, stating that it is the "biggest invisible war of our lifetime" ("Coronavirus crisis' biggest invisible war" 2020). The government has even created a page their website where volunteers can register to "join the war against COVID-19"²⁴. As became evident throughout the process of analysing the data, the rhetoric of war was widely used in reporting on Covid-19.

Within this war, Covid-19 is not the only enemy that is being fought, because Muslims are systematically referred to as the enemy as well. This metaphor is reiterated by headlines such as 'hunt for other Tablighi attendees continues' (Pradhan 2020) or 'Nizamuddin²⁵ COVID-19 Scare: Hunt On For Participants' ("Coronavirus: Hunt intensified" 2020) and the claim that the religious organisation of the Tablighi Jamaat is engaging in 'biological warfare' (Mishra 2020). This threat metaphor is even taken a step further by political leaders, as newspaper articles state that Muslims have been referred to as 'enemies of humanity' ("Yogi Adityanath Says" 2020). Or, as the following quote suggests, even as provokers of a genocide; 'the governor said that on hearing the speech, it seems that the leaders of the Jamaat are provoking people for Genocide. Those people do not respect the law. I say that the law should be followed' ("Tablighi Jamaat member should" 2020).

The above-mentioned evidence demonstrates how the threat metaphor of war against Covid-19 is based on 'injustice frames' and 'boundary frames' (Benford & Hunt 1992; Hunt et al. 1994, p. 194). I will elaborate on this statement in the following section. First of all, the function of injustice frames is to identify 'victims' of a particular injustice and to amplify their victimisation. The frames intent to spread a feeling of injustice across the targets. Moreover, injustice frames are closely related to boundary frames, in the sense that they engage in the identification of 'victim', which naturally implies that their boundaries are set with regards to who is the victim and who is the perpetrator, who is seen as good, and who is seen as evil.

The identified victim in the threat metaphor of war is the Hindu population of India, that is being attacked by the 'biological warfare' (Mishra, 2020) waged by the 'enemy' Muslim population ("Yogi Adityanath Says" 2020). Muslims are constructed as the enemy within the nations' fight against Covid-19, as they are allegedly weaponising Covid-19 to attack innocent Hindus. Based on this evidence, I argue that Muslims, within this threat metaphor, are portrayed

²⁴ Source: <https://www.mygov.in/task/join-war-against-covid-19-register-volunteer/>

²⁵ The Nizamuddin Markaz is a Mosque Banglewali Masjid, is a mosque located in Nizamuddin West in South Delhi, India.

as purposeful actors, who are inherently 'evil' and aiming to infect and kill innocent people. By using words such as 'provoked' or 'planned' ("Tablighi plot" 2020), these articles define the intentions of the enemy, thereby assigning them attributions such as evil and criminal.

The processes of justice framing and boundary framing, are related to what Lakoff (1992) hints at as "the fairy tale of a just war". He states that there is an asymmetry that is built into the cast of 'heroes, villains, and victims' within the symbolism of the metaphor of war. The victim is seen as innocent and in desperate need of protection. The hero is seen as courageous and moral, as opposed to the villain who is portrayed as vicious. Whereas the hero is rational and calculating, the villain is inherently bad. This results in the belief that no one can reason with a villain. Instead, they must be defeated. This portrayal of the enemy is a consequence of the way that we understand a 'just war' (Lakoff, 1992).

Thus, applying this to the case of India, by using the metaphorical language of war, Hindu Nationalist parties imply that they are under attack by the enemy-other, which in this case is the Muslim population that uses Covid-19 as a weapon. As such, this rhetoric engages in the legitimization of action against the Muslim community, since it is the state's moral obligation to protect their citizens from this villain. By framing the phenomenon in terms of war, the government already indirectly refers to a solution. Since the enemy within a war is someone we cannot reason with, the solution relies on harsh measures.

4.1.3 The spread Covid-19 as a form of Islamic bioterrorism

The final threat metaphor that I have identified is Muslims using Covid-19 as a type of bioterrorism. Within the political cartoons, as well as the newspaper articles, this has been the most widely used threat metaphor to describe the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims in general. This threat metaphor is manifested in several ways. In an article of Times Now, in which the authors aim to prove a link between terrorist organisation ISIS and the Tablighi Jamaat, they argue that ISIS has urged the Tablighi Jamaat to use Covid-19 as 'an arms against the disbelievers' (Mishra, 2020; "Tablighi Jamaat shares", 2020). Additionally, the following quote was used in the article of TimesNow:

"O sons of Tawheed! Allah has provided you with a weapon far greater than stones. Use it to break the armies of the disbelieving nations who are out on streets and can be easily overcome. What better chance can you get to kill the disbelievers in multitudes than COVID 19? From limited troops who have been practising jihad, the Muslims in India

can now become one and come down on the disbelievers like arrows striking at their hearts" (Mishra, 2020).

Metaphors like Covid-19 as 'arms' and 'weapons' used against disbelievers suggest a link between the infections and Islamic terrorism. In this framing of terrorism, the term 'Corona Jihad', or 'jihad'²⁶ has been widely used.

The constructed frame portrays the fight against the enemies of Islam in the discourse of Corona Jihad, in which Tablighi Jamaat members are committing a 'Talibani crime' by using Covid-19 as a 'weapon', the terrorist is behaving similar to 'sleeper cells' and the method they use is that of a 'suicide bomber' (Jelaani, Pandey, & Halder 2020; Sujeet, 2020; "Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi" 2020, India Today, 2020). In the following sections, I will unpack these different terms.

Multiple articles have been enforcing this metaphorical rhetoric of terrorism by stating that the Tablighi Jamaat has carried out a 'Talibani-crime' (Venugopal, 2020; Jelaani, Pandey, Halder 2020), thereby establishing a metaphorical link between the Tablighi Jamaat and the Taliban. I argue that the choice for this specific Islamic terrorist organisation is not arbitrary as there has been an ever-growing concern in India that Islamic fundamentalist organisations among which the Taliban, will expand their activities to India (Appadurai 2006). Using this metaphor in times of the uncertainty of the global Covid-19 pandemic, is a powerful recipe for fear, as it taps into the long-standing fears of the audience.

In terms of the tactic that is allegedly used within the act of terrorism, newspaper articles refer to 'suicide bombings' to construct the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims in general as deliberately spreading Covid-19 with terrorist motives (Mishra 2020). For example, in an article of Aajtak, the author states 'He claimed that Tablighi Jamaat produces suicide bombers. According to Rizvi, the Tablighi Jamaat hatched this conspiracy to spread Corona in India' (Abhishek 2020). Although newspapers have used this term systematically to describe the members of Tablighi Jamaat, this metaphor is more commonly used in its visual form in political cartoons. In these political cartoons, Muslims are often depicted as a bomb themselves, such as a cartoon that shows an angry-looking male Muslim, slowly transitioning into a Covid-19 particle that is shaped as a bomb. However, some cartoons show Muslim men wearing a suicide vest, but instead of a bomb, the vest contains Covid-19 particles, such as in the visual

²⁶ Jihad n.d. via <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> Jihad is defined as 'A struggle or fights against the enemies of Islam

metaphor displayed in Figure 3²⁷. This political cartoon was published by LalluRam, India's fastest Hindi news app, and shared on their social media channels as well.

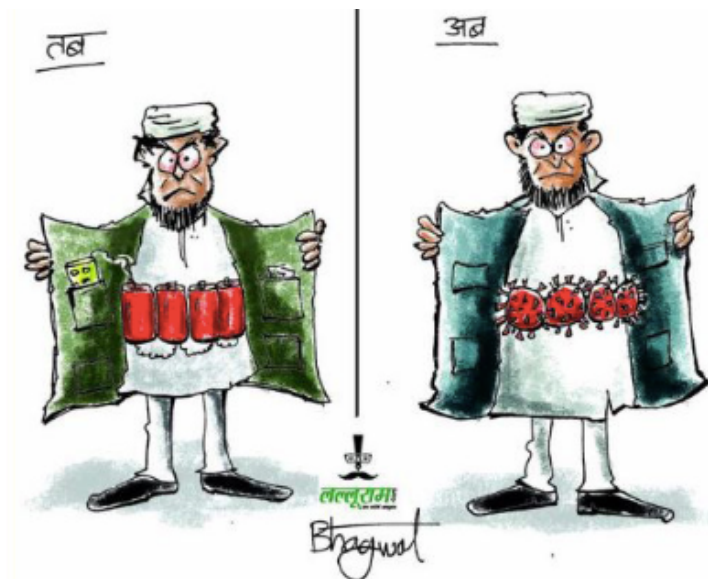


Fig. 3. Political cartoon of suicide bombers carrying out 'corona jihad'. Shared by LalluRam. 2020. From the Equality Labs report: <https://www.equalitylabs.org/coronajihad>

The English translation of both Hindi captions is 'then' and 'now,' implying that Muslims were previously already engaging in activities of suicide bombing but now found a new way of killing people, by using Covid-19 as the bomb.

The presented evidence suggests that the threat metaphor of terrorism also is constructed through processes of injustice framing and boundary framing to delineate boundaries between good and evil and amplify victimisation (Hunt et al. 1994, p.194); Benford & Hunt 1992). The frames construct the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims in general, as violent enemies within. The portrayal of Muslims as terrorists immediately constructs them as evil, which implicitly refers to Hindus as the victims, as they are, according to these threat metaphors, the target of the terrorist actions.

Hülse and Spencer (2008) argue that terrorists are seen as 'being among us'. What this means, is that terrorists are generally seen to operate as individuals, as 'lone wolves', although often acting in the name of a particular organisation. What this does to our minds, is that in a way, every Muslim could potentially be a terrorist. This results in the fact that the threat of terrorism becomes more and more diffuse, and therefore harder to locate. Consequently, I argue

²⁷ LalluRam Political Cartoon [Suicide bomber carrying out Corona Jihad]. 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://www.equalitylabs.org/coronajihad>

that by applying this metaphor to the context of the Covid-19 outbreak in India, this shifts the focus away from the Tablighi Jamaat, as every Muslim could now potentially be a (bio)terrorist. The threat of bioterrorism becomes more diffuse and blame and accountability are now shifted from the organisation of the Tablighi Jamaat to Muslims more in general, as they are all seen as suspects.

The underlying theme that metaphorical language used to describe terrorism is that terrorists are seen as 'criminal'. This has implications for the relationship of the boundaries between 'us' and the terrorist. As a criminal actor, the terrorist is being subjected to the laws of the country. In general, A hierarchy is being established between the ones that are opposing the law and the ones that are obeying the law. This makes the terrorist inferior, rather than equal to us (Hülse & Spencer 2008). I argue that this constructs the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims in general as illegitimate actors, as outlaws. This amplifies the inherently evil character of the Muslims, which, in turn, promotes the delegitimisation of the Muslim population.

Lastly, I argue the process of basic self-justification underlies all of three threat metaphors within this research. The model that arises from the symbolism grounded in the three threat metaphors is reactive in nature and suggests that 'our retaliation is right and, indeed, inevitable' (Steuter & Wills 2008, p. 12). Namely, this paradigm suggests that since the Muslims have infested the country, declared war, or incited terroristic actions, the Indian state and its Hindu-majority were given no choice in the matter but to react, to defend themselves and their (fellow)citizens. Hence, the threat metaphors all consist of stories of legitimation. These metaphors are preparing the soil for the legitimation of violent actions towards the Muslim minority through their framings, a subject that will be explored further in the next chapters.

4.2 Prognostic framing

The second core framing task that will be analysed in this chapter will look at the articulation of a solution, and the strategies to carry out that plan, or 'prognostic frames' (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 616). Newspaper articles have quoted a variety of Hindu nationalist politicians that articulated solutions to combat the threat of Muslims spreading Covid-19 in India. These solutions either aim to limit the further spread of Covid-19 or punish the Muslim minorities, which, according to the previously defined diagnostic frames, are responsible for the spread of Covid-19. The evidence showed that the prognostic frame is mainly articulated in three ways:

a violent punishment, practices of excluding the Muslim population, or legal actions that should be taken against members of the Tablighi Jamaat.

First of all, several politicians have called for a violent punishment of the Muslim community. A regional politician, Ray Thackeray, of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena²⁸ (MNS), states that members of the Tablighi Jamaat "should be killed by firing bullets at them. Why give them treatment? A separate section should be created, and their treatment should be stopped" (Bhandari 2020). He argues that people from the Tablighi Jamaat think that religion is bigger than the crisis of Covid-19. The only way they will learn, according to Thackeray, is that 'they should be beaten, and the video should be made viral. Only then will these people understand' (Sutar 2020). Moreover, in the article that states the analogy of Muslims as 'rotten apples', the author states that 'an ideal solution to the problem of bad apples, is to get rid of them' (Gowda 2020).

The second proposed solution is that of exclusion. Several politicians have advised the Hindu population to distance themselves from the Muslim community to prevent infection. This is reflected in a solution proposed by a member of the ruling BJP, Suresh Tewari, Minister of State. He argues that people shouldn't buy from Muslim vendors anymore, since they are allegedly trying to spread Covid-19 via their saliva by spitting on the fruit they are selling (Shah 2020). By avoiding Muslim vendors when shopping, the Hindu population will limit the risk of getting infected by the 'source' of Covid-19.

The third and last proposed solution, articulated by several Hindu nationalist politicians who argued that legal action should be taken against the members of the Tablighi Jamaat. The reasons for this legal action vary in nature from 'deliberately ignoring directions' ("Tablighi Jamaat Event Organisers" 2020; "Delhi Police Charges" 2020), to more extreme claims such as 'culpable homicide' or 'terrorist activities' ("Coronavirus | Tablighi Jamaat centre chief" 2020; Patna 2020). I argue that government officials who are pleading for legal action, highlight the element of accountability of the alleged actions of the Muslims. This element of accountability reiterates the fact that Muslims are seen to be the culprits of the outbreak and spread of Covid-19, thereby also strengthening the diagnostic frame.

The description of these three proposed solutions seem to be logically derived from and proportionate to the constructed problem. The exclusion of Muslim would limit their abilities to spread Covid-19 to innocent Muslims, as they do not come into contact with the Hindu population anymore. The solution of legal actions or violent punishment would take measures

²⁸ English translation: Maharashtra Reformation Army

against Muslims using Covid-19 as a weapon (of terrorism). With regards to the threat metaphor of terrorism, since the actions of the bioterrorist are constructed as criminal, legal punishment would be a suitable solution. Lastly, since the metaphor of war implies that the enemy is someone that cannot be reasoned with, violent retribution is framed as the only suitable solution.

What these three proposed solutions demonstrate, therefore, is that they are all consistent with the constructed problem of the 'threat metaphors'. Benford (1987) argues that there tends to be a correspondence between the diagnostic and prognostic framings. That is to say, the constructed problem limits the possibilities of proposed solutions, since they have to be corresponding to be more logical and believable.

4.3 Motivational framing

This last type of framing focuses on the agency component of the frames since it is concentrated on the construction of a vocabulary of motive to engage in action. I argue that these frames take the proposed solution one step closer to enactment since they move beyond the simple construction of a problem and identifying a proposed solution. Instead, these frames function as a call to action, which makes participation heavily reliant on these frames.

Through the use of 'vocabularies of severity' (Benford 1993, p.196), stressing the immensity of the danger, the spread of Covid-19 by Muslims is framed as an acute threat to the health and safety of the Indian population. These vocabularies of severity are visible in the evidence presented in the sections on diagnostic and prognostic framing. For example, framing the spread of Covid-19 as an attempt to provoke a genocide against the Hindu population, perpetrated by Muslims, or the claim that Muslims are engaging in biological warfare against the Hindu population articulates a severe risk for the Hindu population (Mishra 2020).

Following these vocabularies of severity, the rationale for participation then often relies on an appeal to the moral obligations of the audience or participants (Schell 1982). The Muslim other is not just defined as different and separate from us, as demonstrated in the section on diagnostic framing, but as the enemy. By using this rhetoric, Hindu nationalist parties are already hinting at the moral obligation of acting towards this injustice. Within these threat metaphors, Muslims are defined as a threat whose crimes are endangering the very existence of the Hindu population. I argue that what these frames present is what Elstain has referred to as 'moral absolutism'. The threat metaphors define the Muslim other as the absolute evil, which

'invites us to hate without limit and tells us, in time of conflict, that we are good citizens for doing so' (1985, p. 25).

I assert that this moral framework then urges Hindus to do something about this threat that is endangering them. This is reflected in the evidence as follows. When we take the example of the threat metaphor of Muslims as the Covid-19 virus, in which Muslims are described as 'rotten apples' spoiling the rest of India, the author states the following:" We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them, as the eminent scientist Einstein has opined. His prescription to the law-abiding majority in the country's population is:' The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but those who watch them passively without doing anything.'" (Gowda 2020). This quote reflects this idea of moral absolutism, by arguing that an even more significant threat than Muslims spreading Covid-19 are the passive bystanders who refuse to engage in action.

4.4 Chapter summary

To summarise, this chapter has used the three core framing tasks diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing to unravel the constructed representation of the reality of the Hindu nationalist parties. Within the process of diagnostic framing, I have identified three dominant ways in which the perceived problem is constructed, all infused with the language of metaphor. These metaphors of threat are identified in threefold, Muslims as the Covid-19 virus itself, Muslims as the enemy in the war against Covid-19, and Muslims as Islamic terrorists, using Covid-19 as a weapon. Through the process of boundary framing and justice framing, the analysis showed how a clear divide is being made between the social identities of Hindus and Muslims in India. In this dichotomous relationship between Muslims and Hindus, the Muslims are attributed as evil, while the Hindu is often described as moral, and good.

Proposed solutions to these problems are consistent with the threat metaphors and described in threefold: exclusion of Muslims, legal action, or violent punishment. Lastly, through vocabularies of severity and an appeal to the moral obligation of the Hindu population, the Hindu nationalist parties are aiming to motivate the audience into enactment. Now that we have established a detailed outlook of the proffered threat metaphors, the next section will elaborate on why these frames are seen as effective and therefore resonate with the Indian public.

Chapter 5. Frame Resonance

Now that I have identified the constructed diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames, the question remains: why does this presentation of reality resonate enough with the Indian public that they are willing to act upon it? As indicated in the introduction, reports of violence perpetrated against Muslims in India have emerged that are linked to the frames provided in the previous chapter. An example is the violent attack on Mehboob Ali, described in the introductory chapter. But why does the Indian public 'accept' this presentation of reality? Why did these framings (i.e. threat metaphors) seem to resonate with the audience while others may have fallen into 'deaf ears' or even be counterproductive? What are the determinant factors of the success of these frames? The answer to these questions will become more evident throughout the rest of this chapter when I engage in an analysis of 'frame resonance' (Snow & Benford 1988; Schrock et al. 2014).

The concept of frame resonance used in this chapter consists of three interrelated sets of determinant factors. (Snow & Benford 1988, Benford & Snow 2000; Schrock et al. 2004). Consisting of credibility and relative salience, that reflect the cognitive resonance of threat metaphors, and emotional resonance. This chapter will present evidence mainly consisting of the second and third level of the CMA, for each of these determinant factors and thereby engage in an analysis of the effectiveness of the frames.

5.1 Credibility of proffered frame

Whether the frames articulated in Chapter Five will be perceived as credible by the audience, is reliant on three factors: frame consistency, the empirical credibility, and the credibility of the frame articulators or claim makers. These interrelated factors will be discussed in the section below.

5.1.1. Frame consistency

Frame consistency is defined by Benford and Snow (2000, p.620) as the congruency between the enunciated ideology, beliefs, claims, and actions. The frame will be understood as more effective when “what the organisation says” and “what the organisation does” are in harmony. The BJP, which has close ties to the RSS, is known for its 'Hindutva' ideology that aims to establish a pure Hindu nation. In this section, I will first reflect on a recent policy, implemented throughout India that reflects 'what the organisation does'. Secondly, I will reflect on how

Hindutva is reflected in the constructed frames. I argue that these frames proffered by the BJP are in harmony with their previous performances.

In the case of the CAA and the NRC, the Hindutva agenda is reflected in the fact that after implementation of both policies, numerous Muslims in India will be rendered stateless (Raj 2020). This emphasises, again, the long-standing idea that they are not really Indian at heart and were never part of India in the first place. With regards to the state of Kashmir, the revocation of the special status reflects the Hindutva agenda since the only Muslim majority state of India will now fall under pan-Indian rules. Therefore, the revocation is seen as an essential step towards establishing a Hindu nation (International Crisis Group 2020; Ramachandran 2020).

The BJP has always been open and vocal about their Hindutva ideology. First of all, prime minister Modi is a lifelong member of the RSS, a party that is fiercely fighting for a Hindu nation and seen as very Hindu nationalistic. Secondly, Modi's election campaign, now known as the 'Modi doctrine', consisted almost entirely out of soft power²⁹ ideas, such as the idea of 'India first', the strengthening of the (Hindu) cultural ties and highlighting the cultural heritage of the Hindus in India. Altogether, a severe emotional investment towards the emotional connection of the Hindu homeland was initiated during this campaign (Kaul 2017; Kinnvall 2019; Parameswaran 2015). The overarching message of the campaign has been to portray India and their majority Hindu population as the responsible and peaceful country, while Pakistan is represented as aggressive and violent. This message is dependent on the idea of a uniform (Hindu) national identity (Kinnvall and Svensson 2018).

The, from my analysis, conducted threat metaphors and associated prognostic and motivational framings all reflect this Hindu-nationalist ideology of Hindutva. Not only do they all construct Muslims as the 'enemy' other by metaphorically referring to them as 'less than human' or terrorists, but they also glorify the Hindu population by placing them at the other side of this dichotomy. Hindus are seen as the embodiment of everything good and moral. Therefore, these threat metaphors connect very well to the broader Hindutva ideology of the BJP and are consistent with the preceding frames provided by the BJP.

5.1.2. Empirical credibility

Next, the empirical credibility refers to the “apparent fit between framings and events in the world” (Benford & Snow 2000, p.620). In this case study, empirical credibility looks at whether

²⁹ The ability to attract and co-opt, rather than coerce (contrast with hard power)

some events or occurrences can serve as evidence substantiating the threat metaphors (Snow & Benford 1988). There are several ways in which the BJP and the media are providing evidence to support the constructed threat metaphors. These pieces of evidence or indicators are presented as facts that substantiate their framing of the situation. I will describe these types of evidence in threefold.

First of all, there is an excessive amount of reports on the number of infected cases that are linked to the Tablighi Jamaat. After the religious gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat in mid-March, the government urged all the participants of the gathering, as well as family members that came into contact with visitors, to get tested. The positive tests reached a point to which one-third of all cases in India were traced back to the religious gathering of Tablighi Jamaat, deeming it as the ultimate hot spot³⁰. Reports on the Coronavirus in India in the first few weeks all kept referring back to the Tablighi Jamaat, with politicians claiming that 'figures tell the truth' ("Figures tell" 2020) and 'Tablighi Jamaat became India's worst epicentre of Coronavirus' ("Tablighi Jamaat became" 2020). Other Indian media, like the Economic Times, pursued this image by stating numbers such as 'over 95% of coronavirus cases reported over the last two days in India have been found to have links with the Tablighi Jamaat congregation' (Sharma 2020).

Moreover, another example of these reports is one of the India Today Group, the largest media company of India, who visualised numbers on Covid-19 cases by providing the following graph (see Figure 4³¹). With this graph, India Today group provides the public of India with a visualisation of the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases. Within this image, the numbers are provided in terms of the confirmed cases in India, compared to the cases that are linked to the Tablighi Jamaat. These numbers are visualised with an image of a Muslim face, recognisable through its skull cap, which connects these numbers are not only textual but also visual to Muslims. These reports and statistics provide evidence towards the threat metaphor, by contributing to the image that Muslims are the cause of the Covid-19 outbreak and spread in India. These numbers are systematically linking Covid-19 back to the Tablighi Jamaat and Muslims more in general.

³⁰ Saugato Datta, a behavioural and developmental economist stated 'this is basically sampling bias: Since people from this one cluster have been tested at very high rates, and overall testing is low, it is hardly surprising that a large proportion of overall positives is attributed to this cluster,' (Daniyal 2020).

³¹ India Today Group [Statistic of Coron cases linked to Tablighi Jamaat]. 2020, accessed May 18, 2020, <https://scroll.in/article/958392/explained-sampling-bias-drove-sensationalist-reporting-around-tablighi-coronavirus-cases>

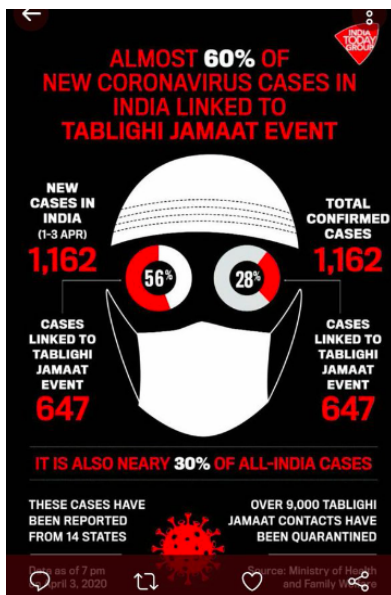


Fig. 4. Information graphic of new coronavirus cases by the India Today Group 2020. From <https://scroll.in/>

Secondly, Indian media reported that the radical Islamic terrorist organisation of ISIS has mentioned and thanked the Tablighi Jamaat for their participation in 'Corona Jihad' (Mishra 2020; "ISIS-Markaz Links" 2020). An article of Times Now shares a section of the Daesh lock-down edition, an ISIS magazine, in which they not only thank the Tablighi Jamaat for becoming the Coronavirus' Super Spreaders', but also asks Muslims in India to become the Covid-19 carriers and use the virus as an arm against the disbelievers (Mishra, 2020). Not only is this publication of Daesh lock-down edition used as evidence for the suspicion that the Tablighi Jamaat is a terrorist organisation, it also blends in well with the long-standing discursive practices of the BJP, in which all Muslims are framed as terrorists (Appadurai 2006).

Lastly, via social media, an excessive amount of videos of Muslims spitting on fruits to spread Covid-19 via their products, or of Muslims attacking the Covid-19 health workers have been shared. A politician of the Congress party, Jitin Prasada, spoke out on these issues stating, 'shame on these Jamaat members who are further degrading themselves by attacking and misbehaving with the courageous medical professionals who are risking their lives to save them' (Nandini 2020). These videos and reports serve as evidence for the idea that Muslims are the enemy in India's battle against Covid-19. With Muslims attacking the 'courageous medical

professionals' or Muslim vendors deliberately spreading Covid-19 via their products, these instances are seen as a confirmation on these claims that are made through the threat metaphors.

However, a lot of the evidence mentioned above was later discovered to be fake. Most of the videos were debunked as fake by independent organisations in India. Since the judgement of empirical credibility is a product of our mind, the notion of empirical credibility in this thesis is mainly seen as the 'perceived credibility'. Therefore, this section is less about the amount of objective, factually correct evidence, and more about the subjective, perceived as valid evidence. This last notion will be elaborated upon further in section 6.2.4 on emotional resonance.

5.1.3. Credibility of frame articulators and claim makers

The factor of 'the credibility of the frame articulators and claim makers' can be linked to the well-established fact within social psychology that leaders or speakers that are perceived as more credible will have a greater persuasive effect on the audience (Benford & Snow 2000; Aronson & Golden 1962). Moreover, the frame articulator or claim maker will be perceived as more credible, when they are seen as knowledgeable or people that perceived to have a high status (Hass 1981). Therefore, this section will briefly review the status and perceived expertise of the frame articulators.

Within this case study, the identified frame articulators are the Hindu nationalist political parties (BJP and RSS) and the political leaders involved with these parties. Not only is this visible in the way in which the government excessively focused on the Tablighi Jamaat during the first months of the Covid-19 outbreak, but also in the way that members of the BJP engaged in making claims in which they shifted accusation and blame towards the Muslim community, as well as spread Islamophobic contents such as political cartoons or fake videos via their social media accounts. The examples in the preceding chapter have demonstrated this.

I assert that, given the fact that Hindu nationalist political leaders within this case study are identified as the frame articulators, it is essential for the frame to resonate with the targets that these leaders are seen as credible and trustworthy. Characteristics that have a considerable impact on the perceived credibility are status and knowledge. The BJP is the current ruling party of India. Therefore, these political leaders have considerable status and power within Indian society.

5.1.4. Emotional resonance

Apart from the analysis mentioned above towards the credibility of the proffered threat metaphors and frames, another vital point to note with regards to this characteristic, is how it utilises emotions. Evidence regarding a particular frame is filtered through an interpretive screen based on the personal experiences of an audience (Benford & Hunt 1992). This process of interpretation happens through the personal beliefs and emotions of the individual.

I argue that with regards to, for example, the empirical credibility of a frame, this means that the presented evidence does not necessarily have to present the 'truth'. Since it is not an objective process, the focus of this indicator should be more on the 'perceived credibility' of the presented evidence. What credibility *is* about is that the feelings of the Indian population are answered by the evidence presented for the threat metaphors. The evidence they read and hear from credible sources are in line with the grievances and emotions that were already there in the minds of the Hindu population.

The deep-rooted, historical grievances, but also the more recent heightened tensions of CAA and the Delhi riots, together with the growing support for Hindu nationalism all influence this interpretation process. Therefore, I argue that these instances have an undeniable contribution to the process of the audience reviewing the credibility of threat metaphors.

5.2 Relative salience

Apart from the factor of credibility, the salience to targets of mobilisation also influences the effectiveness of the proffered frames. The relative salience is divided into dimensions: the centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential commensurability.

5.2.1. Centrality

The concept of centrality is defined as 'how essential are the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with movement frames to the lives of the targets?' (Benford & Snow, 2000). The question that is important when reviewing the centrality of frames to the lives of an individual, is how intensively they feel about the values that are communicated via the frames. In this case, the question that we need to ask ourselves becomes 'how important is the message (consisting of values and ideas), that is communicated via the threat metaphors, for the lives of the targets?'

First of all, the target of the proffered frames is the Hindu population of India. The beliefs, values and ideas that are enunciated through the threat metaphors identify the Muslim other, as the enemy other. In general, considering the empirical context, the heightened Hindu-

Muslim tensions of the last year, can serve as an indicator that the frames are seen as important to the lives of the Hindu population. Violent outbursts, such as the Delhi riots of 2020, demonstrate these heightened tensions.

Additionally, the message that is communicated via the frame is Hindu nationalist in nature, as they all underscore the moral superiority of the Hindu population, in contrast to the viral, enemy, or terrorist Muslim. The re-election of the Hindu nationalist party of the BJP in 2019 with a vast majority, and the general increasing Hindu nationalism, as well as Islamophobia, all argue in support for the centrality of the beliefs, values, and ideas of the proffered frames (Perrigo 2020; Ayyub 2020).

Moreover, with regards to the specific context of Covid-19, as was previously defined as a state of ontological insecurity, people are experiencing passionate emotions due to the removal of social presuppositions. The primary and secondary consequences of the pandemic have left no life untouched in India (i.e. major migrant crisis, poverty, hunger). Evidently, the period of chaos caused a lot of anxiety throughout the country (Roy et al. 2020). Apart from these insecurities that are causing fear within the minds of people, Covid-19 is fundamentally also a life-threatening disease. People fear to subtract the virus themselves or fear that their (vulnerable) family members might become ill.

What this paragraph aims to illustrate is that the lives of the Indian population were centring around Covid-19 within the time frame of this research. The content of this frame, moreover, is congruent with the growing popularity of Hindu-nationalism and Islamophobia in India, therefore targeting specifically the Hindu population of India.

According to Benford and Snow (1988), the greater the congruency between the movement's communicated values, and those held by the targets, the greater the success. The focus on Muslims as the culprits of the Covid-19 outbreak in India, is part of a larger trend, as is becoming clear throughout this thesis. What the section of centrality aims to demonstrate is that certain norms, values, and ideas that are communicated via these frames (i.e. Muslims as the 'enemy other') have deep, historical roots, which implies that the increasingly nationalist Hindu population of India at least partly shares these norms and values.

5.2.2. Narrative fidelity

The second factor that determines the relative salience of the proffered frames is narrative fidelity. Narrative fidelity centres around the following questions: Do frames resonate with cultural narratives or myths? To what extent are the proffered framings culturally resonant? To what extent do they resonate with the target's cultural narrations? (Benford & Snow 2000, p.

622). To answer this question, I have reviewed several academic articles that focus on cultural narratives of the Hindu-Muslim relationship in India to study the themes that underly the identified threat metaphors. I will discuss these cultural narratives for each of the identified threat metaphors.

First of all, considering the threat metaphor of Muslim as the Covid-19 virus itself. Arjun Appadurai argues that “one of the key features of anti-Muslim sentiment in India for quite a long time has been the idea that Muslims themselves are a kind of infection in the body politics”³² (2020). This is reflected in the Hindutva ideology as it aims to establish a *pure* Hindu nation. In fact, BJP has attempted to rewrite the history of India (e.g. rewriting children's textbooks) to reflect their view that India is, in fact, a Hindu nation, invaded and infected by the Muslims and under great threat from Pakistan today. I argue that this historical image is now being re-invented into the threat metaphor of Muslims as the Covid-19 virus itself, as there was already affinity between the two. Thus, it seems as if the new anxieties surrounding the Covid-19 virus have merged with this long-standing idea of Muslims as an infection of the pure Hindu nation.

Secondly, another long-standing image of the Muslim population in India, is that they are viewed as the enemy within. This image is captured in the threat metaphor of Muslims as the enemy within the war against Covid-19. Again, this idea is not new to the Indian public but is constructed through re-inventing long-standing images of the position of Muslims in Indian society. As described in the contextualising chapter, the partition of Pakistan and India has led to a permanent state of war, fought in the state of Kashmir (Appadurai 2006). The resentments against Muslims have been fostered ever since this moment, arguing that Muslims are not really Indian at heart. This results in the Muslims being seen as the enemy within (Brass, 2011). The RSS and BJP have been promoting this discourse, revolving around the idea that Muslims did not only fracture the boundaries of the subcontinent of India, to establish Islamic Pakistan but also have carried out violent terrorist attacks on Indian soil ever since (Freitag 1989). The Muslims have since then been constructed as the enemy.

Lastly, based on my analysis, I argue that the threat metaphor of Covid-19 as a weapon of Islamic terrorism is an image derived from the idea that Muslims are terrorists. This idea has been promoted within the campaign of the BJP and the RSS ever since 9/11. In fact, these images have already preceded the 9/11 attacks, but have been exacerbated exponentially since the events. Within the first term the BJP was in power (i.e.1998 until 2004), 9/11 marked a

³² The people of a nation, state, or society considered collectively as an organized group of citizens.

golden opportunity for the BJP, and it's Hindu-centred allies to pursue their political agendas. Infused with the language of terrorism, they linked Indian Muslims with Pakistan.

This post 9/11 campaign is something that one of my participants articulates as well. This quote symbolises how the conflictual Hindu-Muslim relations are now reframed into Muslims as a terrorist, in order to delegitimise them. He states:

“I think 9/11 was the tipping point. Before 9/11, as an Indian Muslim, I was only carrying the burden of Pakistan [...] But after 9/11, I was carrying the charge of being violent, of being a terrorist. This new word came into our vocabulary, and all of a sudden, I was asked things like 'where is Osama Bin Laden?'. Immediately after this word came into our vocabulary all of a sudden, the Kashmir issue, which used to be described as militancy, as a secessionist or separatist movement, was described as a terrorist movement. There was this word that just took over everything. I was being asked questions like 'why does your religion promote violence?'³³”

5.2.3. Experiential commensurability

The last indicator, as defined by the conceptual framework of Benford and Snow (2000), is the concept of experiential commensurability. This indicator revolves around the following questions: Are the frames congruent with the personal, everyday experiences of the targets? And, do the frames provide an answer to the troubling events and situations which harmonise with how the targets experience these conditions?

I argue that the frames are consistent with the personal experiences of the audience, based on previous analysis on centrality. The everyday experiences of the targets within the time frame of this research largely centre around Covid-19, since it has been dominating Indian, as well as global media since the beginning of the outbreak.

By virtue of the prognostic framings, the proffered solutions by the Hindu nationalist government varies from legal actions taken against the members of the Tablighi Jamaat, violent punishment, and exclusion of Muslims in India. Since the proffered solutions are congruent with the diagnostic frames, they will likely harmonise the experiences of the targets. For example, the exclusion of Muslims will limit their capacity to spread Covid-19 to other innocent citizens.

³³ Ghaleeb (pseudonym) interview by author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

Moreover, the threat metaphor functions also in another critical way. It provides a way to ventilate the emotions that have arisen from the pandemic. The fears that accompanied the virus is its arrival in India, through these frames, can be channelled into anger. Moreover, the shift of target results in the fact that instead of something vague like Covid-19, a concrete target with a face is now provided. The next section will elaborate further on the role of emotional messages in these framings.

5.2.4 Emotional resonance

A significant element within all these interconnected factors of relative salience (i.e. centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential commensurability) is that of the central role of fear. As established, threat metaphors engage in the construction of the 'Muslim other' into the 'enemy other' posing a severe threat to the life and health of innocent people in India. With this, these threat metaphors are tapping into the deep-rooted grievances and long-standing images concerning Muslims and Hindu-Muslim relations. I argue that this deep-rooted fear, demonstrated in the section on narrative fidelity, is now, through the use of these threat metaphors, merged with these new-found fears about Covid-19 and the threat to life that this disease is posing on not only Hindus themselves, but also their families.

But then how exactly is this happening? How are Hindu nationalist parties utilising the emotions that have arisen through the outbreak of Covid-19 for the demonisation of Muslims? For an answer to this question, I will look at the interaction between the core framing tasks of Chapter Four, the determinants of frame resonance as presented within this chapter, and the concept of emotional resonance.

Frame articulators can strategically employ cultural dominant emotional discourse to shape other's emotions for specific ends (Schrock et al. 2014). However, the use of 'emotion work' or 'emotional framing' does not work within a cultural vacuum. Instead, these micro-level activities are taking place within a field of emotions and contribute to an 'emotional culture', or a collectively reproduced pattern of emotions. Donileen Loseke (1993, p. 207) argues that all discursive claims have a preferred emotional orientation and reaction implied or constructed within them. An example that will prove to be very relevant for this thesis is that by calling something an injustice, you indirectly instruct people that anger is seen as an appropriate response and that social change is required to 'solve' this injustice.

Moreover, as Jasper (1997, p.123) "in the right circumstances, almost anything can be perceived as a threat by someone". So, let us shortly return to the concept of ontological insecurity. By removing the ontological security of society, which thereby removes the trust

that our worlds are as they appear to be, people's sense of justice is outraged and frustrated. This process will cause people in India to experience passionate negative emotions, seen as very powerful. In this setting, the Hindu nationalist parties then insert a constructed threat, a clear target that is already known to the Indian public from a historical perspective.

Let us look at these statements in more detail. Schrock et al. (2004) argue how the language of injustice can be utilised as a medium to change fear into righteous anger, a process that is defined as 'emotional channelling'. In the case of this research, the Hindu nationalist parties engaged in this process by implying that Hindu people were in direct danger and in need of protection. Several newspaper articles stated how they feared that 'this disease will spread to many more people through them' ("Coronavirus in India" 2020), that 'they roamed around and spread the virus-like corona carriers' (Mishra 2020) but also moved beyond framing Muslims solely as a threat for spreading Covid-19, by reporting that 'instead of feeling ashamed for this heinous crime, police personnel and health workers were beaten up' (Mankani 2020) or 'a 28-year-old man was allegedly shot when he blamed Tablighi Jamaat members for the spread of coronavirus' ("UP man Shot" 2020). Moreover, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, the spread of Covid-19 by Muslims is repeatedly referred to as a crime.

Subsequently, the government's claim to safeguard the population from the violent attacks carried out by Muslim, while assuring their punishment, is reinforcing the notion that Muslims are the evil perpetrators of attacks against innocent Muslims. This appeal draws on the target's fears while implying that anger should be directed towards the Muslim population. This was repeatedly emphasised in the newspaper articles by political leaders stating that they will take action against the enemies. The chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, for example, stated how 'they will take action against those who have broken the law', politicians threatened to 'trace and quarantine' all attendees of the gathering of Tablighi Jamaat, as well as 'warned of action' against them ("phones of Tablighi Jamaat" 2020) or 'take strong action' (Jeelani, Pandey, Halder 2020). However, specific details on how an action will be taken remained undefined.

Through the use of motivational framing, anger could then be evoked by narratively attacking the antagonists, while defining protagonists as victims (Schrock et al. 2004). The discursive 'attack' in the case within this research moves beyond the diagnostic framing as described in the previous chapter through the use of threat metaphors by the Hindu nationalist parties. This can be explained by further examining the structure and function of a metaphor.

I argue that the way in which these metaphors construct these issues as definite and inarguable is because metaphors transfer the meaning of the known domain onto the unknown domain. The domain of a global pandemic is one that not many of us are familiar with. By

transferring the known domains of 'terrorism' and 'war' onto this domain, the speaker, as well as the audience, are engaging in an interpretive act. Because the two domains are seemingly incongruent, a certain semantic tension arises. If the hearer is able to overcome this tension between what is being said and what is being meant, the joint interpretive action is completed. This way, both parties have engaged in the act of meaning construction, which goes further than the normal codification within the semantic system. After this process of meaning construction, there is a clear understanding of one situation in terms of another (Charteris-Black, 2004).

Through this process of meaning construction, the characteristics, including the normative values and emotions of the domains of 'terrorism' and 'war' are also transferred onto the new domain of the pandemic. In this process, the Muslims are still being linked as the ones accountable for the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in India. Negative feelings that have arisen from the Covid-19 outbreak are channelled into anger. Therefore, not only feelings of anger towards the disease, but also feelings of anger towards domains such as terrorism and war, are also projected onto the Muslim community of India. What this section has demonstrated, is that the complex interplay of threat and blame articulated within these threat metaphors have tremendous emotional components (Jasper 1997, p. 126).

5.3 Chapter summary

In sum, this chapter not only answered the question of why the threat metaphors resonate with the Indian public but also how emotional resonance is achieved through the constructed threat metaphors. This chapter engaged in an analysis of the two determinants of frame resonance, credibility and relative salience. It examined for each of the constituent factors the underlying processes as to why these threat metaphors seem to resonate with the audience. Additionally, this chapter corroborates the argument Jasper and Polletta (2001) that emotions serve as an essential element within the analysis of framing practices. The chapter, through the concept of 'emotional channelling', has reviewed how Hindu Nationalist parties in India have utilised the emotions of fear that have arisen from the biological problem of Covid-19, and through the language of injustice, attempted to channel these emotions into anger.

Hence, what makes these threat metaphors specifically interesting is that the threat metaphors tap into the fear of the Indian public, which is the deep-rooted and historical fear of Muslim, but now merged with the fear of Covid-19, life-threatening disease with grave socio-economic impact. This process results in the fact that, for people reading the newspapers and looking at political cartoons, the 'objective' truth might not matter as much anymore. They feel

'heard' when they read about information that connects to their grievances and the threat metaphors. This is what adds an extra element to the frames and is arguably what makes them this powerful. So powerful even, that they are translated into performances, which the next chapter will elaborate further upon.

Chapter 6. Ideological Performances

Chapter Four 'identifying threat metaphors' has engaged in an in-depth analysis of the threat metaphors constructed by Hindu nationalist parties in India. In the previous chapter, I delved into the resonance of this type of affective framing, and the emotional messages that are encoded within these threat metaphors. The threat metaphors function through the assignment of meaning to the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India. Seen in this light, the Hindu nationalist parties and their supporters, the threat metaphors, and the targets are all seen to be part of a particular 'meaning system'. A meaning system is seen as "the knowledge of cultural references to 'read' the beliefs, values, and allegiances of the performer of their actions" (Fuist 2013, p. 430). I argue that threat metaphors are part of these meaning systems since they consist of re-invented frames that have been historically part of Indian culture and give meaning to the situation of Covid-19.

The goal of a particular way of framing is ultimately to gain supporters that will join the organisation, which in this case concerns supporters of Hindu nationalist parties that act in line with their values, beliefs, and allegiances. The function of this chapter is to analyse some performances of Hindu individuals that have occurred within the timeframe of this research. I will review these performances as an interactional process. Namely, these ideological performances are seen as an enactment of social identity that is constructed and embodied within a certain meaning system.

I will do so by using Fuist's (2013, p.430) concept of 'ideological performances', which is defined as "how a performer's beliefs, values, and allegiances are displayed for an audience via her behaviour, language, movement, use of props, and aesthetics. Put simply; it is the way one 'codes' one's ideology into behaviour and aesthetics (perhaps unconsciously) in a way that can then be read and interpreted by others based on knowledge of the referenced meaning systems". Hence, performance is seen as the enactment of a social identity within a particular meaning system, in which this social identity is seen as the "cognitive, moral, and emotional connection of an individual with their broader community" (Polletta & Jasper 2001, p. 285). In this chapter, I will review how individuals start to enact their collective identities, informed by these threat metaphors, thereby situation themselves and the audience in a certain meaning system.

This way, an analysis of these performances will provide insight as to how the macro-level threat metaphors and the Hindu-nationalist ideology that is communicated through them, work in the micro-level of performances. However, since these performances can even be

found in how one looks or communicates, it shows how the performances engage in the drawing of boundaries between Hindus and Muslims. As such, these performances can reiterate the constructed frames and are therefore part of the process of meaning construction central to this thesis. The analysis of this chapter is mainly based on the of the interviews with Muslims, but also partly data that of the Critical Metaphor Analysis. As these analyses are based on the interpretations of Muslims, often the targets of these performances, this already gives us an interesting idea on what message they were able to communicate.

6.1 The collective Hindu identity

Before I delve into this analysis, I will give a succinct recap of how the threat metaphors have engaged in the reiteration of the collective Hindu identity. I have argued that threat metaphors have influenced identity, using three interconnected processes within the conceptual framework of framing. First of all, through the use of boundary framing (Hunt et al. 1994, p. 194), the parties have delineated the boundaries between 'us' and 'them', between Hindu and Muslim. Then, through assigning normative attributions to the out-group through these threat metaphors, they have constructed the 'other' into the 'enemy other'. In this process, the Hindu nationalist parties have been utilising the longstanding grievances and emotions of the Hindu public, to merge them with the newfound fear of the unknown disease of Covid-19. Lastly, the language of injustice and proffered solutions to this constructed problem of Muslims as the cause of the emergence and spread of Covid-19 have moved the threat metaphors one step closer to enactment.

There is a multitude of performances that display the power relations between Hindus and Muslims during the timeframe of this research. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to analyse all these examples. To highlight the social relevance of these threat metaphors, I will analyse two types of performances, enacted by Hindus. While doing so, I will elaborate on how these instances can be viewed as ideological performances, enacted within the constructed meaning system of Hindu nationalist parties. As a result, this chapter will answer the last sub question of "what ideological performances affecting the Muslim community have emerged within the previously established meaning system?"

6.2 Exclusion from food

The first performance that I will analyse in this chapter is initiated by the performer, therefore marking it as a conscious performance. As Fuist (2013, p. 433) argues "a social actor would

first signal herself as a performer and then draw on shared knowledge to explicitly dramatise some element of her beliefs, values, and allegiances to an audience". In other words, the performer will, in one way or another, draw attention to themselves in order to communicate the start of his performance.

The first performance illustrates an experience of one of my participants, Faheema. In the interview, she told me about how the government gives out food rations to help out the poorest of Indian society. Faheema herself did not need the food rations, but many people in her neighbourhood had to wait in line to obtain the food rations. She told me how her friend had waited in line, and when it was finally her turn, the distributor told her: "No, you cannot get one, because you are deliberately spreading the virus, so you do not deserve it"³⁴.

A similar experience happened to Amir and his family. He told me that "during Covid times, our house was always the last to get milk. Our house was also the last to get any food ration. So, if my mom wanted to buy any milk or food, as a Muslim family, we would always be the last ones to get it. We could see all the other people getting the milk delivered to their house. If we would ask them if we could also buy some milk, they would immediately say 'oh sorry we just ran out'³⁵.

Reviewing these two performances, I have asked myself the question "How do these instances represent ideological performances that situate the performer within the shared meaning system?" First of all, the distributor first drew the attention of an audience to himself by refusing to distribute the food rations. The distributor in Faheema's story drew the attention to himself by very explicitly stating that he would not give them food because they are Muslim and according to him, are accountable for the Covid-19 outbreak. How they refer to the Muslim community 'deliberately spreading' Covid-19, is consistent with the previously identified threat metaphors—hereby drawing on the shared meaning system that is established by the Hindu Nationalist parties. This is seen as an ideological performance because the performer displays his beliefs that the Muslims community is deliberately spreading Covid-19, via language. This way, he codes his ideological ideas about Muslims into the behaviour of refusing to give them food and constructs his own identity as different from hers. Other people will interpret this, through the shared meaning systems such as the threat metaphors.

What these performances also reflect, is that through the enactment of the social identity, the distributors reflect the emotional message that is encoded in the threat metaphors

³⁴ Faheema (pseudonym), interview by Author, Zoom, July 3, 2020.

³⁵ Amir (pseudonym), interview by Author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

and examined in the previous section. This is reflected in the way that this performance can be viewed as an enactment of an injustice frame. These performances, for the performer himself, are seen as a logical result of the injustice that the Muslims community is perpetrating against innocent Hindus. We could state that both of the distributors are performing with 'dramaturgical loyalty' (Turner & Killian 1987) which is defined as the allegiance to a movement's constructed definitions of emergent norms. The distributor is acting in a certain morally informed way by withholding food rations, thereby punishing the 'evil' Muslims who have caused this situation.

6.3 Social boycotting

The last example centres around the phenomenon of 'social boycotting', which, after the outbreak of Covid-19 in India became a widespread practice (Ellis-Petersen & Rahman 2002). All participants referred to this practice and told me that people within their close environments are all drastically losing their customers due to these practices. The analysis of this ideological performance will elaborate on four instances, all centred around the idea of social boycotting. First of all, one of my participants, Tisha, states 'this one person, a local member of the BJP, actually put out a banner on his street. It says that you should not buy from Muslims anymore³⁶'.

Secondly, numerous reports appeared of Hindu vendors using saffron colour flags, to differentiate themselves from Muslims. The Hindu vendors are engaging in these practices, to prevent themselves from losing their livelihoods as well, since people are becoming increasingly scared to buy from Muslims vendors. According to the constructed threat metaphors, Muslims are seen spread Covid-19 via their products. The flags are either put on the carts by the vendors themselves or distributed by Hindu nationalist politicians or supporters (Sharma 2020, "'Do not buy" 2020).

Thirdly, several newspapers state that Muslim vendors are harassed on the street under the pretext of preventing Corona Jihad ("Do not buy" 2020). An example of this is a video that shows a local BJP member, shouting at a Muslim vendor and his son, threatening them that they have to leave because they are Muslim. In an interview with the same BJP member, he admits to the deed with the following statement: 'Yes, it was my video. I reprimanded him because he was lying. He said his name was Rajkumar while his name is Rehmuddin. He was not wearing a mask and gloves. We know... 16 vegetable sellers in Kanpur and one in Lucknow tested COVID-19 positive' ("Don't be seen here" 2020).

³⁶ Tisha (pseudonym), Interview by Author, Zoom, July 25, 2020.

This instance is very similar to the experience of a family friend of one of my participants, Amir. This family friend, who sells vegetables in the neighbourhood and has been systematically outed from his place of business, during the Covid-19 outbreak. He is not 'allowed' to roam the streets anymore, according to Amir. When I asked Amir, who is not allowing him to roam the streets anymore, he states “When he was trying to sell vegetables, he was threatened by Hindus from surrounding neighbourhoods, who told him that they were going to stone him, pelt him, or kill him, if he continued to do business. So it is a threat to life really³⁷”.

How does this collection of instances of social boycotting, represent ideological performances, that situate the performers within a certain meaning system? These are all conscious performances, as the performances are initiated by an actor. I will now discuss the various elements of social boycotting while analysing every one of them as an ideological performance.

So, let me take the first example, the BJP member that has put a banner out on the street with the statement that people should not buy from Muslim vendors anymore³⁸. Via the use of this prop, the BJP member marks himself as the performer. The message he is aiming to communicate displays his beliefs on Muslim vendors as a source of Covid-19, or at least, a reason for others not to buy from them anymore. While expressing his ideology, he locates both himself and his audience within the meaning system of the Hindu nationalist parties' threat metaphors, who are convinced that the Muslims are the culprits of the Covid-19 virus.

The use of the saffron flags by Hindu vendors or right-wing parties to visibly delineate the boundaries between the Muslim and Hindu vendors is also seen as a conscious, public performance. By visibly enacting their identity as Hindus, these vendors are visualising the process of 'boundary framing' that is manifested in the threat metaphors. Additionally, the specific use of the colour saffron communicates a certain meaning as well. The colour saffron is seen as the colour of Hindu nationalism, which even if the choice for the flag would be arbitrary, communicates a certain ideology: the Hindutva ideology.

This performance is therefore seen to communicate several different messages at the same time: the fact that they are different from the Muslim vendors, to secure their own business, but thereby assumably also (unintentionally) putting a target over the Muslim vendors since the flags have made it increasingly easy to recognise them. Moreover, the symbolism of

³⁷ Amir (pseudonym), Interview by Author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

³⁸ Tisha (pseudonym), Interview by Author, Zoom, July 25, 2020.

the colour saffron also communicates the message of the Hindutva ideology, as this colour is a symbol for Hindu nationalism.

Lastly, I will discuss the performance which was discussed by Amir. The Hindus from the neighbourhood are also engaging in conscious, public performances by threatening the Muslim vendor. These perpetrators mark themselves as the performer, by initiating the threat against the Muslim vendor. The nature of the threat is very hostile and violent, a threat to the life of the Muslim vendor. As such, these threats situate the performer and the audience within the shared meaning systems, since they are seen as appropriate responses to the identified threat metaphors. One of the proposed solutions (i.e. prognostic framings) was, in fact, violent punishment of the Muslim community.

Even more so, this performance shows how the emotional message of the threat metaphor is coded into one's behaviour. If I were to use the concept of dramaturgical loyalty by Benford and Hunt (1992), which states that a performance shows allegiance to a movement's constructed definitions of emergent norms (Turner and Killian, 1987), I argue that this evidence is in line with the idea of dramaturgical loyalty. Since Muslims are trying to spread Covid-19 to innocent Hindus deliberately, these men were acting under the pretences of trying to protect innocent people from dying. This performance demonstrates how violence against Muslims is being legitimised, since it can be seen as reactive in nature, as necessary means against the atrocities that the Muslims are perpetrating against the Hindu majority.

To conclude the section on performances, I would like to argue that the three constructed threat metaphors, and the collective identities that they reiterate, have resulted in the enactment of collective identity within meaning systems of Hindu nationalism. Because these enactments were again engaging in the reiteration and communication of the (emotional) messages of the threat metaphors, these performances are further delineating boundaries between Hindu and Muslim communities. Therefore, what this section has demonstrated is that meaning is communicated not only through the threat metaphors on macro-level, but also through ideological performances on a micro-level.

6.4 Structural and symbolic violence

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how three threat metaphors in India are presenting a particular representation of the reality of the Covid-19 outbreak. All three of these threat metaphors are framing the Muslim community as the culprits of Covid-19, thereby drawing on longstanding images and deep grievances within India. As such, these threat metaphors have

succeeded to merge the Hindu community's deep-rooted fear for Muslims, with the newfound massive fear for the biological problem of Covid-19, through these threat metaphors. This last chapter has demonstrated that the consequences of these threat metaphors are severe, as they operate to legitimise forms of violence against Muslims, thereby exacerbating already existing inequalities within the country.

In this last section, I will shortly link the findings of this thesis to the concepts of 'structural violence' (Galtung 1996) and 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 2004) to demonstrate the social consequences of the threat metaphors in combination with the growing popularity of the Hindu Nationalist parties. I will use these concepts to outline a particular idea, as I argue that the consequences of these threat metaphors go beyond the scope of this thesis and have implications at a more structural level. The portrayal of the Muslims community as a threat, an enemy, a virus, or a terrorist, in dominant discourses in India, might have implications on their already precarious situation in Indian society.

The concept of symbolic violence is defined by Bourdieu and Wacquant (2004, p.273) as "a form of social and cultural domination that is often taken for granted and experienced as natural, even by its victims". This is very closely related to the concept of structural violence by Galtung (1996, p. 197) which is defined as "avoidable insults to basic human needs, and more generally *life*, lowering the real levels of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible" (1996, p.197). With this concept, Galtungs refers to structures of exploitation and repression that are harming people and can therefore be considered as violent.

The interpretations of the findings of this research reflect structures of domination and oppression in India. This is visible through the threat metaphors, informed by historical, cultural narratives, that define Muslims as less than human, animal-like, the enemy, or the terrorist. But also, through the empirical context, that has demonstrated increasing support for Hindu nationalism and growing Islamophobia, which are both reflected in current policies (i.e. CAA, article 370). As such, this is not the first time Muslims are being scapegoated for the hardships of the country of India, or as one of my participants argues "every time something bad happens in India, they will find a way to blame the Muslims"³⁹.

Hence, I argue that not only are these threat metaphors constructed within systems of inequality; these are also contributing to the exacerbation of these same structures of inequality. This circular process is demonstrated as threat metaphors are seen as 'historically situated practice' (i.e. based on cultural narratives and already existing frames), therefore constrained

³⁹ Amir (pseudonym), interview by Author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

and enabled by their social contexts. What this last thesis also has shown, is that the enactments of these frames are again contributing towards these structures of inequality, since it has resulted in Muslims not being allowed into hospitals, not receiving food rations, not being able to roam the streets and sell their products, and even in numerous instances of physical violence. Thereby severely threatening the safety of the Muslims population of India.

6.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have examined two types of ideological performances by Hindu individuals that situate themselves and their audiences within the shared meaning system of the threat metaphors and Hindu nationalism. I have found that through conscious, private and public performances, individuals are enacting their social identity and hereby contributing to the process of boundary construction. The ways in which these identities, beliefs, and values were enacted were diverse, whereas some of the performances have used props, the majority of the performances were reflected in language use. This last chapter has made the final contribution to the process of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the meaning making process central to this thesis.

The last part of this chapter has moved a bit beyond the scope of this research, by using the concepts of symbolic and structural violence, in order to reflect on the more structural implications of threat metaphors. Following this analysis, I argue that the position of Muslims in India, who were already in a precarious situation, have exacerbated due to these threat metaphors.

Conclusion

"I just feel betrayed. It makes me feel threatened and unsafe. It makes me feel helpless in the sense that 'who am I?' I am just a regular dude trying to make his way through life. And there is this entire machinery targeting you. And I am like, how do you fight that sort of machinery? There is just no way that any Muslim organisation can develop any systematic institution that can encounter this. We are just not capable. There is just so much helplessness"⁴⁰.

In March 2020, when the world grappled with the Covid-19 pandemic, in India, this biological problem was used to fuel longstanding communal conflict. Hindu nationalist parties, through discursive practices, infused with metaphorical language, started the process of demonising the Muslim population in India for allegedly 'deliberately, wilfully, and malignantly' spreading Covid-19 to the Indian population. According to the media and the Hindu nationalist parties, their goal was to infect and kill as many Hindus as possible. Several reports started to emerge, stating that Muslims were attacked, socially boycotted, or refused treatment at hospitals.

To help me understand this process of demonisation and legitimisation of violence, the research aimed to answer the following research question: *How did Hindu Nationalist parties in India create Covid-19 threat metaphors, in order to demonise and against Muslims minorities in India, from March until July 2020?* In order to answer this research puzzle, this thesis first sketched the empirical context of India to serve as a point of reference for the succeeding chapters. These chapters have outlined an understanding of the contents of the dominant threat metaphors, why these threat metaphors resonate with the Indian public on a cognitive and emotional level, and lastly an analysis of the individuals enacting their identity within these constructed shared meaning systems.

This thesis not only makes a theoretical contribution, by merging emotions and ideological performances with the widely used analytical frame of framing theory (Benford & Snow 2000), it also makes topical contributions which I will highlight in twofold. Firstly, it contributes to the knowledge on the social dynamics of Covid-19 pandemic, which was highly topical at the time of writing, and secondly, it contributes to the knowledge on the problem of growing Islamophobia in India. A topic that was marked as one of international concern by several NGOs ("India: end bias" 2020, "India: hate crimes" 2017).

⁴⁰ Ghaleeb (pseudonym) interview by author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

The following section will lay out the most important findings of this thesis. First of all, I have argued in the contextualisation of the empirical case study that the Covid-19 outbreak in India can be defined as a situation of 'ontological insecurity' (Giddens 1984). Situations that break the presuppositions of the social environment, such as disaster situations, not only frustrate people, but are seen to outrage their sense of justice, and arouse passionate emotions. As a global pandemic of the scope of Covid-19 can be viewed as a setting of 'ontological insecurity', we are dealing with a highly emotional society.

Throughout this thesis, I have identified three dominant threat metaphors that construct Muslims as the culprits of the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 in India: Muslims as Covid-19, Muslims as the enemy in the war against Covid-19, and Covid-19 as a weapon of Islamic (bio)terrorism. Consistent with these metaphorically constructed problems, the proposed solutions articulated in the data were defined in three ways: violent punishment, legal actions, or the exclusion of the Muslim population. The overarching theme of these framings was found in the process of injustice frames, in which roles were assigned for the evil, perpetrating Muslims, the innocent Hindu victims, and the state as inherently good and even heroic.

When diving deeper into the meaning of these framings, I found that the combination of the growing support for the Hindu nationalist parties and their Hindutva ideology, the massive amounts of 'evidence' that was presented, but maybe even more so the emotional messages encoded in these frames, have ensured their effectiveness. To elaborate a little more on these emotional messages, I have found that longstanding grievances and cultural narratives were re-invented through the construction of the threat metaphors. Muslims in India were historically conceptualised as an infection of the body politics of India, as Islamic terrorists, and the enemy within, inherently linked to Pakistan. I argue that the historical and culturally familiar narratives, through these threat metaphors have merged the longstanding fear of the Muslim population with the newly arising fears for the Covid-19 virus. Subsequently, through the medium of the language of injustice used in these frames, that appeal to the morality of the audience, these fears are channelled into anger which is seen as the main driver behind the performances and violent instances reported in India.

Lastly, the ideological performances were very much consistent with the proffered frames, as they varied from refusing to give out food rations to Muslims, to the engagement in social boycotting. Through these performances, these Hindu individuals have expressed their cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with the Hindu nationalist frames. In this process, these performances informed by the threat metaphors, engaged in the process of boundary

construction between Hindu and Muslim, as the performers either sought to exclude the Muslims, or punish them.

If we then return to the puzzle statement posed in this research. The answer reflects a highly complex interaction of cognitive, moral, and emotional dimensions of the process in which Hindu nationalist parties were able to reframe a longstanding political conflict, into a health concern. The achieved emotional, cognitive, and moral connection with the proffered threat metaphors, then resulted in the construction of violence against Muslims, manifested in and accentuated by the ideological performances of social boycotting and exclusion from food, have highlighted how the already precarious situation of Muslims was exacerbated through the use of these threat metaphors.

Discussion and critical reflections

Now, what does the above-mentioned arguments tell us? An essential contribution of this research is that it has enhanced our knowledge of the highly topical Covid-19 and Islamophobia in India. It tells us that, particularly in times of unrest or ontological security, these stories about threat can serve a powerful catalyst for polarisation, divide, and violence.

Moreover, this research aimed to contribute to a more holistic understanding of framing practices by combining the widely used 'framing theory' of Benford and Snow (2000) with emotional and performative concepts. I would like to argue that the theoretical contribution of this research stretches beyond this specific case study. This thesis has demonstrated that the inclusion of emotions into the analysis does not discard existing conceptual toolkits. As my chapter on frame resonance has shown, emotional resonance and frame resonance are very closely related. As such, this research aimed to contribute to moving beyond the 'cognitive bias' that is currently dominating the field of framing theory.

Although this research has shown the central role of the emotional dimension within frames, the research has mainly focused on the emotional messages encoded within these frames. Due to the limited time frame of this research, as well as travel restrictions due to Covid-19, I was not able to include a satisfactory insight into the emotional lives of the possible recruits. Moreover, another limitation of my research is found in the practical usefulness of this thesis. As the last section on symbolic and structural violence states, I argue for a problematic situation in which the Muslim minority is situated in India. However, my thesis gives little insights into how effective change can be pursued in order to relieve this problematic situation.

Suggestions for future research

Expanding on the previous section, these limitations have illuminated several exciting directions for future research. First of all, my suggestion for follow-up research would be to expand the analytical concept of emotions beyond the definition of this research and focus more on the emotional lives of the targets of recruitment. This shift of focus will allow for a deeper understanding of the interaction between the emotional messages and the targets.

Moreover, due to the qualitative research of this research, the results of this study are not generalisable. Therefore, the advanced analytical frame presented in this research, consisting of frames, emotions, and performances serves as an interesting point of departure for different settings. Perhaps also settings that are not situations of 'ontological insecurity', to get a more nuanced idea of the role of emotion in framing practices.

The weaponisation of language

To conclude, I argue that the process central to this thesis can be defined as what Pascale has defined as the "weaponisation of language" or "the rapid acceleration of signifying practices that lay the essential cornerstones of material violence" (2019, p. 898). The weaponisation of language is a process in which cultural vulnerabilities are exploited. Authoritarian governments use these practices to attack people that are constructed as disloyal, dehumanise minority groups under the excuse of a mythological homogeneous nation-state, to discredit facts, and strategically manipulate public emotional responses. Practices that are consistent with the process outlined in this thesis.

Now when we return to the quote that is stated at the beginning of this chapter, I vividly remember how my participant, Ghaleeb, stated this in his interview. He told me he was tired, and he felt like there was no way back from this point. "there is this entire machinery targeting you. And I am like, how do you fight that sort of machinery?⁴¹". I argue that critical engagement with these systems of signification provides an opportunity to decode and deconstruct these processes of the weaponisation of language.

My hope, in particular, is that further studies will engage in an analysis of the functions of these affective types of framing, or other instances of the weaponisation of language. Future studies may hopefully provide insights into practical ways to reframe issues, that could serve as a form of resistance. However, I argue that in order to "fight

⁴¹ Ghaleeb (pseudonym) interview by author, Zoom, July 17, 2020.

such a machinery", we should first try and understand how it functions, its dynamics, its components, and how it relates together — a process to which this thesis hopefully has made a modest contribution.

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Appendices

Appendix A - List of participants

| Date | Name | Gender | Place of Residence |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 2020, June 18 | Aafiyah | Female | New Delhi |
| 2020, June 18 | Aadil | Male | Mumbai |
| 2020, June 22 | Hikma | Female | Mumbai |
| 2020, June 25 | Faheema | Female | Mumbai |
| 2020, July 3 | Tisha | Female | Mumbai |
| 2020, July 3 | Tadeel | Female | Pune |
| 2020, July 8 | Ghaleeb | Male | Mumbai |
| 2020, July 17 | Amir | Male | New Delhi |
| 2020, July 23 | Alisha | Female | New Delhi |

Appendix B - Topic list interviews

Personal Background

- Place of residence
- Occupation
- Religious identity

Islamophobia in India

- How do you currently feel, as a Muslim, living in India?
- What would you say the scope of Islamophobia in India is?
- In what ways is it visible?
- Violence against Muslims
 - Own experiences
 - Experiences of people close to you

COVID-19 and Muslims

- Do you perceive a link being made between COVID-19 and Muslims
 - Describe this link
- Metaphors used to link Muslims to COVID-19
 - Where did you notice these metaphors (Like Corona Jihad)
 - How does it make you feel?
 - What are your experiences with the metaphor(s)

Social consequences

- Change in attitudes
- Negative experiences during Covid-19 outbreak
- Experiences of violence or discrimination (several forms of violence) since COVID-19
- Experiences of violence or discrimination of family members or friends
- Growth in Islamophobia since the outbreak of Covid-19
 - In what ways noticeable
 - Responses by the government
- Social boycott
- Other 'Jihad' terms that are coined

Appendix C - Glossary

Chapter Five: Framing

Discourse:

Discourses are social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation. . . . The underlying assumption of discourse analysis is that social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. Rather, they actively construct a version of those things. They do not describe things, they do things. And being active they have social and political implications (Jabri, 1996, p. 94-95).

Frame: “world

Interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the

out there” by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment’ (Benford & Snow, 1992, p. 137).

Diagnostic framing

Problem identification and attributions. Focusing blame or responsibility (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615)

- *Boundary framing:* attributional processes that seek to delineate the boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and construct movement protagonists and antagonists (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616).
- *Injustice framing:* The way in which movements identify the “victims” of a given injustice and amplify their victimization (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 615)

Prognostic framing

The articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out a plan (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 616)

Motivational framing: collective

Provides a rationale for engaging in ameliorative

action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 617).

Chapter Six: Frame Resonance

Frame resonance:

The effectiveness or mobilizing potency of proffered framings, thereby attending to the question of why some framings seem to be effective or ‘resonate’ while others do not (Snow & Benford, 1988)

Credibility

- *Frame consistency:* The congruency between an SMO’s articulated beliefs, claims and actions (Benford & Snow 2000, pp. 619-620).
- *Empirical credibility* The apparent fit between the framings and events in the

world (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 620)

- *Credibility frame articulators*: The level of persuasiveness of the frame articulator, associated with status and knowledge (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 621)

Relative salience

- *Centrality*: Centrality has to do with how essential the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives of the targets of mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 621).
- *Experiential commensurability*: The level of congruence of the frames and the personal, everyday experiences of the targets of mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 621)
- *Narrative fidelity*: The extent to which the proffered framings are culturally resonant (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 622).

Emotional framing: The activities that social movements engage in to achieve emotional resonance (Ruiz-Junco 2006, p. 49).

Emotional resonance: The link between targeted recruits' emotional lives and the emotional messages encoded in SMO framing (Schrock et al. 2004, p. 62).

Emotional channeling: Reshaping certain emotions into other emotions that are more adequate for the social movement activity at hand (Ruiz-Junco 2006, p. 47).

Chapter Seven: Performing

Performing: The demonstration and enactment of power. It concretizes the idea regarding the struggle between protagonists and antagonists and reveals to audiences ways in which they can achieve or preserve desirable power relations (Benford & Hunt, 1992, p. 45).

Performance: The enactment of a social identity within a meaning system or meaning systems (Fuist 2013, p. 430).

Collective identity: An individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution' (Polletta & Jasper 2001, p. 285)

Ideological performances: how a performer's beliefs, values, and allegiances are displayed for an audience via her behavior, language, movement, use of props, and aesthetics. Put simply, it is the way one 'codes' one's ideology into behavior and aesthetics (perhaps unconsciously) in a way that can then be read and interpreted by others based on knowledge of the referenced meaning systems (Fuist 2013, p. 430).

Meaning system: The various related cultural elements, such as references, symbols, languages, in-jokes, aesthetics, knowledge and more (Fuist 2013, p. 428).

Dramaturgical loyalty: Allegiance to a movement's constructed definitions or emergent norms (Turner and Killian, 1987)

Appendix D - List of Newspaper articles

Newspaper articles are structured by date and paper

Aajtak

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Delhi: Corona infection in Tabligi Jamaat, and increased risk of spreading the virus across the country | 30-03-2020 | Article | Qubool, Ahmed |
| 'This is shameless', Rohit Sardana reprimanded for defending the Jamaat | 31-03-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat chief makes fun of Corona campaign: Arif Mohammad Khan | 31-03-2020 | Article | |
| Jamaat: CM Kejriwal said - this irresponsible act, will take strong action | 31-03-2020 | Article | |
| Corona: People involved in the program of Tabligi Jamaat are being recognized nationwide | 01-04-2020 | Article | Canaan, S. |
| Demand for ban on tablighi Jamaat, UP Minorities Commission letter to PM Modi | 01-04-2020 | Article | Abhishek, K. |
| Maulana Arshad Madni defended Tablighi Jamaat, said - Markaz made no mistake | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| 'They were telling the Muslims to die in the mosque, Maulana Saad himself went into isolation' | 02-04-2020 | Article | |
| Indore: Female doctor told how sudden mob stoned the entire team | 02-04-2020 | Article | |
| The misbehavior of the members of the tablighi in isolation, increasing the risk | 02-04-2020 | Article | |
| Army doctors arrived at isolation camp of Tabligi Jamaat, BSF deployed in security | 03-04-2020 | Article | Puneet Sharma |
| VIDEO: The misbehavior of the Jamaatis, listen to what the Muslim religious leaders are saying | 03-04-2020 | Video | |
| Bad gestures from Markaz's patients, cigarette-bidis sought from nurses | 03-04-2020 | Video | |
| The provocative words of Raj Thackeray - '... Such people should be shot!' | 04-04-2020 | Article | Kamlesh Sutar |

| | | | |
|---|------------|---------|---------------|
| Bharatpur: Refused to admit pregnant Muslim woman in government hospital, newborn dies | 04-04-2020 | Article | Dev Ankur |
| Markaz and Tablighi Jamaat of Nizamuddin area should be completely banned: Vishwa Hindu Parishad | 06-05-2020 | Article | Ashok Singhal |
| The Supreme Court reached Jamiat on the issue of tablighi Jamaat, seeking intervention from the court | 07-04-2020 | Article | Anisha Mathur |
| Danger from fake clerics, Muslim community needs to open their eyes: Subuhi Khan | 08-04-2020 | Video | |
| Maharashtra: Jamani found infected with corona virus, strangled suicide with blade | 11-04-2020 | Article | Divyesh Singh |
| Ashok Pandit, who met Javed Akhtar on Twitter, asked - why be silent on Tablighi Jamaat? | 17-04-2020 | Article | |
| From religious gatherings to midnight parties - know about the corona super spreaders of the world | 20-05-2020 | Article | Nikhil Rampal |

A Star of Mysore

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|--------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|
| Bad apples in the basket | 06-04-2020 | Article | Gynapathy B.A. |

India today

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|---|------------------|---------|--------|
| Tablighi Jamaat preacher, others booked for violating govt guidelines on religious gatherings | 31-03-2020 | Article | |
| Coronavirus in India: Tablighi Jamaat meet turns Covid-19 super spreader | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat chief speaks to followers in leaked audio | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| Who is Maulana Saad, the chief of Tablighi Jamaat? | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| Curious case of missing Tablighi Jamaat members | 24-04-2020 | Article | |

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|--|------------|---------|--|
| Yogi Adityanath says Tablighi Jamaat responsible for nationwide surge in Covid19 | 02-05-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat members should be dealt with like terrorists for spreading coronavirus: BJP MP | 11-05-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat's criminal act cannot be forgiven, says Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi at eAgenda | 30-05-2020 | Article | |

Republic World

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 4 More Test Positive For COVID-19 In Assam, All Attended Tablighi Jamaat Meet In Delhi | 01-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi Slams Tablighi Jamaat Over Coronavirus Spread | 01-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Nizamuddin Dargah Criticises Tablighi Jamaat for congregation despite govt's orders | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| Sample Of Tablighi Jamaat Returnee Sent For COVID-19 Test | 01-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Telangana: All 1,200 Tablighi Jamaat Attendees To Be Screened, Says State Health Minister | 01-04-2020 | Article | Gloria Methri |
| 'No women officials in service of quarantined Tablighi Jamaat members', declares UP Govt | 03-04-2020 | Article | |
| Congress slams Tablighi Jamaat members for misbehaving with Coronavirus health workers | 03-04-2020 | Article | |
| COVID-19: Positive cases in India reach 2301, 62% of spike due to Tablighi Jamaat | 03-04-2020 | Article | |
| Role of Tablighi Jamaat was most condemnable: UP CM Yogi Adityanath | 03-04-2020 | Article | |
| Timely Action Against Tablighi Jamaat By Maharashtra Police Saves Many Lives | 03-04-2020 | Article | Shewan Sen |

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|--|------------|---------|------------------------|
| UP Identifies 1203 Attendees Of Tablighi Jamaat; 897 Tested For COVID-19 | 03-04-2020 | Article | Shubhayan Bhattacharya |
| 243 Tablighi Jamaat Members Quarantined In Haridwar | 04-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| CM Uddhav reveals 'Didn't permit Tablighi Jamaat event in Maharashtra'; state tally at 423 | 04-04-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat event attendees should be 'caught', seize phones to examine call details: Adityanath | 04-04-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat Members 'misbehave' With Hospital Staff In Kanpur | 04-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| 30% Of India's Total COVID-19 Cases Are Linked To Tablighi Jamaat: Health Ministry | 05-04-2020 | Article | Jay Pandya |
| Amit Malviya shares stats showing steep spike in COVID cases due to Tablighi Jamaat | 05-04-2020 | Article | |
| Many Tablighi Jamaat Returnees From South Continue To Test Positive For COVID-19 | 05-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Over 300 Tablighi Jamaat members tested coronavirus positive in Pak's Punjab | 05-04-2020 | Article | |
| UP Man Shot Dead Over Remarks On Tablighi Jamaat | 05-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Coronavirus Outbreak: Two Tablighi Jamaat Cases Test Positive In Punjab | 06-04-2020 | Article | Varsha Chavan |
| Figures tell truth: RSS leader Vaidya on COVID-19 cases linked to Tablighi Jamaat event | 06-04-2020 | Article | |
| Himachal CM Jairam Thakur: '50% Of Total COVID-19 Cases Linked To Tablighi Jamaat' | 06-04-2020 | Article | Gloria Methri |
| Markaz Backers Threaten Media Against Reporting Over Tablighi Jamaat | 06-04-2020 | Article | Gloria Methri |
| Provide travel details, Mumbai cops to Tablighi Jamaat members | 06-04-2020 | Article | |
| Punjab govt warns Tablighi Jamaat attendees of criminal prosecution; sets timeline | 07-04-2020 | Article | |

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|---|------------|---------|----------------------|
| Two Tablighi Jamaat Members Booked For Murder Bid In Haridwar | 08-04-2020 | Article | Press Trust of India |
| Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Saad booked for money laundering amid 'self quarantine' | 16-04-2020 | Article | |
| Yogi Adityanath says role of Tablighi Jamaat attendees in spread of Covid 'condemnable' | 03-05-2020 | Article | |

The Hindu

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|--|------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 78 belonging to Tablighi Jamaat from Karnataka in quarantine | 31-03-2020 | Article | Karnataka Bureau |
| Officials of Tablighi Jamaat charged with defying restrictions - Today's Paper | 31-03-2020 | Article | Saurabh Trivedi; Nikhil M Babu |
| States told to track foreign Tablighi members - NATIONAL | 31-03-2020 | Article | Vijaita Singh |
| 22 people who attended Tablighi Jamaat conference in Nizamuddin traced to Tirupattur | 01-04-2020 | Article | Madhavan, T. |
| Coronavirus 72 Tabligh attendees traced in Gujarat; one dead of COVID-19 | 01-04-2020 | Article | |
| Tablighi Jamaat and COVID-19: The story so far | 01-04-2020 | Article | Sruthi Radhakrishnan |
| Coronavirus Dharavi victim likely met Jamaat members | 03-04-2020 | Article | Tanvi Deshpande |
| District authorities scramble to trace Tablighi event attendees in Karnataka | 03-04-2020 | Article | Karnataka Bureau |
| Mobile vegetable sales inaugurated in Tiruppur | 03-04-2020 | Article | |
| Police deny ruckus by Tabligh men | 05-04-2020 | Article | |
| Muslim outfit seeks apology from Jamaat for 'insensitive behaviour' | 07-04-2020 | Article | Shoumojit Banarjee |

TimesNow News

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 'Why didn't you stop Tablighi Jamaat program': Maha Home Minister to Delhi Police post spike in COVID-19 cases | 09-04-2020 | Article | |
| Delhi Police charges Tablighi Jamaat with 'culpable homicide', includes Section 304 in FIR: Report | 16-04-2020 | Article | |
| Watch: Tablighi Jamaat 'Spread' but won't surrender, Do traitors shelter them? The Newshour Agenda | 16-04-2020 | Video | |
| Watch: Tablighi plot to hunt Corona heroes, Who brainwashes them into attacking? The Newshour Agenda | 20-04-2020 | Video | |
| Watch: Tapes of Tablighi harassing LNJP nurse EXPOSED, will you call it FAKE news? The Newshour Agenda | 24-04-2020 | Video | |
| No idea why so much outrage over tweet on Tablighi members, will reply to notice as per rules: IAS officer | 02-05-2020 | Article | |
| RSS playing communal politics by blaming Tablighi Jamaat for spread of coronavirus: Siddaramaiah | 12-05-2020 | Article | |
| Is calling out Tablighi Markaz = 'Islamophobia'? The Newshour Debate | 26-05-2020 | Video | |
| Did Maulana Saad deliberately infect India? India Upfront | 26-05-2020 | Video | |
| Daesh lockdown edition magazine appreciates Markaz for being COVID19 superspreader | 04-06-2020 | Article | Siddhant Mishra |
| ISIS-Markaz links EXPOSED, shocking literature hails Tablighis for spreading Coronavirus | 04-06-2020 | Video | |

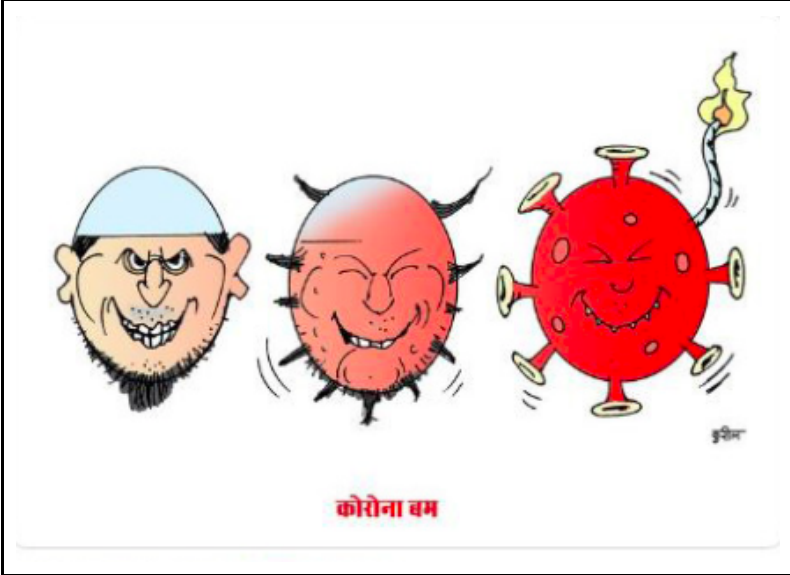


Zee News

| Title | Publication Date | Form | Author |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| DNA: Tablighi Jamaat Betrayed the Nation? | 31-03-2020 | Video | |

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|--|------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Tablighi Jamaat Nizamuddin: 'Audio' of Maulana Saad gone viral, requesting people to act against govt order over COVID19 | 31-03-2020 | Video | |
| Tablighi Jamaat: Know all about the Muslim outfit under scanner for spreading coronavirus in India | 31-03-2020 | Article | Srivastava, Ritesh K. |
| Tablighi jamaat has al Qaeda connection, maulana exposed | 01-04-2020 | Video | |
| Taal Thok Ke: What to do with those who spread 'Corona Jihad'? | 02-04-2020 | Video | |
| Obscene acts & murderous attacks of Tablighi Jamaat with essential service providers during Corona | 03-04-2020 | Video | |
| Tablighi Jamaat members should be killed by firing bullets: MNS chief Raj Thackeray | 04-04-2020 | Article | Bhandari, Ankita |
| 601 new COVID-19 cases in 24 hrs, 1023 related to Tablighi Jamaat: Health Ministry | 04-04-2020 | Article | Bhandari, Ankita |
| Himachal man commits suicide for social boycott over Tablighi Jamaat links | 05-04-2020 | Article | Bhandari, Ankita |
| Indian Army averts coronavirus COVID-19 threat inside Lucknow cantonment from Tablighi Jamaat members | 05-04-2020 | Article | Agarwal, Namrata |
| Tablighi Jamaat members 'misbehave' with hospital staff | 06-04-2020 | Video | |
| When will the 'maulana' of 'Corona Jihad' be arrested? | 06-04-2020 | Video | |
| COVID-19 positive Tablighi Jamaat member, who escaped from Uttar Pradesh hospital, caught | 07-04-2020 | Article | Bhandari, Ankita |
| Coronavirus crisis: Tablighi Jamaat head Maulana Saad quarantined in his Zakir Nagar residence, say Delhi Police sources | 08-04-2020 | Article | Srivastava, Ritesh K. |
| Tablighi Jamaat became India's worst epicentre of Coronavirus? | 08-04-2020 | Video | |
| Jihadists' Secret Plan Out on Corona Jihad in India my Muslim ~ CoronaJihad | 09-04-2020 | Video | |

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|--|------------|---------|---------------|
| Amid rise in coronavirus COVID-19 cases, 30 Tablighi Jamaat members test positive in quarantine centre of Delhi's Mundka | 11-04-2020 | Article | Das, Ananya |
| DNA: Kerala is a new hotspot of 'Jihad' in India | 09-05-2020 | Video | |
| DNA: Zee News is not scared from Jihad Sponsors, Will keep reporting the truth of Jihad | 11-05-2020 | Video | |
| Home Ministry blacklists over 2000 foreign Tablighi Jamaat members from travelling to India for 10 years | 04-06-2020 | Article | Manish Shukla |
| Tablighi Jamaat event organisers deliberately ignored directions: Centre to Supreme Court; rejects CBI probe plea India News | 06-06-2020 | Article | |

Appendix D - List of Political Cartoons

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|  <p>कोरोना चम</p> | <p>1. Manoj Kureel, Indian Political Cartoonist</p> |
|  <p>AB TO HAMARI TALAASH BHI 29 STATES KI POLICE KAR RAHI HAI BHAJJAN...</p> | <p>2. Manesh Joshi</p> |
|  <p>लुटियंस मीडिया आपदा में अवसर! जिहादी चीन कोरोना काम्रेस लेफिस्ट पाकिस्तान नवसली इस्लामी</p> | <p>3. Manoj Kureel</p> |



4. Manoj Kureel



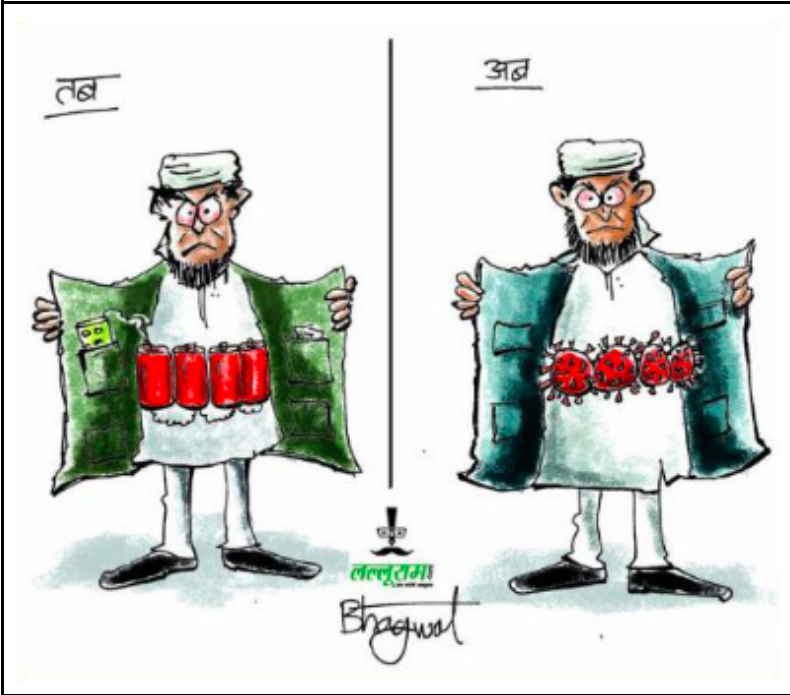
6. Manoj Kureel



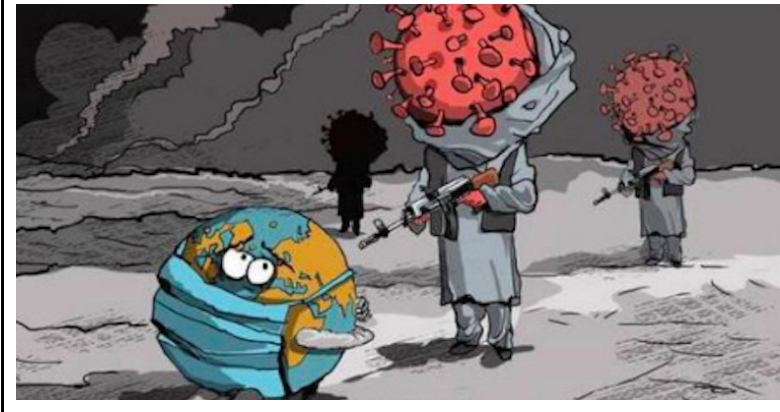
7. Abhishek Mishra



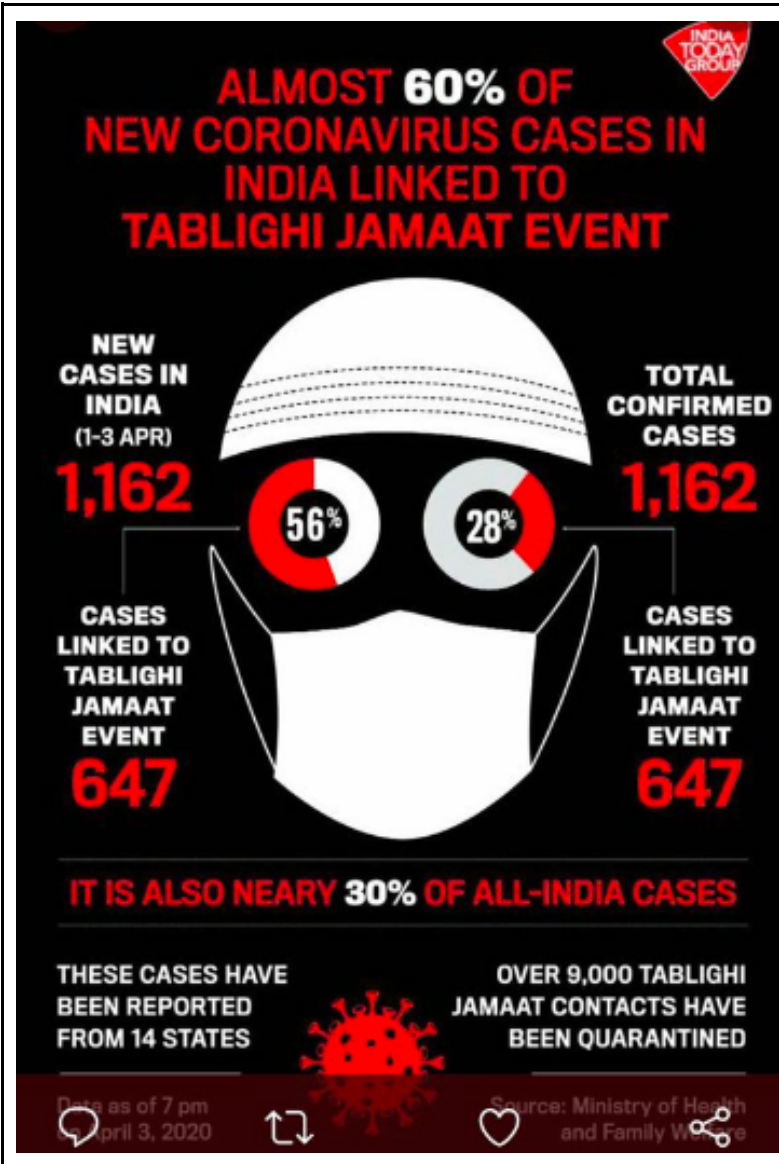
8. Manoj Kureel



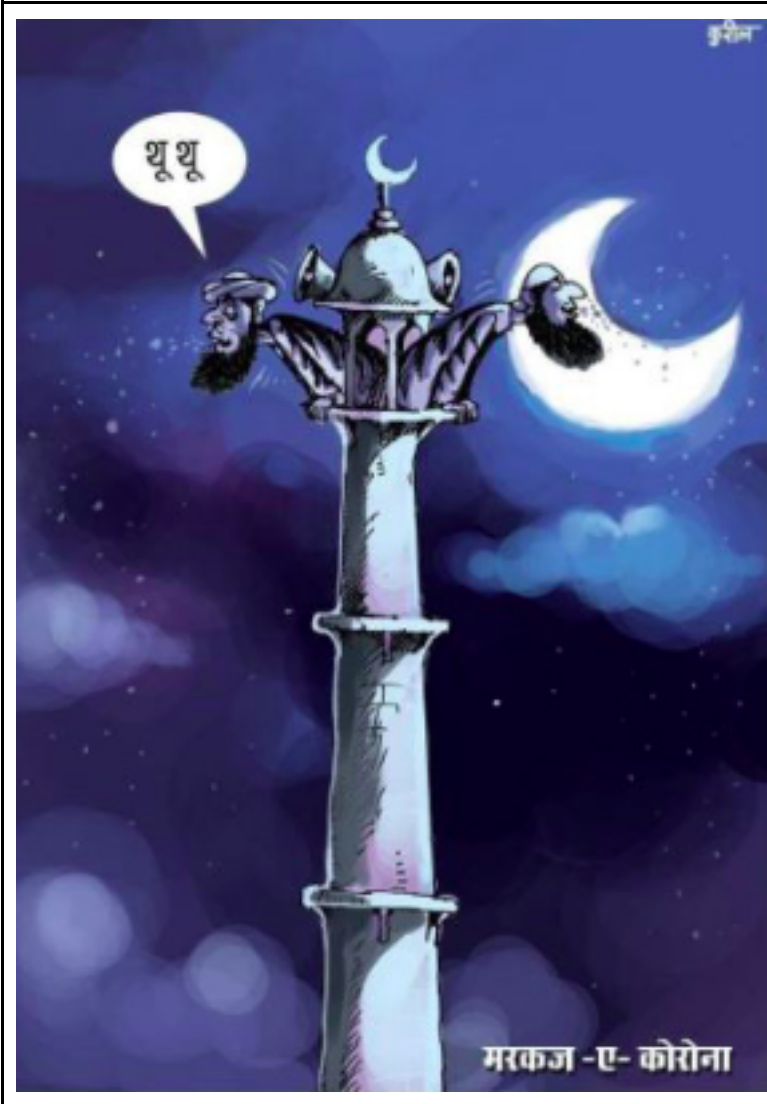
9. Lallu Ram



10. The Hindu



11. India Today



12. BJP for India



13 BJP for India

Appendix E - List of the used Nodes NVivo

Frames:

- Problem
 - Virus
 - War
 - War against Covid
 - War against Muslims
 - Threat
 - Terrorism
 - Weapon
 - Organisations
 - Suicide
- Solution
 - Exclusion / Social boycott
 - Politicians
 - Legal action
 - Homicide
 - Disobedience
 - Violent
 - Shoot people
 - Beat people
- Motivation
 - Vocabulary of severity
 - Morality

Resonance

- Evidence
 - Fake news videos
 - Cases linked to Tablighi Jamaat / Muslims

Performance

- Violence
 - Beaten
- Refused treatment in hospital
- Virtual discrimination
- Exclusion
 - Food rations
 - Social boycotting

Appendix F - Criteria for Metaphor Identification

Linguistic criteria

A metaphor is a word or phrase that causes semantic tension by

1. *Reification* - referring to something that is abstract using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is concrete.
2. *Personification* - referring to something that is inanimate using a word or phrase that is in other contexts refers to something that animate.
3. *De Personification* - referring to something that is animate using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is inanimate.

Pragmatic criteria

A metaphor is an incongruous linguistic representation that has the underlying purpose of influencing opinions and judgements by persuasion; this purpose is often covert and reflects speaker intentions within particular contexts of use.

Cognitive criteria

A metaphor is caused by a shift in the *conceptual system*. The basis for the conceptual shift is the relevance of, or psychological association between, the attributes of the referent of a linguistic expression in its original source context and those of the referent in its novel target context. This relevance or association is usually based on some previously unperceived similarity between the referents in those contexts.

Lastly, the following definitions of the key terms that will be used in this work are based on these criteria:

1. *A metaphor* is a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur to another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby causing semantic tension. It may have any or all of the linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive characteristics that are specified above.
2. *A conventional metaphor* is a metaphor that is frequently used and is taken up in a language community, thereby reducing our awareness of its semantic tension.
3. *A novel metaphor* is a metaphor that has not previously been taken up and used in a language community, thereby heightening awareness of its semantic tension.
4. *A conceptual metaphor* is a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of metaphors by showing them to be related.
5. *A conceptual key* is a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of conceptual metaphors by showing them to be related.

Appendix G - Plagiarism statement

Declaration of Originality/Plagiarism Declaration MA Thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights Utrecht University (course module GKMV 16028)

I hereby declare:

- that the content of this submission is entirely my own work, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources. These are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such, with a reference to their sources provided in the thesis text, and a full reference provided in the bibliography;
- that the sources of all paraphrased texts, pictures, maps, or other illustrations not resulting from my own experimentation, observation, or data collection have been correctly referenced in the thesis, and in the bibliography;
- that this Master of Arts thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights does not contain material from unreferenced external sources (including the work of other students, academic personnel, or professional agencies);
- that this thesis, in whole or in part, has never been submitted elsewhere for academic credit;
- that I have read and understood Utrecht University's definition of plagiarism, as stated on the University's information website on "Fraud and Plagiarism":

"Plagiarism is the appropriation of another author's works, thoughts, or ideas and the representation of such as one's own work." (Emphasis added.)

Similarly, the University of Cambridge defines "plagiarism" as "... submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity." (Emphasis added.)

- that I am aware of the sanction applied by the Examination Committee when instances of plagiarism have been detected;
- that I am aware that every effort will be made to detect plagiarism in my thesis, including the standard use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.

Name and Surname of Student: La Kleuskens

Title of MA thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights:

"At war with Corona: Jihadists" How threat metaphors were used to demonise and construct violence against the Muslim minorities in India during the Covid-19 outbreak.

| | |
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| Signature  | Date of Submission 51-10-2020 |
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¹ <https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/policies-and-procedures/fraud-and-plagiarism>

² <http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/universitys-definition-plagiarism>