Abstract: In August 2019, India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took the historic decision of abrogating Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which revoked Kashmir's special status. The contentious move resulted in the emergence of two key competing narratives, with political supporters hailing the abrogation as the liberation of the nation from decades of secessionism and terrorism; and opponents representing it as an assault on democracy and the Constitution. This paper will analyze political contrast in the narratives of political supporters and opponents and how each side discursively represented the abrogation to legitimatize their respective versions of reality. To conduct the analysis, I will draw on Author's (2015) theoretical framework of the Discourse of Illusion, with application to analysis of data occurring from three aspects: historicity (use of the past to justify the present or predict the future); linguistic and semiotic action (subjective conceptualizations of the world made apparent through significant metaphorical rhetoric); and the degree of social impact (the rise of delineating categories as a result of one's rhetoric).

Keywords: Discursive Illusions, Political Contrast, Categorization, Metaphor, India-Article 370

The Discursive Construction of Legitimacy in the
Abrogation of Indian Constitution's Article 370

1. Introduction

On 5th August 2019, India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, revoked Kashmir's special status in a bid to integrate its Muslim-majority population with the rest of the country by abrogating (repealing or abolishing an existing law or agreement) the Constitution's Article 370. The Article that was abolished conferred state-ship to the region, a separate Constitution and a large degree of autonomy over the internal running of the state. Its partition rooted in the colonialization of India when Kashmir's ruler chose to join India rather than Pakistan on the condition of autonomy, Kashmir has witnessed over seven decades of conflict and unrest since 1947, divided between India (rules Kashmir valley and the largely Hindu area around Jammu city), Pakistan (holds western part of the region frequently referred to as Azad or Free Kashmir), and China (controls a portion of the eastern region bordering with Tibet).

The most significant aspects of Kashmir's special status in the Indian Constitution were Article 370 and Article 35A, the former bestowing freedom to regulate all state affairs barring foreign affairs, defense and communications, and the latter privileging only Kashmir's permanent residents with special rights, including property and land ownership, scholarships, and civil service employment. The abrogation of Article 370 was preceded by the stationing of thousands of paramilitary troops around the region, key political leaders being placed under house arrest, and shut down of internet and mobile services, with the Central Government (the Centre) arguing that Jammu-Kashmir's (J&K) special status was always intended to be temporary and remedying the situation could result in a temporary rise of militant attacks. Revocation

of Article 370 would be legally possible upon recommendation for its abolishment by the Constituent Assembly of the State. However, the Assembly was dissolved in 1957 upon adoption of the State's Constitution; furthermore, as the State currently has no government after the ruling coalition party split up, Kashmir has been under the Centre's de facto rule through appointment of a State Governor, also commonly referred to as 'President's rule', allowing the Centre to abrogate Article 370 within the Constitution's legal framework.

Unsurprisingly, the abrogation of Article 370, in the context of the Modi government's rule, has given rise to mixed reactions within India. For example, former President of the Indian National Congress Party (Congress) Rahul Gandhi, BJP's key political opposition, tweeted on 6th August "National integration isn't furthered by unilaterally tearing apart J&K, imprisoning elected representatives and violating our Constitution. This nation is made by its people, not plots of land. This abuse of executive power has grave implications for our national security." This stance was echoed by Omar Abdullah, former Chief Minister of J&K, who claimed "Government of India's unilateral and shocking decisions today are a total betrayal of the trust that the people of Jammu & Kashmir had reposed in India… aggression against people of the State…has resorted to deceit and stealth in recent weeks to lay the ground for these disastrous decisions"[1]. However, member of political party Shiv Sena (a right-wing ultranationalist party) claimed the abrogation, in fact, represented a "[h]istoric day for India. Article 370 scrapped, and Jammu and Kashmir now truly a part of India… the path to a safer, progressive and an open J&K determined by the citizens and not anti-national elements, has been paved"[2]. This paper is concerned with discursive illusions arising from the political contrast in the discourses proliferated by dominant but opposing discourse clans, that is typically powerful groups in society (Author, 2015), with access to

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[1] https://twitter.com/ANI/status/1158273125831925761/photo/1

[2] https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-article-370-scrapped-heres-how-politicians-and-parties-reacted-to-centres-move/335589

proliferative mediums, who employ linguistic and rhetorical strategies to persuade audiences of the legitimacy of their own versions of reality. In particular, I focus on the contrasting representations of the issue by the Modi government, discoursed by the Prime Minister himself in a speech addressed to the nation, and a counter representation proliferated by Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament (MP), former Under-Secretary of the United Nations, prominent political writer, and member of BJP's main opposition, the Congress.

During their governance over the last few years, the narrative centered around BJP's political ideology has forged an aggressive tone (Ganguly, 2014), reconceptualizing Indian nationalism as a masculine being that is 'Hindu supremacist...[while] Muslims and other minorities are located as the Other of this body politic' (Kaul, 2017: 525; cf. Laclau, 2005). This narrative stance depicts the current government not only as the moral compass of new India but seeks to legitimatize their policies and decisions by positioning them against an illegitimate or alien influence. In this way, the nation becomes what Anderson's (2010) argues to be an imagined community- 'both inherently limited and sovereign' (57). In this regard, Indian socio-political discourse, over the last several years, has been bolstered by distinct right-wing nationalist ideology, whether apparent in opinion columns, commentary on 24-hour news channels, or through various pop cultural discourses (see Author, 2020). Thus, it is not hard to correlate the resurrection of BJP since 2014 and their dispersion of Hindutva (conflation of religious and national identity), and the perceived disintegration of Kashmir's autonomy. As Perrigo (2019) argues, over the last few decades, Hindu nationalists have played on anti-Muslim sentiment amongst Hindu voters generating election agendas that promise the revocation of Kashmir's special status as a means to safeguard the Indian constitution.

However, supporters of the abrogation have argued vehemently against anti-nationals who are believed to have perpetrated a misinformation campaign against the government's actions, which are aimed at rectifying the disconnect between the law and state that has, over the years, led "instability, violence and erosion of institutions of governance…J&K is victim of the disjunction that allowed state to plunge into an inexorable proxy war… [and] also created a wide wedge between people and the government" (Kumar, 2020).

This is a complex and deeply historical issue, and to do justice to all the different representations within one paper is simply not possible as it would need to include a look at Pakistan vs India's narrative, global vs national leaders, narratives emerging from different regions within India etc. Instead, this paper will draw on the multidimensional theoretical framework of the Discourse of Illusion to investigate the two key contrasting narratives of the issue that have emerged locally, and generally highlight those supporting the abrogation and those against it. The framework used in this paper will focus on the contrasting language used to talk about a contentious political issue; the contrast arising directly from the manipulation of linguistic and rhetorical strategies by opposing socio-political groups in the representation of a common issue. In doing so, I interpret the political language in contrast from a (critical) discourse perspective. Furthermore, within these macro arguments there are hundreds of varying interpretations of the issue, but for the sake of illustration, I will focus on the overarching narratives emerging from the two key political parties in India- BJP vs Congress, and the narrative each has constructed through prominent party figures, in this case PM Modi and MP Shashi Tharoor.

2. Discursive Illusions

Kant (1970) has argued that our minds actively participate in the creation of a subjective, reconstruction of the external world by drawing on past experiences (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966; Author, 2015, 2020). Our conceptualization of reality is a

product of history, evolving over time, apparent "not in documents or static things, but only in the actual run of event in experience" (Hart 1929: 492). This socio-cognitive phenomenon Bourdieu (1990) refers to as our habitus that "produces individual and collective practices… in accordance with the schemes generated by history… [that] tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices" (54). These predisposed forms of ideological behavior naturalize into our consciousness and are challenging to discern in routine activities. This also highlights the temporal aspect of our habitus, in which past understanding becomes the foundation through which we make sense of new experiences.

Habitus evokes cognitive, social and linguistic elements in the creation of our subjective realities, so that perceiving the world as it appears becomes an entirely ideological phenomenon. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain further that our social environment is constituted through the habitual actions of individuals becoming common sense, "share[d] with others in the normal, self-evident routines of everyday life… everyday life is taken for granted *as* reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence" (37). Of course, habitus differs with individuals as practices and beliefs are contextually determined, as such our habitus produces action and thought that correlates with the very conditions of existence from which our habitus itself is born (Bourdieu, 1991). In this way, habitus is both liberating and constraining, presenting a contention between convention and creativity- to redefine boundaries is to set and operate within boundaries to begin with. Our representations of reality are in effect a competing assortment of subjective perceptions (Hume 1970), constructed through language and action but which upon societal consent transform into objective truths. Consequently, we seem to inhabit two realities: the subjective reality that we

know and construct through our ideological thinking, what Kant (1970) refers to as phenomena or empirically observed, and what the world is outside of knowledge, "represented in abstraction from sensibility" (Grier, 2001: 87).

However, as creators of our own social environment, both subjective and objective realities, for all intents and purposes, are one and the same; what appears to be is what is comprehended (cf. Grier, 2001). These representations are further objectified through collective societal consent whereby often privileged representations of reality proliferated by powerful groups and individuals work to shape dominant societal perceptions. This in itself is another kind of subjectivity, the impact of cognition on social behavior that a subjective reality, if agreed upon by many, acquires factual legitimacy. Thus, a single-minded belief that our representation of reality that is "nothing more than this imaginary universe of interchangeable possibles, entirely dependent on the decrees of the consciousness that creates it, and therefore, entirely devoid of objectivity" (Sartre, 1957 in Bourdieu, 1990: 42) is the only valid representation gives rise to illusions. In mistaking our subjective representations of reality as objective we are prone to acting on them, taking decisions, laying ground for future actions, categorizing and structuring society on the basis of them. Eventually these representations can become dissociated, to whatever extent, from their point of origin, becoming "naturalized" that is to say, "based in the nature of things or people, rather than in the interests of classes or other groupings" (Fairclough, 1995: 35). However, I believe that while these ideologies may become naturalized over time, they do not necessarily become dissociated from their original source, instead the study of ideology reinforces how ideological meaning can sustain relations of domination, prioritizing the interests of one group at the cost of others (Thompson, 1984). The study of ideologies can demonstrate how they can be concealed, revealed or disguised in discursive practices to appear natural and legitimate. Power, hegemony, as well as material means (e.g., language, modality etc.) help validate and make operative powerful ideologies.

More specifically, this paper is concerned with the notion of collective illusions created through various discourses, whereby creators of powerful narratives, with access to powerful mediums (e.g., media), employ strategic rhetorical and linguistic devices to persuade audiences of the legitimacy of their ideologies. Thus, collective illusions arise when particular representations of reality (be it of an event, issue, phenomena, occurrence etc.) become recognized as the 'dominant framework' within which understanding of that reality operates (Author, 2015). Such illusions become challenging to disprove because they start representing what is true for social groups and individuals adhering to similar ideologies, with regards to any aspect of reality. As Hall (2001: 76) explains, power absorbs at all levels of social reality and so "[k]nowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has real effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true'".

Subjective representations of reality offered as narratives of truth appear persuasive because they evoke fear, prejudice, or happiness etc. and when presented as factual propositions that audiences have the liberty to adhere to or reject, align with what Gramsci defines as hegemony, whereby a "hegemonic class... gains the consent of other classes and social forces through creating and maintaining a system of alliances by means of political and ideological struggle" (in translation, Simon, 1999: 25-6). In regarding this process as hegemony, then, I further elevate the earlier notion of dominant framework to 'hegemonic discursive framework' of specific issues, events, social constructs, or groups etc. through which understanding, action and discussion is formed. Of concern here is not the falsity or subjectivity of such representations but instead the discursive process through which they acquire a status of legitimacy.

Establishment of consent on part of audiences regarding a particular representation of reality can generate a collective illusion, resulting in normativity within group beliefs and practices, and ultimately, generating categories through which we structure and classify our experiences. These categories ultimately become "representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are and what our relationships with others are... a self-serving schema for the representation of us and them as social groups" (Oktar, 2001: 313-14). Thus, once a discursive illusion materializes (i.e., an ideological representation of an issue, event or social construct etc. which goes on to become a hegemonic framework of understanding through collective agreement, reinforced through discourse), it becomes part of our knowledge system, leading to powerful categories and stereotypes of the social world.

The Discourse of Illusion (drawing on a combination of the Foucauldian and Faircloughian notion of discourse), proposed here as an umbrella term embodying various forms of public discourses, especially political and media discourses, can be viewed as an attempt by writers or speakers to persuade the audiences that the representation of reality being promulgated is the truthful one. In other words, it can be deemed as an effort to persuade audiences to suspend their judgments or interpretations in favor of the writer or speaker's. Potentially, because all of our discourses are ideological, they are also those of illusion. However, within this framework we are interested in discursive illusions that arise from contestation between different representations of reality, and the dynamicity with which these representations can change, making the illusory nature of the discourse more perceptible. Examples can include populist or nationalist discourses, discourses of terrorism or activism, discourses about climate-change or refugees. There are, however, various discourses, such as those of marketing or corporate social responsibility, amongst others, within which discursive illusions are much harder to discern, primarily due to the relative

staticity of their discourses, even though they can appeal to a larger consciousness seeking answers about lifestyle or societal expectations.

The Discourse of Illusion framework is proposed as an alternative to more conventional methods of political discourse analysis for two key reasons: firstly, it does not reduce ideological differences arising in socio-political discourses to only a matter of propaganda, emerging from the desire to retain or challenge a status quo of power. Through the Discourse of Illusion, we move away from basic text to larger areas of context and social reality to bring more recognition to the fact that groups and individuals do inhabit separate realities, an objective one we cannot access and a subjective, ideological one that drives our understanding of how things were, how they are, and how they should be. As such, the framework attempts to analyze and engage with discourse and argument construction with an open-mind and without judgement. This relates to the second reason the framework is proposed as an alternative method: it adopts a multi-perspective approach that considers how argumentation is formed through manipulation of history (our past), metaphor, and categorization, which together allow for a more in-depth look at how ideological arguments, as well as social constructs and categories, are formed and become operative in society.

The Discourse of Illusion is an appropriate multidimensional framework to adopt in the study of contrasting political discourse as it is concerned with how writers or speakers seek to attain collective consent for their versions of reality. The analytical framework employed will explore discursive illusions through three interrelated components-history, linguistic and semiotic action, and social impact- analyzed using a combination of three methods (structured immediacy, metaphor analysis, and categorization). As mentioned previous, the integration of these models distinguishes this approach by allowing for a deeper and richer multi-perspective analysis of dynamic discursive processes at both textual and contextual levels.

To sum up, I can argue that discursive illusions emerge when writers and speakers, through various modalities (e.g., press conferences, speeches, news reports) seek to legitimatize their representation of reality. The discourse here itself becomes the modality- the medium through which meaning, or argument is formed, whether through speech, texts, or any other multimodality. These discourses shape and are shaped by society, textured with complex ideologies that have real world impact. The constant change and contestation between the values or beliefs within such discourses, generated by competing discourse clans (socio-political groups governed by similar ideological systems and as such prone to common narratives about different aspects of the social world) give rise to multiple discursive illusions.

3. Methodological Framework

In order to more closely explore how discursive illusions are realized, the paper will draw on a combined analysis incorporating dimensions of historicity, linguistic and semiotic action, linked to an account of some of the social effects of these actions:

1. Historicity- discursive illusions are a product of ideologies negotiated over time by different discourse clans, dealing with the growth or change of perceptions. The historicity of discourses reflects also the naturalization of subjective representations into social consciousness, becoming ordinary and commonsensical, illustrating the recontextualization of past experience into present day action or discussion (cf. Wodak, 2000; 2002). To analyze this historical component of discursive illusions, I draw on the concept of *Structured Immediacy* (Leudar and Nekvapil, 2011), focusing on "how participants enrich the here-and-now of action by connecting it to the past" (66), and which we can further define as the "reconceptualization of historical antecedents in an attempt to situate and present specific instances of current reality, often in relation to the future*"* (Author, 2015: 52). In this manner, historical

details "'thicken' the descriptions of people and activities – providing them with meanings they would not have had otherwise" (Leudar and Nekvapil, 2011: 80).

An analysis of historicity within discourses entails an investigation of how discourse clans creatively render the meaning of events and issues, making "accountable connections between something in the present and something in the past, uniting the two in a figure-ground relationship... [this can] involve denying historical connections: if one is successful at obliterating elements of the past then something in that past ceases to be consequential and something else can take its place" (Leudar and Nekvapil, 2011: 72). In this way, history gets transformed into a sort of tool used to negotiate the here-and-now with the past. In doing so, I also extend Bourdieu's notion of habitus beyond individual practice to include collective practices of dynamic discursive entities (e.g., newspapers, political parties, government, community groups etc.) with evolving knowledge systems. Analysis at this level involves looking at both literal and conceptual references to time (references to specific times and dates or the concept of history and time), invocation of past events or socio-political history (what has happened in the past, actions of the past), and recontextualization of present occurrences in terms of these past events (conceptual or literal connections between the past and current or future time).

2. Linguistic and semiotic action- subjective representations of the world give rise to our discursive actions, often in the form of metaphor, which enable the reconceptualization of experiences in new or alternative ways. Lakoff (1987: 296) argues that our very conceptual systems are intrinsically metaphorical, and "cannot in any sense be said to fit a reality completely outside of human experience", thus the way we think or organize our experiences is largely metaphorically structured. Such truths presented to discourse clans can invoke emotional agreement and

seem convincing because they correspond with the audiences' way of thinking. Even radical or creative metaphorical conceptualizations of social constructs, if they correspond with audiences' ideologies, can seem less unconventional and thus effective in manipulating the perceptions through their "imaginative rationality" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 193).

To analyze metaphorical conceptualizations within discursive argumentation I borrow elements of critical discourse analysis (CDA), focusing in particular on metaphor analysis which "aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use" (Charteris-Black, 2005: 26). The focus here is on what the speaker or writer's intention is when creating and disseminating specific metaphors, usually by blending both cognitive and pragmatic perspectives, and thus recognizing that metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon but also a persuasive tool. Analysis at this level involves looking at various metaphors/metaphorical representations which can potentially "bring to a discourse event traces of previous uses and of previous discourse events" (Cameron, 2003: 27).

3. Social impact- the naturalization of subjective representations of reality generates various categories and stereotypes, setting standards for normative behavior, enhancing in-group commonality and out-casting those who do not adhere to similar values. Categories become a consequence of our discursive actions and the means through which we observe and classify events, issues or constructs, as well as our relationship with others. Discursive illusions arise when generalizations take place, privileging one version of reality over another, and labels are assigned based on how we perceive reality as opposed to what it really may be since "human categorization is essentially a matter of both human experience and imagination- of perception, motor activity, and culture on the one hand, and of metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery on the other" (Lakoff, 1987: 8).

The categories and stereotypes that our discursive actions generate can be analyzed through Jayyusi's (1984) notion of categorization analysis that explicates how people "organize their moral positions and commitments round certain category identities" (183). The use of membership categorizations within membership categories are indicative of the influence that habitus has on our way of perceiving the world. Analysis at this level involves identifying three classes of membership categories: self-organized groups (united by common beliefs, interests and commitments); type categorization (predicting actions believed to be "embedded in the features of that categorization" [Jayyusi, 1984: 24]); and individual descriptor designators (assigning labels with both an ascriptive and descriptive function to 'types' of people or constructs). Put together, analysis of categorization at these levels reveals the ideologies behind the positive or negative representation of self and other groups in the context of complex issues.

4. Data

The primary data for this paper comes from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official government website, which provides open access to an archive of all speeches, official English translations and related videos, as well as Shashi Tharoor's official website that also provides open access to archives all his speech transcripts and media writings. This paper is part of a larger project on the Discursive Construction of Hindu Nationalism in Contemporary Political Discourse that consists of over 200 speeches and commentaries ranging from 2014-2019, which marks the rise to power and re-election of the Modi government. However, for the sake of illustration, this paper presents a more focused and detailed comparative study on the construction of Article 370's abrogation focusing on 2 key texts- Modi's Address to the Nation on August 8th 2019 (the official English rendering of the speech was accessed from the Government's website), 3 days after the government revoked Kashmir's special status, and Shashi Tharoor's contrasting commentary on the revocation a day after Modi's speech, giving rise to significant

discursive illusions. Supporting secondary data that consists of international and Indian English-language online newspapers (of various political leanings) have also been included in order to better inform understanding of the socio-political issue (e.g., Indian political history, opposition parties, Hindu nationalism, Jammu-Kashmir conflict etc.) and its analysis.

5. Case Study Analysis

The world has seen a rapid rise in right-wing nationalist sentiment with political leaders, elected to office and otherwise, propagating populist narratives that encourage protectionist sentiment. In India too, similar to the "political Right in many countries faced with the globalization of moral values and the growing influence of Western, especially American, culture, the BJP has reactively committed itself to purify Indian society" (Marsh and Brasted, 2002: 235-6). BJP's fundamental ideology of Hindutva seeks to enforce "a communal reconstruction of national identity", deriving from "a primordial Hindu community, which transcends regional, language and cultural difference and is bound together by a common history, civilization and destiny" (235). Banerjee (2017) further clarifies that the origins of Hindu nationalism dates back to the 1920s, and goes beyond Hinduism as a religion, to frame India's cultural identity through denoting "all people who believe in, respect or follow the eternal values of life that have sprung up in Bharat [Republic of India]". The decision to abrogate Article 370 met with skepticism from opposing discourse clans precisely because it was perceived as an infringement of basic constitutional and democratic rights in the course to assimilate the people of J&K under a common national identity. However, proponents of the abrogation have argued that the move will work to bring constitutional equality to all citizens, while eliminating alien forces that seek to divide and conquer parts of the country. As such I divide the analysis into two parts: the discursive representation of Article 370 and representation of the abrogation by both Modi and Tharoor.

Representing Article 370

Extract 1   Article 370 and 35A have given nothing but secessionism, terrorism, nepotism and widespread corruption on a large scale to Jammu-Kashmir. Both these articles were used as a weapon by Pakistan to flare up the emotions of some people. Due to this about 42,000 people lost their lives in the last three decades. (Modi, 8/8/2019)

Extract 2   More than 1.5 crore people of Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of the benefits of laws that were enacted for the benefit of the people of India. Imagine children in rest of the country have a right to education while children in Jammu & Kashmir were deprived of this right. (Modi, 8/8/2019)

Extract 3   The democracy in our country is very strong; but you will be surprised to know that there have been thousands of brother and sisters living for decades in Jammu and Kashmir who had the right to cast their vote in Lok Sabha polls but were not allowed to cast vote in assembly and local body elections. They are the ones who had come to India following partition in 1947. Should we have allowed the injustice to continue in the same way? (Modi, 8/8/2019)

Extract 4   Brothers and sisters, Jammu – Kashmir is the crown of our country. We are proud that many brave sons and daughters of Jammu – Kashmir have sacrificed and risked their lives for its security. Maulvi Ghulam Din of Poonch district, who had informed Indian Army about Pakistani intruders during 1965 war. He was conferred Ashok Chakra. Col. Sonam Wangchug of Ladakh district, who forced enemies to bite dust during Kargil war, was honoured with Mahavir Chakra… The list of such brave sons and daughters is very long… They all had a dream of seeing a peaceful, safe and prosperous Jammu – Kashmir. We, together, have to realize their dream… When peace and prosperity prevails in this important part of the globe, the efforts for peace in entire world will be naturally strengthened. (Modi, 8/8/2019)

In the preceding extracts, Article 370 is reified into a *weapon* used by enemy Others to incite *secessionism* and *terrorism* within J&K. Use of words and phrases that denote violence (*lost their lives, flare up, sacrificed and risked their lives, Pakistani intruders, war, security*) in conjunction with the adverb *but* delegitimizes any assumed effects of the law other than threat, and thus also invalidates any arguments proposed by opposing discourse clans. The legitimacy of the Centre's actions is achieved through "moral evaluation... trigger[ing] a moral concept but are detached from the system of interpretation from which they derive... transmu[tating] moral discourses into generalised motives" in the quest for collective consent and support (van Leeuwen, 2007: 97-8). Such moral binaries expressed through the topos of threat to freedom (Wodak et al., 2009) can be seen to warrant extreme action in the pursuit for necessary radical change. J&K are further reified into the *crown* of India, transforming the country into a pre-Independence kingdom that is under attack and abrogation the only means to defend the kingdom against outside aggression. As indicated in Section 3, past experience is manipulated when the abrogation of Article 370 is reconceptualized as an obligation, a moral responsibility to *realize the dream* of *peace and prosperity* in a personalized narrative that draws on the names and faces of Kashmiris (*children, brave sons and daughters, Maulvi Ghulam Din of Poonch, Col. Sonam Wangchug of Ladakh*), which include the vulnerable, the religious (*Maulvi* is a title given to Muslim religious scholars) and professional (*Colonel*) insinuating both the collective struggle and diversity of those dreaming for peace, and thus to whom the abrogation is owed. The region's history of struggle is collectivized but individual stories of bravery and victimization humanizes the on-going conflict in the region, allowing an echo of Modi's own narrative and ideologies. We see here also the power and effect of political discourse that can work to position the audience to a story, group of people, or issue through "repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency" (Fairclough, 1989: 54).

The people of J&K are positively represented through actions denoting courage, democracy and determination (*sacrificed, risked their lives, forced enemies, dream, deprived*), their actions earning them *honour,* award and medals (*Ashok Chakra, Mahavir Chakra)*, placing them on the opposite end of the category-pairing of aggressor vs victim, in which *Pakistan* is negatively represented as *secessionist, terrorist* and the *intruder*. Reference to historical dates, events, and statistics (*42,000 people, 1.5 crore people, following the partition in 1947, living for decades, during the 1965 war, during the Kargil war*) provide the impression of factuality, helping audiences to suspend their disbelief by adding credibility to claims. More importantly, as explained in Section 3, by recontextualizing current day events in terms of 1947's partition of the Indian subcontinent and the consequent Indo-Pak wars, connotations and emotions from the historical event are transferred into present day. As Dalrymple (2015) notes, the 1947 partition played a key role in shaping modern India's identity: an identity deriving from a collective consciousness of violence and division. And furthermore, a collective memory that continues to be stoked with ceaseless political narratives that reverberate self-protection, other-provocation and anti-inclusion sentiment.

Use of temporal references also serve to emphasize the length of the Kashmiri people's struggle, their stories of bravery and injustice legitimizing Article 370's abrogation. In this way, criminalization becomes a key strategy in delegitimizing the polarized Other, discursively built to cover a range of time frames, making the threat an on-going one (Lazar and Lazar, 2004). The use of past experience in justifying a present course of action encourages individual memories of suffering to become collective experiences of the partition, so that even if wider audiences "do not embrace memories of events that occurred in unfamiliar or historically distant cultural contexts" their understanding of these narratives become a "mediated phenomena", assuming "collective relevance when they are structured represented, and used in a social setting" (Kansteiner 2002: 190). Modi asserts his moral authority in deciding to abrogate Article 370 by reinforcing his headship of the country, which is personified

into a family, addressing his citizens as *brothers and sisters*, *sons and daughters*, with repeated use of unifying pronouns *we* and *our* serving to align all Indian citizens with Kashmiris, and both these groups with the government.

Lastly, we also find in the preceding data extracts representation of Article 370 as an assault on democracy, as Modi draws on legal language (*laws that were enacted, right to education, right to cast their vote, cast vote in assembly, injustice*) to further personify the law as one that *deprives* the Kashmiri people of their basic rights. In this version of events, the resulting *injustice* of Article 370 is inconsistent with the *democracy in our country*, providing legal grounding for its abrogation in order to achieve *a peaceful, safe and prosperous Jammu,* and ultimately a *naturally strengthened...world.*

By contrast, MP Shashi Tharoor, member of the opposition political party, reconceptualizes Article 370 strictly in terms of its legal framework:

Extract 5   ...it was left to the Constituent Assembly of J&K to determine the constitutional relationship between India and the state... the primacy in such matters lies with the people of J&K... The Constituent Assembly of J&K enacted the Constitution of J&K, whose Article 147(c) places a bar on the legislative assembly from affecting the constitutional relationship with India, as provided in the Constitution of India. So, they accepted Article 370 as the permanent constitutional relationship between the Union and the state, an interpretation upheld in successive Supreme Court judgments. The permission of the people of J&K through an elected body is a condition precedent to interfere with its special status under Article 370. Clause 3 of Article 370 makes it clear that you cannot amend the article without the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly. (Tharoor, 9/8/2019)

The heavy use of legal language (*Constituent Assembly, constitutional relationship, Article 147(c), bar on the legislative assembly, Constitution of India, successive Supreme Court judgments, condition precedent, Clause 3 of Article 370*) serves the narrative purpose of judging BJP party's actions to be in violation of the spirit of the law, and as a result Tharoor places himself (and the opposition party he is ideologically aligned with) firmly at the other end of the unlawful vs lawful standardized relational pair. This category-pairing, Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil (2004: 245) define as the "typical expectations that incumbents of one category have of incumbents of the other", with the lawful side having the power to pronounce moral judgment on the unlaw side, while the Other side is denied any grounds for explanation. As discussed in Section 3, categories are a consequence of our discursive actions and the means through which we observe and classify events, issues and our relationship with others. Given existing political power asymmetries, this inevitably leads to the prioritization of one version of reality over another. We also see here the emergence of double contrastive identities (Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil, 2004), an inevitable consequence of discursive illusions, whereby groups and individuals can play multiple roles or be either positively or negatively depicted based on different narratives. This is evident also in the interpretation offered by Farooq and Javid (2020: 2), whereby Article 370 was always a means to manage the emotions and sentiments of J&K's population, to

> earn temporary peace for the newly emerged Indian state... Since the dispute was registered with the United Nations (UNO), therefore, India agreed to hold a plebiscite to honour the will of the state's people... [however] The Indian governments have been consistent in realizing to change the demography of the state to convert it into Hindu majority state. However, article 370 hindered any possibility of such a plan....

In these two contrasting representations of Article 370, we see a version of reality (discoursed by Modi) in which Pakistan and anti-nationals are portrayed as the

aggressive Other, in opposition to a democratic nation wanting to do what is morally right by all its citizens. In the contrasting version of reality (discoursed by Tharoor), it is the Modi government which is depicted as the unlawful Other, violating the emotions and sentiments of the Kashmiri people for the furtherance of their own political propaganda.

Representing the Abrogation

Extract 6   As a country and as a family, you and us, together we took a historic decision. A system which denied due rights to our brothers and sisters of Jammu, Kashmir… A dream which Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel had, a dream which Babasaheb Ambedkar had, the dream shared by… crores of citizens, has now been fulfilled. (Modi, 8/8/2019)

Extract 7   Friends, whether it is the colour of *kesar* or flavour of Kahwa or sweetness of apple or juiciness of apricot whether Kashmiri shawls or artefacts; organic products of Ladakh or herbal medicine of Jammu and Kashmir, all these need to be publicised in the whole of world. I will give you one example. There is a plant in Ladakh, named *solo*. Experts say that this plant is like a *sanjivini* for people living in high altitude and for security forces deployed in heavy icy mountains. These plants have great role in maintaining immune system of the body at where oxygen level is low. Just think over, should these extraordinary items be sold or not in the whole world? Which Indian will not like this? (Modi, 8/8/2019)

Extract 8   It is possible in democracy that some people will agree to this decision and some will oppose it. I respect their disagreement and their objections… But I urge them to act keeping the national interest as paramount and help the government in giving a new direction to Jammu – Kashmir… Come forward to help the country… But it is also true that whatever odds are being caused now because of these historic steps are being fought by them only… We should not forget that it is the patriots of Jammu – Kashmir who are strongly opposing the conspiracies of

Pakistan of instigating terrorism and separatism. Our brothers and sisters, who believe in Indian Constitution, deserve a better life. We are proud of them. (Modi, 8/8/2019)

In representing the abrogation of Article 370, Modi continues to enforce the conceptualization of the nation as an imagined family through use of metaphor (*as a family, our brothers and sisters*) and unifying pronouns (*our, we, us*) that position Modi as head of the family, and thus responsible for giving his family *a better life* (cf. Anderson, 2010). Use of temporal references (*historic decision, historic steps*) contextualized in the past *dreams* of famous Indian freedom fighters mark the abrogation as a key moment in India's history, connecting actions of freedom fighters, who represent the emotions of pre-Independence India, with the contemporary state of affairs in J&K being *denied due rights.* The abrogation is conceptualized as freedom for the people of J&K, and Article 370 as keeping them hostage by antagonist Others, namely the *conspiracies of Pakistan.* In this way, national identity is categorized in terms of *patriotism,* which is further represented as *agreement* with government decisions, *giving new direction to Jammu-Kashmir, keeping national interest as paramount, strongly opposing conspiracies of Pakistan* and *believing in the Indian Constitution.* These actions attribute to patriots the qualities of being brave, democratic, lawful and just. By default, those who oppose the actions and values of patriots, are placed on the other end of the Us vs. Them category-pair, and their actions and qualities the opposite of patriots (support *conspiracies of Pakistan, instigate terrorism and separatism,* undemocratic, and unjust). The abrogation becomes a historical event, therefore, precisely because of the rupture it causes with routine expectations or practice, and "touches off a chain of occurrences that durably transforms previous structures and practices" (Sewell, 1996: 843).

Most interestingly, perhaps, in the extracts is the way in which J&K are metaphorically conceptualized in terms of the *colour of kesar* (saffron), *kahwa* (traditional tea), *Kashmiri*

shawls, plant named Solo, or just generally in terms of *extraordinary items*, through the topos of a favorable time (Wodak et al., 2009), emphasizing a difference between the depraved past and the more idyllic future. As discussed in Section 3, metaphors enable the reconceptualization of experiences in new or alternative ways, thus the depersonification of a region strife with religious conflict and human casualties in terms of exotic objects and natural resources (*juiciness of apricot, organic, sweetness of apple, herbal, plants*) can be argued to play down the resulting aggression or violence that the abrogation could incite and amplify the economic benefits instead. This discursively centers the narrative promoting the abrogation in positive terms, in which the benefits of abolishing the law outweigh the temporary drawbacks (*sold world over, publicised in the whole world, sanjivini* [infusion of life] *for people living in high altitude, maintaining immune system*).

By contrast, Tharoor amplifies the chaos caused by the abrogation, largely ignoring benefits to the economy or national unity:

Extract 9   … dangerous consequences of the government's actions – to tourism, to the economy, to national security and to India's international standing…the public… has been willfully misled about the process – and that the Modi government has successfully elided the entire issue of its own legal sleight of hand to bring about its objectives… the government has danced around its legislative tricks and chicanery in playing fast and loose with the Constitution and with the rule of law. (Tharoor, 9/8/2019)

Extract 10   However, the government has completely ignored the well-established position in law that whatever you cannot do directly, you cannot achieve indirectly… The Supreme Court has recognised that while something can be formally legal, the substance of it can be a fraud on the Constitution. It is entirely possible to argue from this set of facts that this entire exercise is a fraud on the Constitution of India and a betrayal of the promise our founders made to the people of J&K. (Tharoor, 9/8/2019)

Extract 11   Modi government has <u>changed the basic constitutional relationship of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to the Republic of India without consulting them</u> or their elected representatives. This <u>blithe disregard for Article 370(3)</u> and Article 35 is a <u>breathtaking betrayal of our democracy</u> and nothing short of <u>legislative authoritarianism</u>... our government has <u>acted in utter contempt of the people of the state and of the value of democratic decency</u> that is meant to animate our political culture... The <u>precedent it sets for our democracy is ominous and worrying.</u> (Tharoor, 9/8/2019)

In these extracts, the government is negatively represented as untrustworthy and suppressive (in contrast to Modi's family metaphor), drawing on words and phrases that insinuate reckless and threatening behavior (*dangerous, misled, elided, betrayal, utter contempt, ominous and worrying*). Tharoor continues to draw on legal discourse to conceptualize the abrogation and thus the Centre's actions as unlawful: *legal sleight of hand, legislative tricks, playing fast and loose with the Constitution, ignored well-established position in law, fraud on the Constitution, blithe disregard for Article 370(3), legislative authoritarianism*. While Modi's narrative aligns the Government with the Constitution, the dreams of India's early freedom-fighters and thus the fundamental values of democracy, Tharoor positions the government against the fundamental principles of a democratic and law-abiding society. In fact, use of words that imply intentional manipulativeness (*willfully, danced around, playing fast and loose, ignored, fraud, without consulting)*, further delegitimizes their actions by emphasizing intentionality of *dangerous* actions. Supporters who adhere to this version of reality, similarly, argue that

[f]alsifying facts and history are not a new venture for India's Prime Minister... he [Modi] spoke of Dr Ambedkar or Sardar Patel's opposition to article 370. In fact, Dr. Ambedkar advocated plebiscite in Kashmir Valley... PM Modi has claimed that Article 370 is used as a tool by Pakistan, has no factual basis at all... failure of the

'secular state' which systematically eroded Article 370... has been the root cause of resistance in Kashmir Valley. (Gokhale, 2020)

In this regard, categorization draws on our history to reframe events within different contexts, implying a certain bind when it comes to making sense of experiences- our interpretations constrained by our habitus. Again, this is quite typical of social categorization whereby the designation of certain groups with particular labels reveals our preconceived notions; that is an appeal to previous frames of experience, leading to the expected-ness of people's behavior and practice. Use of membership categorizations within membership categories is indicative of the influence that our habitus has on our way of perceiving the world, as the Discourse of Illusion implies, we structure our experiences and relations with others in society within our subjective framework of reality. We categorize not always on the basis of what is objectively true, but rather what we believe to be the truth. Therefore, while Modi represents the abrogation based on preconceived notions of the partition and Pakistan; Tharoor represents the abrogation based on preconceived notions of BJP's nationalist agenda and rising threat of Hindutva.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I explore political contrast in the narratives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor on the abrogation of Article 370 by employing the Discourse of Illusion framework, which can generally be understood as the product of subjective representations of reality, emerging from historical repositories of experience, embodying various discursive actions, and ultimately leading to socio-political consequences (Author, 2015). The framework aimed to highlight contrast in political language from a (critical) discourse perspective by focusing on the manipulation of linguistic and rhetorical strategies in the narratives of two prominent political figures, both of whom sought to construct powerful yet opposing representations of a contentious political issue.

Analysis of the abrogation's (re)conceptualization reveals the emergence of two key competing narratives: one which transforms the abrogation into the liberation of J&K and as the cornerstone of democracy; the other as an assault on democracy and manipulation of the Constitution. To persuade audiences of the legitimacy of each narrative, competing discourse clans draw on various linguistic and rhetorical tools, including temporal referencing, metaphor, topoi, insinuation, recontextualization, positive and negative presentation, giving rise to conflicting versions of reality. The juxtaposition of these two realities, generating powerful discursive illusions in the attempts to attribute meaning to present day issues, create evidence that such contested discourses cannot be treated as "neutral or innocuous signifiers" (Dunn, 2006: 371) but rather as ideological reasoning that encourage social beings to act on them, with concrete sociocultural and political implications. The most dominant and contrasting narratives regarding the Indian Constitution's Article 370 reduces a complex issue rooted in the subcontinent's bloody history of partition into reductive Us vs Them dichotomies. For supporters of the abrogation this involves two general ideological camps- democratic patriots vs. unjust anti-nationals. For those opposing the abrogation the division rests between lawful citizens and right-wing nationalists.

The framework of the Discourse of Illusion proved to be especially useful in deconstructing how discursively shaped social issues can be reflective of the ideological conceptualizations of various discourse clans, in support of their respective socio-political agendas. Such discursive constructions come to mean different things depending on a range of variables, especially the macro- and micro-contexts, reiterating the fact that

we make sense of the world around us through the social construction of the meanings, characteristics, and "truth" that make reality "knowable." There is no way

to step outside interpretation. There is no objective Truth to discover; only competing interpretations to navigate. (Dunn, 2006: 377)

What the Discourse of Illusion attempts to bring to light is the struggle between contrasting and competing narratives offered by various discourse clans in society in an attempt to generate a single hegemonic discourse that becomes associated with the understanding of any particular socio-political issue, in an effort to challenge or retain political or social status quo. Within most nations, there is often a degree of disconnect between the ruling and the ruled, perpetuated by sharp ideological divisions between major political parties that tend to prioritize politics and power over social harmony and interest. For example, we see evidence of this in America in terms of the Democratic and Republican parties, or Britain with regards to the Conservative and Labor parties. Similarly, India demonstrates a colorful history within which the BJP and Congress parties have never been allied in their respective fights to retain or grab power. In addition, subjective and contrasting notions of the 'imagined nation' (Anderson, 2010) means that each political party self-appoints itself as the true, moral cornerstone of democracy, and subsequently the nation's savior. In this regard, the Discourse of Illusion framework can also be applied to the study of other sociocultural and political constructs, including, nationalism, populism, diversity, or migration, as each of these constructs and the discourses they generate have the potential to become the embodiment of ideological tensions between competing discourse clans. Such issues can *mean* different things in different contexts and by different voices, crafting societal understanding in specific directions.

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