Egalitarianism, Deliberation and Technoscience: Reimagining Equality in a Postcolonial Democracy

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Abstract

Political theory in recent times have been confronted with two substantive challenges. On one hand while normative or analytic philosophy has come under criticism for being too abstract and devoid of any practical significance, the post-structural variety has not been able to proceed further beyond the critique of political institutions, specially of the liberal democratic form. While the former has to contend with the charge of an ethics-first approach that does not work in the real world of politics, the latter is handicapped by its inability to frame coherent political and normative frameworks. This dissertation attempts to bridge the divide by working with a recent tradition of democratic realism within the confines of liberal democratic theory. While doing so, it examines the ideas of development, security and resistance in the postcolonial context through the lens of India's nuclear program. Much of the analysis of these issues have come from the standpoint of critiques of these ideas in contemporary times. Even though those analysis have provided us insights, previously unappreciated, they have not been successful in theorizing about the way forward. This dissertation is both a descriptive as well as a normative attempt to look at those issues with the aim of thinking beyond critique. It proceeds in three distinct parts where in i)using theory of democratic realism it seeks to argue how we need to go beyond the various critiques of development, ii) how Hume inspired moral sentimentalism can be re-imagined to extricate ourselves from the binaries of liberalism and nationalism and lastly, iii)using Stanley Cavell and Ranciere try to conceptualize the legitimacy and importance of subaltern resistance in democratic politics.

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Introduction

This dissertation is animated by a singular concern- with the question of inequality and reflecting about the floundering of egalitarian ideals in the context of a postcolonial democracy. The question about equality of citizens in a democracy has been a matter of debate and deliberation for much of the history of political thought and the discipline of political theory. These debates have concerned themselves with the constitution of equality, the contestation between equality and liberty as well as defining cogently argued principles of justice and fairness. The central concern of this dissertation is not to add to the already well-endowed corpus of literature dealing with the definitions and principles of an egalitarian society. What it aims to accomplish is to argue that demands for equality often gets immobilised at the altar of communal goods such as development and security. There are two axes along which this claim will be examined. One is along the knowledge differential between experts and lay people that often amounts to infantilization of the citizen in normative terms. The other is the majority-minority divide within the logic of representation and how the politics of nationalism may render the normative aspirations of equal citizenship fragile. A relational egalitarian approach towards justice within the liberal social contractarian tradition will be affirmed and it will be argued that

dissent of the subaltern within this contract is an integral to the strengthening of the norms of any egalitarian arrangement.

Political theory as a discipline has often been concerned with the normative questions of 'ought' rather than only 'is' as is the case in most social sciences. Apart from being descriptive, the normative claims that this dissertation would make are, i) in the context of massive inequality where the divide between the few who are affluent and the many who are not is omnipresent, a regulative burden on the most advantaged is justified since the gains accrued by the few are an outcome of an unfair system; ii) In our theorization of politics, along with reason, passions and sentiments should also have a pivotal role in deliberations about justice and fairness; and iii) Democratic flourishing requires an "aversion" towards conformism.

Inequality in Mass Democracies

One of the central concerns of contemporary political discourse is the presence of growing inequality in democratic societies across the world. Much of the recent criticism of this growing inequality has argued about the reasons why economic inequality is detrimental for democracy as it inhibits social mobility, enriches a ruling class which can distort our ideas of justice and fairness as well as in some cases entrenches a plutocratic class that puts

into question the legitimacy of a democratic setup. However, this dissertation is inspired by another concern that Adam Smith had with extreme economic inequality, that it results in the distortion of our sympathies. Smith was worried that such inequality had the pernicious impact on how we view others in our society wherein our admiration for the rich and powerful can also lead to a sense of neglect and scorn for those who are on the margins. It is important to mention here that Smith was aware that economic inequality is an inalienable outcome of any flourishing commercial society, in fact, he believed such inequalities were necessary for productivity, growth, and helped to maintain the "distinction of ranks" that provided stability to a polity. However, what was good for the society as a whole also had some inimical consequences for individual values. This is precisely the reason why Smith invokes, "the character of virtue", in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* which seeks to provide a system of practical morality for individual lives in commercial societies. These virtues included prudence, magnanimity and beneficence.

Smith's reflections on the commercial society and the normative ideas that he developed in the 18th century have increasing relevance in a contemporary world rife with inequality and indifference. I would however argue that we need to simultaneously think with Smith and beyond him. The

contemporary world where contestation between globalization and anti-globalization forces have gone beyond the earlier debates between capitalism and communism, where the divide between the global elite and the ones who have been left on the wayside are much deeper, and where advances in technology are determining how we conduct our social and political relations, the question of inequality requires to be thought afresh by working imaginatively with our existing resources.

The context of knowledge societies

The contemporary world is a place of massive technological transformation where we are inundated with words such as "knowledge management", "knowledge workers", "knowledge organization" and "intellectual capital". This has resulted in the dislocation of the traditional locus of knowledge production and autonomy of institutions of higher learning; simultaneously the sanctity of science as a domain of authoritative knowledge in modernity has increasing come under scrutiny. In this knowledge society the earlier linear model of science from basic to applied has given way to a complex non-linear form of science where societal forces impinge at various levels. The very definition of what constitutes "knowledge" has become contested owing to its ambiguity.

This contestation has significant implication for democratic decision-making when we take into account the division of labour between experts and ordinary citizens. In a knowledge society, infused with a diverse range of technologies, the experts provide scientifically mediated information about facts, recommend the solutions to problems we encounter and helps us to navigate through the plethora of choices we have to confront. There is an assumption of asymmetry of knowledge in such a society where the experts are deemed to be more knowledgeable and the lay people ignorant. However, both the experts and the lay people inhabit the same shared social world where the experts have a certain conception of the good and they assist in this navigation and sifting of facts. The manner in which this lay person is conceived has important implications for our relational egalitarian notions of justice. The experts will have to preserve their epistemic asymmetry as it is the basis of their authority but at the same time, they will also have to frame their advice in a way that makes sense to the world that the lay person inhabits.

Considering that such an asymmetry exists, what makes us defer to experts? Joseph Raz in his book *The Morality of Freedom* makes a distinction between theoretical and practical authorities wherein he argues that both of them share a structure in which the reason for one's deference to authority lies in the fact that it enables us to comply with applicable duties. In a similar vein

Linda Zagzebski (2012) argue that the reason we defer to authorities is that it enables us to gain better knowledge, something we are naturally predisposed to pursue. However, neither Raz nor Zagzebski have any answer to the question as to how to identify experts in practice. In Raz's opinion as long as we are able to identify genuine authority there is a reason to obey it and the entity itself is justified in exercising its authority over us.

This sharp distinction between expertise and lay people conflicts with the contemporary state of the world where this division of labour has come under pressure. We live in an age where, to quote an evocative phrase, 'the technical is the political' (Thorpe 2007:63), where the political is defined as 'the subset of social relations characterized by conflict over goods in the face of pressure to associate for collective action, where at least one party to the conflict seeks collectively binding decisions and seek to sanction decisions by means of power' (Warren 1999:218). This definition of the political alludes to intense conflict within social relations thereby requiring the possibility of coercion. Therefore, even deliberations and consensus under constitutionally laid out procedure are not immune to the dynamics of coercion.

The relationship between democratic theory and expertise is riddled with two kinds of issues. First is the fear of what Habermas termed the

'scientization of politics' which often leads to the entrenchment of technocratic ethos in a democracy. Here the prevalence of specialist knowledge is used to narrow the scope of political choices. Hence only a few have the power to decide what kind of choices are realistic. The second concern for democratic theory comes from what Weber calls 'decisionism', where these choices are made in the context of irreconcilable value pluralism and in the absence of a rationally acquired grounding. The rise of logical positivism in the postwar period where the only knowledge that mattered was scientific knowledge and all other knowledge were deemed meaningless led Habermas to worry that 'when this type of science attains a monopoly in the guidance of rational action, then all competing claims to a scientific orientation for action must be rejected.' (Habermas 1974:264). The hegemony of such a positivist view of knowledge coupled with Weber's 'decisionism' thesis meant that it not only constricted the scope of the involvement of citizens in politics but also the space for reason.

The problem with the asymmetry in knowledge between experts and non-experts also was a concern for Dahl (1985;1989) who proposed the idea of 'minipopulus' where competent groups of citizen's representatives will hold to account the experts. However, this formulation suffers from the weakness that there can always be an asymmetry in information between experts and

non-experts. There are domains, for example related to security, which involves privileged information. The experts work in secrecy because it is integral to their work and hence divulging the very secret to the non-experts may make their compromised.

I discuss this phenomenon of secrecy with the example of India's nuclear program in one of the later chapters. For now, it is sufficient to emphasize that this asymmetry will be an integral part of a knowledge society in our contemporary world. This scientization of politics is markedly evident in developing countries for whom technocratic solutions and scientific artefacts are regarded as the common sensical path to progress and development. As Fischer (1990, 17) defines, Technocracy is a 'system of governance in which technically trained experts rule by virtue of their specialized knowledge and position in dominant political and economic institutions'. The technocratic impulse guided much of the development discourse around the world in the twentieth century. However, its significance and capture over the political imagination of the elites was evident with greater fervour in the postcolonial states. Technocrats were seen as the 'authoritative problem solver of the needy nation' (Roy 2007:117)). The underlying logic of technocracy assumes that scientific research should be disconnected from politics and technocrats with specialized technical knowledge should be neutral in decision-making.

However, the reality is often more complex. Technocrats do not only get entangled in the political dynamics of the day but even end up dictating the policies which will determine the future trajectory of a state.

The example of India and its relation to technocracy and politics is a case in point. The first Prime Minister of India, after independence from British rule, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was an ardent admirer of science and its appeal to him was far beyond the narrow confines of economic rationality. Science for him was not only an instrument of material progress and tackling social issues but he expected that it can contribute to the development of scientific temper among the population subjugated under imperial rule for several generations. He even hoped that science will usher in a 'classless society' in India. However, in reality this science was not going to bring a revolution in terms of attacking a stultifying social structure marred by divisions and conflicts. The entrenched power structures were kept in place as the scientific technocrats were shielded and insulated from the vagaries of politics. Some of these technocratic institutions, over the years have acquired a life of their own who have moved from one side of a spectrum where they did not interfere with the politics to the other side where their framing of preferences was deemed as fait accompli by the government. The nuclear establishment is a case in point where discourses around development with

respect to nuclear energy and security with respect to nuclear weapons has been framed, discussed and legitimized through a technocratic rationale thereby constraining the political choices, a fear that concerned Habermas.

This asymmetry between expert and non-experts gets further deepened when the accountability structures of a democracy themselves are not robust. Discussing the role of the Indian Parliament as an institution of accountability, Kapur and Mehta (2000: p.iii) writes, "that over the years there has been a decline in the effectiveness of Parliament as an institution of accountability and oversight. It shows that the instruments that Parliament can use for accountability—motions on the floor, oversight powers, the committee system—are increasingly being rendered dysfunctional. The fact that the Indian economy is globalizing has also eroded the power of Parliament in two respects. Much of economic decision making is now increasingly governed by international treaties, and the Indian Parliament is one of the few parliaments in the world that does not have a system of effective treaty oversight in place. These treaties are a fait accompli by the time they come to Parliament. Second, the Indian state, like many other states, is restructuring its regulatory framework with more powers being delegated to non-elected institutions. This process of delegation can increase

transparency and accountability, but parliamentary oversight of these institutions remains very weak."

As the country has liberalized there is a new class of elites who have much to gain from the political arrangement as devised by this entrenchment of technocrats in decision-making processes. Hence the technocratic rule is often legitimized by the privileged few deforming the accountability principle which is an integral part of deliberations in a democracy.

There are a number of critiques to this technocratic approach, specially with regard to economic development in postcolonial states as discussed in the subsequent chapters. However, the problem of asymmetry both in terms of knowledge as specialized skills and information as secret as discussed by Habermas and Dahl remains. Alfred Moore (2017) provides us with a good starting point to think about political life in a democracy in the context of such asymmetries. His framework of *Critical Elitism* has three key features. First is the recognition that expertise necessarily involves inequality wherein expertise is defined as the "possession of special skill, experience, information or knowledge rooted in the methods, norms, practices and goals of a specific community and which is recognized as legitimate by the wider society". (Moore 2017:6)

Given that inequality will persist, he proposes that deliberations should be subjected to critical scrutiny. Second, he also recognizes the value of passivity on the part of the ordinary citizens thereby going against the conventional wisdom of 'democratization of expertise'. Most democratic theorization affirms active participation among the citizenry which may be a worthy ideal to have. Here he makes a distinction which has very important consequences for political life. He argues that often we conflate passivity in participation with passivity in judgment which is a fallacy. A passive citizen can be very well capable of engaging in active judgment which is more important to affirm the ethos of a democratic society. Our judgments require a certain cultivation of civil passions and sentiments, not just rational deliberation. This importance of complimenting the reason with the passions is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4. The third aspect of his framework is another fine distinction between expertise and expert authority. While expertise needs to be authoritative in order to protect us from pseudo-scientific claims, the constitution of expert authority should be a deliberative exercise, and this should be an outcome of discursive justifications in a polity.

Now that I have set out the broad context within which the issues are discussed in this dissertation, let me briefly sketch out the contours of the normative assertions I made earlier.

Advocating Democratic Realism

If there is one fact that our lived experience of democracy has taught us, it is that the realities of democracy falls far short of its lofty aspirations. There has been a recent corpus of literature which has slowly begun to accept the reality that those ideals of democracy may not be achievable in our lifetime and inequality will be permanent feature of our democratic lives. As Mark Philp (2012;645-646) writes, " If there is a realist 'ethos'...it lies in the sense that we must engage with a world of the powerful and the powerless in a way that allows us to understand it better and to engage and evaluate its participants." Any theorization of democracy today has to contend with the fact that powerlessness, felt by a vast section of people living under democracy, is an integral part of our political system.

An orientation towards democratic realism allows us to overcome the idealism associated with theoretical conceptions of democracy and engage with the real fact of how most of us experience it phenomenologically. As Schattschneider writes, "The beginning of wisdom in democratic theory is to distinguish between the things the people can do and the things the people cannot do. The worst possible disservice that can be done to the democratic cause is to attribute to the people a mystical, magical omnipotence which

takes no cognizance of what very large numbers of people cannot do by the sheer weight of numbers. At this point the common definition of democracy has invited us to make fools of ourselves. What 180 million people can do spontaneously, on their own initiative, is not much more than a locomotive can do without rails." (1975: 136)

It is not that Schattschneider does not believe in the power of democracy, it is just that he is cautioning against the unrealistic expectation about the 'power of the people'. He wants to highlight the fact that even though the norms of democracy are infused with idealism, the very vehicle through which it comes into existence i.e. the government, may itself be venal and undemocratic. He could very well have been inspired by Schumpeter's idea of elite democracy where he defines democracy as, "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1942: 250). In this classical definition of democracy, the electorate's vote is not the formation, or the expression of a collective will but acceptance of leadership. Thus, democracy in practice has always been the rule of the few over the many.

Much of democratic theory has been preoccupied with the concern for the least advantaged, specially starting with Rawls and the subsequent literature on egalitarianism. The wager that democratic realism would like to propose is that considering the perils of plutocracy when a few rules over the many in the context of deep inequality, we should shift our orientation towards the most advantaged in the society and ensure special regulative burdens on them. This regulative burden in contemporary societies can take many forms. For example, in the context of India where public education suffers because of government neglect and those who can afford private education exit the system, it would not be far-fetched to argue that irrespective of the investment made in education, the public education system will continue to suffer as long as the most advantaged class do not have a stake in those institutions. As a regulative ideal, one can propose making it mandatory for the students from elite families to attend public educational institutions.

In a subcontinent which has the major nuclear powers vying for dominance, deterrence or survival, whipping up of nationalist frenzy is a common occurrence specially for electoral gains. A normative theory where the most advantaged are to take up extra burden could in principle make military service for the wards of legislators or their closest family members mandatory. The moral psychology in vogue when someone close might have

to bear the brunt of a war is expected to be very different than when the ordinary citizens, the many, could be used as cannon fodder in a conflict.

The Affects of Moral Sentimentalism

There are four broad principles which form the bedrock of democratic governance, namely, the reliance on reason and sound judgment in order to engage in reflective deliberation as well as the willingness and ability to sustain individual autonomy and engage in moral considerations. (Marcus 2013). Autonomy of thoughts is essential for ethos of citizenship and such thoughts expressed through free speech are an essential vehicle for putting forth our preferences, knowledge and reasoning in the public sphere. Related to our thoughts is our actions. If there is a disjunction between the two, we will fail to justify our reasons for the actions we undertake thereby leading to a problem of social co-ordination. Citizens are expected to form their judgment on the basis of knowledge arrived at through reasoning rather than through mere opinions. However, acquiring knowledge is a difficult task and it requires special skills to be able to have an objective stance as well as access truth through identifying the causal explanations for occurrences around us. Plato's distrust for democracy was a result for this very fact as he did not expect the general public to distinguish between knowledge as truth and knowledge as opinion, hence for him the ideal ruler was the philosopher-

king. Lastly, in a polity all collective judgments with respect to issues of justice should be based on universal principles applicable throughout time and space. Aristotle was an advocate for collective judgments of the many and the rule by democracy, though not unaware of the follies of the mob.

The answer to the question as to who should rule depended on a variety of variables for Plato and Aristotle such as the nature of personality, the consequences of socialization, the institutional arrangements and the ability to make just decisions. While for them reason and passions were integral to human nature, with the coming of Enlightenment a more rational world was imagined where religious authority was replaced by secular authority. Once the religious authority was gone, there was a need to provide a secular foundation for our moral precepts which was provided by Kant. Modern liberal societies were to be governed by reason and passions were deemed to cloud our judgments when thinking about morality.

This enlightenment legacy of basing our political lives on secular moral foundations based on reason was not restricted to Europe alone. It took deep roots even in newly independent nations coming out of the yoke of colonialism. For example, in India, the constitutional structure of representative government was borrowed from the Westminster model of

government. While the idea of universal suffrage and each person with equal dignity was the normative content of that new arrangement, secular reason failed to provide satisfactory answer to the problem of representation in the context of majority-minority ethnic religions. This problem of representation manifests itself in numerous ways. Sometimes in electoral competition that results in ethnic violence, at other times through jingoistic nationalism and war frenzy with the neighbouring country whose cumulative effect is to keep the minority population under siege by demanding proofs of their loyalty to the nation. The problem of representation is not one that can be addressed to the satisfaction of all through rational deliberation considering the competitive logic of electoral democracies. What is required is a taming of our passions and civilizing our sentiments to ameliorate the suffering caused by the uneven yet unavoidable social contract between plural social groups.

Borrowing from the recent literature on moral sentimentalism, I argue that reason and passion should not be seen antagonistic one another but our moral judgements should include both. While theorists who believe that politics is all about rational deliberation should embrace the fact that all deliberations are imbued with our passions, those who vouch for more affect-induced politics should try to work out how impartial deliberation is possible within the generalized notion of passions. As Krause (2008, 80) writes,

“Sympathy enables us to resonate with the affective experiences of others, to be moved by the sentiment that others express.” Here the meaning of sentiment encompasses a wide spectrum of emotions and concerns including pleasure and pain.

It is not that the moral sentimentalists of the past like David Hume were unaware of the destabilizing effect of violent passions. It is precisely because of that very fact they advocated measures of how civil passions can be cultivated. Even though our passions are involuntary and unconscious, they can be tamed to be more civil through proper institutional efforts. Liberal democracy does not determine such cultivation but does facilitate our social lives to be immersed in such affects. Impartiality in our judgments is not bereft of affects but impartial judgments should be a feeling in itself. This requires an engagement with the perspective of others, not just with the aim of understanding their concerns but also be transformed by such engagement. The transformed selves are expected to transcend the limitations of our own contingencies and yet that transcendence is not carried out through the singular faculty of reason but reason with passion.

In the context of this dissertation, one of the centrals concerns for independent India has been the divide between the Hindus and Muslims

owing to historical reasons and cultural differences. While the two communities have lived together along with the conflicts between them for centuries, the reasons of the state which includes the logics of representation has intensified those conflicts over the years since India became a modern nation state. To affirm the values of pluralism and uphold the dignity of the individual, we will always fall short if we seek foundations for co-existence in rational deliberations. What is also required is the cultivation of the ability to be transformed by the other through greater encounters in the public space and acknowledging the common humanity that Hume sought to affirm. Our normative aspirations of relational egalitarianism will remain untenable without such a commitment.

An aversion to conformism

A vibrant democratic egalitarian political culture is supposedly a participatory one. In most democracies, while there are no *de jure* obstructions to participating in political activity, because of inequality in economic and social relations, active participation *de facto* remains an ideal rather than a reality. Even the low turnout on voting days in Western democracies where voting is not mandatory shows that apathy is an indelible condition of modern democratic life. This state of affairs is even justified by certain approaches of theorization in democratic life. These argue that mass

participation is a recipe of disintegration and chaos as there will be heightened disagreement on a larger number of issues in an already fragile polity. Others argue that maximum democracy might not automatically ensure optimal outcome and therefore with respect to efficiency, a healthy equilibrium between active democrats and apathetic citizenry is desirable.

I would argue that these arguments are flawed because they run counter to the very principle on which democratic life rests. It is normatively unjustified because it does not uphold the relational attributes of egalitarian civic and political life. In fact, justifications for apathy in political life may entrench stereotypes, exacerbate relational inequality and as Smith argued, lead to the distortion of our sympathies. An apathetic individual should not just be understood as someone who is not actively participating in political processes though that can be true as well. The more significant concern in relation to apathy is the cultivation of a disposition that is conformist to the prevailing dogma and a failure to affirm an aversive outlook towards existing arrangements while encountering radical difference.

Engaging with Cavell's notion of 'voice' along with Wittgenstein's idea of 'aspect change' through Ranciere's conception of radical equality enables us

to normatively contend why a flourishing democracy requires a transformation of the self.

For Wittgenstein, the notion of 'aspect change' brings about a change in us not just by virtue of knowledge or fact but this change is attitudinal similar to a new dawn where we perceive the state of affairs from a perspective different from the previous day. The failure to bring about this change leads to what Cavell calls 'soul blindness' where we fail to see the other person as human. 'Soul blindness' is a failure to connect with the other through our 'internal reasons', not through knowing or thinking or believing, but by the practical engagement and acknowledgement of the other as a human being. Deep inequalities among us often leads us to fail to acknowledge this fact. Whether it is economic, or social or epistemic, huge inequalities in any sphere prevents us from cultivating a disposition of 'aspect change' as well as prevents the self-transformation required for an enriching democratic life. The inability to acknowledge the poor, or the marginalized minority or the uneducated as human beings contributes to the fragility of our interlinked communal lives.

On the Methodological Orientation

In a celebrated essay, '*Does Political Theory Still Exists?*' Isaiah Berlin argued that political theory and science are two distinct enterprises because

of the nature of questions political theory engages with. Because the discipline is concerned with normative ideas involving a philosophical temperament, one of the defining feature of which is that philosophical questions do not "satisfy conditions required by an independent science, the principal among which is that the path to their solution must be implicit in their very formulation." (Berlin, 2013: 147) For him, it would not be adequate to ask political theory to follow the same rules of engagement as followed by the empirical sciences and consequently political theorists should not aspire to be scientists of politics either.

This divide also exists between political scientists and political theorists in the institutional sense. Since there are a multitude of interpretations of the same texts that political theorists engage in, for political scientists there is no standard criteria to judge whether political theorists enable any progress of knowledge. Political theorists argue that political life is so diverse and concepts so slippery, that no account of formal methods that political scientists devise can adequately capture or exhaust political life. The things worth knowing about political life cannot be solely known through scientific research methods. However this kind of divisions points towards assertions such as theorists are concerned with normative and speculative exercise whereas scientists have more to do with facts, falsifiable theories and

probabilistic knowledge. This dichotomy implies that there cannot be anything substantive to be said about issues related to values and the only knowledge that matters is one arrived through scientific and factual investigation.

Even though we cannot propose axioms about human beings with absolute certainty neither can we draw a line pointing out the boundaries of human knowledge, nonetheless, we are always required to make reasonable judgments in life. The fact that we have disagreement in values and consensus is always difficult does not imply that we can live a life without using our faculties of judgment. While cause, effect, demonstrability and repetition are the purview of science, in studies about values and judgment which is the domain of political theory, we work on our judgments through deeper engagement and understanding of the values under contestation through interpretative and historical methods. Political life is not determined by laws only and contingency is an important aspect of this life. Mere reliance on causal approaches will be insufficient to grasp an activity that is more an art, less a technique. This contingency is often linked to the specific historical context in which the political dynamics unfold and therefore attention to history, which itself can be a contested terrain, becomes important while making judgments and pronouncements.

Institutionally political theory has been bifurcated into 'history of political thought' and 'contemporary political philosophy'. The former is considered as a form of intellectual history where historical texts are read in their context without any explicit normative arguments. Contemporary political philosophy is undertaken with a view of expanding knowledge with the aspiration of coming up with generalizable principles similar to the sciences and it is mostly ahistorical in nature. As Daniel McDermott says, even if the most analytical form of philosophy cannot be considered as science in the traditional way one understands, it is still "an approach to gaining knowledge that falls into the same broad category as science." (McDermott 2008, p.11). In this view, philosophers too are interested in formulating theories and abstract principles which they hold onto till they are falsifiable or improved upon subsequently. Like science they believe that in philosophy too, the logic of accumulation of knowledge is applicable. Rorty (1984:4), for example, says "we should treat the history of philosophy as we treat the history of science. In the latter field we have no reluctance in saying that we know better than our ancestors what they were talking about" (Frazer 2010:6).

I start with a much humbler assumption compared to Rorty, more in agreement with Bernard Williams who wrote, "Philosophy's methods of

helping us to understand ourselves involves reflecting on the concepts we use, the modes in which we think about these various things; and it sometimes proposes better ways of doing this." (2002:7). I also have a deep suspicion about the claim that there is virtue in methodological rigour. The idea that the inquiry about political life can be undertaken only through a prescribed set of methods and therefore we should devote considerable time in figuring out the right method appropriate for the task may often become a hindrance in our understanding of issues and predicaments confronting us in real life in our present context.

The task of a political theorist should not be to justify either a philosophical or a historical approach but to creatively meld both philosophy and history in their theorization. The fundamental aspect of political life is pluralism. This does not imply that we should not engage in normative reasoning but be self-conscious of the fact that there will always be limitations to anything we propose. Theorists should not be expected to go by logic alone neither should it be expected that there will be absolute consensus on their principles. The fact of pluralism also implies that to whatever normative frameworks we propose through our reasoning, there will always be countervailing forces and developments in social life to be confronted with. When Arendt reflects, "What is important for me is to understand. For me, writing is a matter of

seeking this understanding, part of the process of understanding" (Arendt 2000, p.5), she is articulating her belief that the task of political theory should not be just limited to abstract conceptions of rights, duties and obligations but these concepts are to be understood within the context of a larger contestation of forces at play.

Aristotle made the distinction between *sophia* and *phronesis* where the former meant abstract truth while the latter encapsulated the goal of practical wisdom. For him the task of political science is not just to arrive at normative principles, but also involved the question of application of these principles. Similar to Arendt's standpoint, political theory involves theory of practice vis-a-vis the practice of theory. The historians single-minded fascination with the past and the philosopher's aversion to it, both lead to in their way "reinforces the prejudices of the present" (McIntyre 1984: p,34). It is in the same spirit of phronesis this dissertation has been written where past thinkers from the canon has been engaged with in order to guide us about the issues that confront us both in the postcolonial condition as well as universally. The purpose here is not to conceptualize abstract truths but to inquire into the practical wisdom the past thinkers can offer.

In recent times, there has been a renewed emphasis that political theory should be interpretative and more case-sensitive instead of generating hypothesis through statistical measures in a decontextualized manner (Schram 2003:p. 836-8, 49-50). Thiele (2000) argues that the mandate of political theory should be the cultivation of common sense and good judgment without getting involved in the turf war between foundationalism and relativism. The methodological orientation of this dissertation is guided by these imperatives where the effort has been to engage with abstract concepts within the context of the life of a postcolonial democracy but not restricting the purview of those reflections limited to a single country.

Research Questions

1. How does one engage with the egalitarian principles of justice in traditional political theory in the context of postcolonial countries?
2. What is the relationship between scientific expertise and democratic equality in political theory?
3. How is knowledge to be mediated in a democracy where enormous power differentials exist between experts and citizens?
4. What role does science play in the imagination of state making in postcolonial nations and how does it disfigure the normative ideals of democracy?

5. What has been the fate of dissent and why does the state remain central to the articulation of both justice and oppression in the postcolony?

Object of Study: The postcolonial Indian State and its Nuclear Program

After independence, the central question at the heart of Indian politics was democracy. The Indian state had a contradictory inheritance, as it was simultaneously the successor to the British colonial state as well as the anti-colonial nationalist movement. How has this modern feature of democracy in the Indian political life evolved over time? Sudipta Kaviraj points to three specific aspects in which the evolution of democracy in India has "shown the general tendency of modernity towards gradual differentiation: 1) the lack of social individuation and the resultant equality of groups rather than individuals, 2) an assertion of electoral power by rural groups because of the specific sequence of economic modernization, and 3) the increasing conflicts of the secular state principles as the idea of secularism is being subjected to a democratic – electoral ratification" (Kaviraj 2000: 155).

The unwavering belief in Enlightenment ideals of Indian elites like Nehru and Ambedkar led them to treat traditional ideas and practices as "erroneous". In their opinion the 'modern' option was to be presented to the people and the inherent rationality of the population will gradually displace those "erroneous" beliefs. One of those modern options that modernity instituted through global capitalism was the discourse of development. As Akhil Gupta argues, "the apparatus and discourse of development is a key to any definition of the "postcolonial condition". As movements of independence in the Third World led to the universalization and naturalization of the order of nation-states, however, a different regime of domination and management replaced the explicit administrative and economic control exercised during official colonialism. In this new regime of global governance, development discourse and institutions interpellated the newly independent nations of the Third World into particular temporal and spatial locations (Gupta 1998: 21-22).

If the discourse of development was central to state making of newly independent India, it was through the prism of science that the future of this nation was imagined. The inception of science's cultural authority was co-terminus with the civilizing mission of the British who wanted to enlighten the natives through the power of reason. Writing in the inaugural issue of the

magazine *Science and Culture,* one of India's most respected scientist Meghnad Saha, "The call that brings 'Science and Culture' into existence is truly the call of the times. For it is obvious to every thinking man that India is now passing through a critical stage in her history, when over the cultural foundations of her ancient and variegated civilization, structures of modern design are being built. It is necessary that at such a juncture the possible effects of the increasing application of discoveries in science to our national and social life should receive very careful attention; for if the present is the child of the past, it may with equal emphasis be said that the future will be the child of the present."(Saha 1935)

Science became the site where colonial modernity was to be articulated and this involved matters related to religious discourse, or engaging with dominant knowledge formations, or endorsing claims of the antiquity and validity of Indian knowledge systems (Prakash 1999, Raina 2003). In postcolonial India, "science was harnessed by the state and would fluctuate between a developmentalist form and a strategic mode, while never fully losing its authoritarian-colonial address" (Abraham 2006, 211). Itty Abraham argues that there is ambivalence in "postcolonial" science, which is because on one hand it was to be the prime mode of state legitimation;

simultaneously it had to legitimate itself as it was being deployed in setting where its authority and claims to knowledge were contested (Abraham 2000).

India's nuclear power establishment is an apposite site to interrogate the relationship between science, expertise and egalitarianism in a postcolonial democracy. The nuclear program also is an appropriate case study as enmeshed within it are issues of development, security, progress, national interest and deliberation. While scholars of security studies and international relations have studied and interpreted this sector with their own theoretical tools, political theorists have been reluctant to apply their gaze to the multi-faceted nature of this program, which has enormous import for the normative value judgments of Indian democracy.

I will be studying three interrelated aspects of India's nuclear program. First is the role of nuclear energy in the development discourse of the country. The government of India places high priority on nuclear energy for its development goals. There is a consensus among the intelligentsia that nuclear energy is of utmost important for India's economic growth. However, the program remains shrouded in opacity and secrecy. What are the reasons that the establishment works with such secrecy and still garner

legitimacy? What kind of discourses enable a few experts to have complete control over a program whose effects are to be felt by millions of people?

The nuclear weapons program is the second axis through which I would like to study the relationship between order and freedom in a democracy. What kind of insecurities plagues a postcolonial nation? Why does it often privilege order and security over liberty and freedom? Who gets to frame the discourse on national interest and how does it change or remain unchanged with the shifting images of the enemy?

Lastly, a number of social movements have erupted in various parts of India protesting against nuclear power. What is the political legitimacy of such movements in a representative democracy like India? How do they articulate notions of development and freedom? Are there mechanisms to bridge the divide between scientists and the protestors?

Frameworks for Interpretation and Analysis

I have already elaborated the various criticisms leveled against egalitarian theories of justice specially of the redistributive variety. Borrowing from Elizabeth Anderson's notion of "democratic equality" and Iris Marion Young's assertion that any conception of justice should begin with concepts

of domination and oppression, my research will employ theories, concepts and frameworks both within the western tradition as well as scholars from India. Having said that, I would like to highlight three specific approaches that will guide my research ahead.

1. *The concept of 'problem-space'*

David Scott characterizes the present as a transitional moment, "after postcoloniality", a period that follows the anticolonial nationalism and postcolonial criticism. This transitional phase demands a reorientation of the critical agenda. "Criticism must understand itself self-consciously as a practice of entering an historically constituted field of ongoing moral argument...It is only by understanding criticism in this way that we can determine the contingent *demand* of- and on- criticism in any conjuncture. These conjunctures are in effect 'problem-spaces'; that is to say they are conceptual-ideological ensembles, discursive formations, or language games that are generative of objects, and therefore of questions." (Scott 1999, 7-9).

Scott argues that in the current postcolonial condition we occupy a different problem space that demands different questions and different answers. The problem-space of anti-colonialism generated questions that were defined by the demand of political decolonization and overthrow of colonial power.

"The way one defines an alternative depends on the way one has conceived the problem, and therefore reconceiving alternatives depends in significant part on reconceiving the object of discontent and thus the longing that stimulates the desire for an alternative" (Scott 2004, 6).

The central vocation of political theory should be to engage with the critical demands of the present, political dilemmas facing postcolonial nation states and the myriad injustices people are subjected to. Scott's proposal enables us to tackle them in a theoretically informed manner that is both historically sensitive as well as compels us to search for imaginative formulations.

2) The idiom of co-production

The political nature of science and technology has already been described above. Because science and technology are embedded in the culture and politics of modernity, Sheila Jasanoff argues that, "in broad areas of both present and past human activity, we gain explanatory power by thinking of natural and social orders as being produced together. The texture of any historical period, and perhaps modernity most of all, as well as of particular cultural and political formations, can be properly appreciated only if we take this co-production into account. Briefly stated, co-production is shorthand for the proposition that the ways in which we know and represent the world

(both nature and society) are inseparable from the ways in which we choose to live in it. Knowledge and its material embodiments are at once products of social work and constitutive of forms of social life; society cannot function without knowledge any more than knowledge can exist without appropriate social supports. Scientific knowledge, in particular, is not a transcendent mirror of reality. It both embeds and is embedded in social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions – in short, in all the building blocks of what we term the *social* (Jasanoff 2003, 2-3) Hence scientific knowledge production is intricately linked to concepts of egalitarianism, meritocracy, nationalism, secularism and democratic subjectivity.

3) Ranciere's radical equality

For Ranciere, equality is a double occurrence since it is a condition as well as a production. He is aware that society is composed of inequalities, but inequality in social and political terms is only possible based on prior equality. He admits that, "Society as such will never be reasonable but it could experience the miracle of reasonable moments arising not in the co-incidence of intelligence – that would be stultification- but in the reciprocal recognition of reasonable wills" (Ranciere 1991:96).

"There cannot be a class of the emancipated, an assembly or a society of the emancipated. But any individual can always, at any moment, be emancipated and emancipate someone else, announce to others the practice and add to the number of people who know themselves as such and who no longer play the comedy of the inferior superiors. A society, a people, a state, will always be irrational. But one can multiply within these bodies the number of people who, as individuals, will make use of reason, and who, as citizens, will know how to seek the art of raving as reasonably as possible." (Ibid. 98)

David Scott's formulation of 'problem-space' is helpful in understanding the trajectory and shifting discourse on nationalism in contemporary India. As researchers working at the intersection of regimes of truth, knowledge production and power, it is imperative that we go beyond the existing frameworks of understanding nationhood. As already mentioned, the discourse of development is not new in India. What has indeed changed in recent times is its predatory nature of the state where the logic of primitive accumulation has drastically altered the relationship between the citizens, the state and the market. The idiom of co-production, though not a theory, is a useful approach to understand the linkages between science, technology and the various life-worlds inhabited by people. What kind of social imaginaries do science produce, what are its effects and what kind of power relations are

enmeshed in the manner a nation imagines its future? The significance of nuclear power for a better future for its citizens and the increasing importance of nuclear weapons in security discourses should not be seen as isolated occurrences in the progress of science and technology but analyzed through the norms, discourses and institutions embedded in social relations. Lastly, even though the Indian state accords constitutional equality to all its citizens, in practice there are numerous sites where this ideal gets compromised. The domain of expertise is one such location where scientific knowledge and intelligibility of complex technological issues becomes the yardstick for excluding a substantial number of people by infantilizing them. In these cases, only a minuscule number of people dictate the agenda of development and security while the rest of the population are mere consumers of those decisions. Ranciere's radical equality helps us to conceptualize this inequity and provides us with a novel lens to define the terms of equality afresh.

This dissertation project brings together diverse theoretical strands from analytical philosophy, critical theory, post-colonial theory and Science & Technology Studies in conversation with political theories of justice and equality. Using the critical case study approach and employing interpretative methodologies, this research aims to study India's nuclear program in a manner that is both contextual and historically informed. The aims and

objectives of this research as well as its design are borrowed from what Bent Flyjberg terms *phronetic* social science.

In his book *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again,* he advocates a social science that is open to using a plurality of research methods to help people challenge power more effectively. Arguing against social science's attempts to create time-tested theories of static social reality thereby emulating the natural sciences, Flyvjberg believes that the social sciences are better equipped to produce a different kind of knowledge – phronesis, which means practical wisdom, that emanates from an intimate familiarity with practice in contextualized settings. The primary purpose of my research is not to provide theories or hypothesis that are to be empirically tested or falsified. Its main task is to unravel how power works through in-depth narratives, the consequences of such power arrangements and its impact on the society's capacity for value-rational deliberation. And keeping that context under consideration, reflect about the adequate normative justifications of political life which can be both contextual but not limited to the post-colonial context. The effort is to present normative arguments that can be helpful to think about liberal democracy and citizenship universally.

The first chapter is an overview of the debates around egalitarianism in political philosophy while the second chapter concerns itself with the role of technoscience in democratic societies and the role experts play in framing and disseminating scientific knowledge. Chapter 3 is a study of India's nuclear program and its quest for development. Through a detailed discussion of the Indo-US nuclear deal, it aims to show how representative democracies often fails to perform its accountability function successfully. It also argues that to assume that we will be able to achieve strict procedural accountability in mass democratic societies where all the organs of the state along with the civil society, media and different interest groups are to perform their functions ideally all the time is an illusion. Accountability measures will always be subverted if both the few and many do not have equal stakes in different components of the polity. Chapter 4 describes the security dimension of the nuclear weapons and argues how community relations often get disfigured at the altar of ethnic nationalism. Much of the discussion about community relations in India have relied on the exceptionalism of India's secular credentials. However, this chapter argues that instead of trying to theorize Hindu-Muslim relations through multiple rational vantage points, relational egalitarianism between the communities requires cultivation of passions and sentiments within the logic of deliberation. While innumerable debates have taken place within the confines of secularism, multiculturalism and recognition

frameworks, with the rise of a virulent Hindutva party to power there is a need to reassess those templates. The chapter borrows from David Hume's emphasis on passions and proposes a framework of reciprocity based on fairness and impartial judgment. And finally, chapter 5 narrates the events of anti-nuclear protests at Koodankulam and through it reinforces the importance of dissent for a flourishing democratic life. It also emphasizes on the importance of a political existence where philosophy can be pursued by everyone. This philosophy as a mode of reflection that happens in the moment when the self refuses to be what it was and is in the process of 'becoming' what it was not earlier.

Chapter 1

Egalitarianism in Political Theory and the Problem of Expertise

One of the central concerns of modern political theory has been whether to focus its attention on institutions or virtue. Should the emphasis be on the institutions of government or on the characters of those who are in charge of administering them? Since the publication of John Rawls seminal book articulating a theory of justice, there has been a host of other works which have tried to answer a third question. Jeremy Waldron argues that the dichotomy between institution and individuals that was present in the work of David Hume has been replaced in recent times by a tri-chotomy (Waldron, 2013). Apart from whether our theoretical endeavours should be directed towards individual virtues required for good governance or the kind of political institutions necessary for a good society, there is a third line of inquiry as in, the ends and ideals a good society should seek to promote.

Since much of normative political theorization of the neo-Kantian variant has been devoted to abstractions in search of a particular end i.e. the appropriate principles of justice; questions of "means" involving power, history, and praxis has often been sidelined. Because of the historical processes that a postcolonial nation has gone through and the deep imprint of colonialism on its present, it is imperative that any project of political theory

will be inadequate if it confines itself to ideal and abstract theories. The set of questions that this dissertation seeks to address are: how does one frame the egalitarian principles of justice and equality in the context of postcolonial democracy? What kind of deliberative mechanisms are required to mediate complex forms of knowledge production in such a democracy? What is the role of experts in the initiation, production and dissemination of scientific knowledge? How does one define political equality in relation to power differentials between citizens and experts? What are the faultlines between the normative ideals of postcolonial constitutional democracies and the accompanying practices on the ground?

In order to answer these sets of questions, it is important to have a sense of the existing literature on egalitarianism, deliberative democracy and the question of scientific expertise in the discipline of political theory.

Egalitarianism and Political Equality

At the heart of egalitarianism remains one of the most important philosophical work of the 20th century, *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971). The book has been influential both in terms of its articulation of theories of justice as well as in its ability to provide insights into a domain of philosophical inquiry

that is inherently complex. The claim that Rawls makes in this book is that while assessing standards of justice and trying to frame principles of equality, the question one needs to ask is what is it that we should be measuring? The answer to this question, in his opinion is that governments should focus on what he calls 'social primary goods', like liberty, opportunity, the powers and prerogatives of office, the social bases of self-respect, income and wealth. His most famous principle in relation to distributive justice, which is at the core of debates around equality, is the 'difference principle' according to which a just society is one which makes the worst off as well off as possible.

Shortly after the publication of Rawls' book, came Nozick's (1974) assault on egalitarianism wherein he criticized egalitarians like Rawls for their mistaken belief that as if all of a society's resources are kept in a 'big social pot' and all that is left to be done is to figure out the various ideal mechanism of distributing them. He chided them for not taking into account that much of these 'social goods' are a product of human motivations and is often transformed by human endeavours and actions. In his view making a move towards distribution without factoring in the production aspect of these goods is theoretically flawed.

Another criticism that Rawls' theory faced was the question as in is why should such a principle be always hostage to matters of income and wealth of the least advantaged? Dworkin (2000) in his formulation incorporates the notion of responsibility within the theory of equality. For him, before moving to the distributional aspect of income and wealth to the least advantaged, it is important to investigate the reasons as to why they are disadvantaged in the first place. He argues that while governments should compensate for 'bad luck' of being born with underprivileged endowments or if unforeseeable 'poor luck' befalls on an individual, it should not subsidize what he calls 'option luck' wherein individuals have brought upon misfortune onto themselves by the choices they have made freely. Therefore, it is not the government's task to compensate someone who may have developed expensive tastes or who chooses not to work.

Arneson (2000) goes on to argue that Dworkin has made the mistake of comparing equality of welfare outcomes with equality of opportunity for resources whereas any theory of equality should be moving to an opportunity conception rather than a resource one. G.A.Cohen (2008) agrees with Dworkin's objection to pure welfarism but disagrees with his resource-based conception since he believes that the government should compensate people undergoing pain and suffering.

Deviating from both the resource and welfare-based approach, Amartya Sen's (2009) egalitarian conception of justice argues that for an individual to be given state support, the measure should be his 'capability to function'. Sen's account is often deemed more realistic than theories of welfare or resources and has been immensely influential in development economics as well as in policymaking within organisations like the United Nations. Within Sen's theory is also the response to Nozick's notion of responsibility. If one has the capability to achieve functionings but neglects to do so, then the responsibility of the situation lies on the individual and he cannot make any claims to support from the state.

All these approaches can be broadly classified within the distributive rubric of egalitarian political philosophy. However, there is another version of egalitarianism which takes into account the relational conception of equality. Often termed as 'social equality' or 'status equality', wherein equality is couched not in the vocabulary of the goods individuals are entitled to but instead how individuals relate to each other. As Elizabeth Anderson puts it, egalitarianism's "proper positive aim is not to ensure that everyone gets what they morally deserve, but to create a community in which people stand in

relations to equality to others." (Anderson 1999a, 287-289) There are four basic features of this relational approach to egalitarianism:

i) the importance of equal access to non-material goods

ii) the focus on the expressive nature of institutions

iii) the emphasis on democratic ethos in the quest for equality

iv) attention to the structures of social relationships

Following this conception of relational equality, allows us a starting point to think about political equality between citizens and experts. My dissertation will borrow from this idea of relational equality to theorize about domination and oppression in a postcolonial context.

Liberal Democratic Equality and the Politics of Expertise Because we live in an increasingly complex society, one of the defining challenges of our times is how to reconcile the ethos of democratic society, which involves citizen participation with the reliance on expert judgments, which plays a huge role in political decision-making. In recent times, democratic theorists have called for attention to its epistemic dimension (Anderson 2006, Estlund 2008). Democracies should not only be able to make pronouncements about egalitarian normative ideals but their

legitimacy is often contingent upon their ability to provide solutions to problems faced by communities. In order to do so, the state has to rely on experts who are competent and have specialized understanding about the nature of the problems. On one hand while the experts are best placed to offer solutions in the interest of the people, at the same time, because of their knowledge and exalted position in the social hierarchy they can undermine the democratic processes. There was the Enlightenment liberal belief that by bringing science and technology into politics, many of the conflicting issues will be depoliticized. An escape from politics was envisioned, from the "elusive and fragile human judgments ...to a less precarious trust in experts and their technical competencies". (Ezrahi 1995:30)

The relationship between science and politics is co-constitutive and the manner in which technology alters human-conditions ultimately falls under the sphere of politics (Levy 1990). The concept of 'public interest' has always been an elusive one in a democracy. This is because there are often incommensurable and incompatible value systems among a population, which is diverse and heterogeneous. Since these values are irreconcilable, the 'solution' approach to politics has been discarded. Because problems and solutions are susceptible to multiple value judgments, this approach of

finding solutions to problems facing a society is "anachronistic, ineffective and illegitimate" (Ezrahi 1995:34).

What kind of challenges do experts present to democratic politics? Extension of democratic control over scientific bureaucracy or experts may be difficult and often counterproductive since the logic of such a control would signify the placement of the ignorant higher in the hierarchy giving commands to the expert (Lively 1975:5). There is a certain dilemma at the centre of democratic accountability because of the asymmetry in knowledge. It may be the case that the public may be ignorant about certain issues and experts may dictate the rules as to what is in public interest; on the other hand if we let ignorant citizens to take decisions pertaining to complex scientific matters, they may be guided by a folksy common sense, rumour or even fear (Turner 2001, Turner 2003).

When it comes to complex policy issues, ordinary citizens are often not in a position to offer the best solution or critically engage with alternative policy positions. Citizens often elect legislators who act on their behalf but they are never sure whether their elected representatives are accurately able to represent the interest of the voters (Esterling 2004:25). The elected representatives may not have the wherewithal to judge the issue

and hence end up delegating their authority to other experts, which may include commissions, advisors, panels and other researchers and academics.

In contemporary times, the status of science as objective and neutral has been questioned. There has been a politicization of science where scientists have been forced to take sides in political struggles and they have often provided contradictory interpretations of facts which has pushed towards a more overt democratization of science (Massen and Weingart 2005: 1-2). In his perceptive account of the power/knowledge nexus, Foucault argues that as a discursive practice science simultaneously structures, systematizes, formalizes, modifies, articulates, confirms, and validates our knowledge (Foucault, 1972). If there is no way we can separate truth or knowledge from power, as for power to operate it has to be validated by a system of knowledge (Brass 2000), the ordinary citizen will always be under the intellectual control of the expert since he is the ultimate source of knowledge (Turner 2001).

Finally, it has often been noted that for democracies to work, citizens are expected to have a certain degree of competence to make informed decisions (Dahl 1992). However, what counts for adequate competence of a citizen is vague and ambiguous. In a globalized world, the innumerable number of issues in which the citizen may be expected to acquire competence could be overwhelming.

Moreover, democratic theorists have always been wary of rule by a class of elites who are in positions of authority on the basis of their scientific competence or other such standards (Estlund 2008).

Politics, Science and Technology Studies

As mentioned above, political questions have become increasingly relevant to Science and Technology Studies (STS). These questions are related to the nature of governmentality and accountability in the modern state, democratic decision-making rights and problems of participation versus representation, and the structure of the public sphere and civil society (Thorpe 2007). They have become more prescient in the context of globalization wherein the relationship between science and the broader polity is being transformed. One of the first works that brought into conversation questions of political theory with the sociology of scientific knowledge was *Leviathan and the Air Pump* (Shapin and Schaffer 1985) wherein they point to Boyle's suggestion that the experimental apparatus separated the constitution of knowledge from the constitution of power. Experiments allowed cognitive agreement to be based on the transparent testimony of nature rather than human authority (p.339). It is through the notion of a liberal society as "the natural habitat of science" that liberal democratic politics has legitimized itself in the twentieth century (p.343). Just

as the scientific establishment has been successful in disguising its political character, similarly the modern liberal state presents itself as the neutral arbiter among competing group interests.

Science was instrumental in providing solution to many of the key problems inherent in the liberal political order. As Ezrahi points out, liberalism modeled political accountability on the "visual culture" of experimental science, whose purpose was "attest, record, account, analyze, confirm, disconfirm, explain, or demonstrate by showing and observing examples in a world of public facts" (Ezrahi 1990:74).

This faith in scientific liberalism has been questioned in recent times by STS scholars who are driven by doubts about the validity of the universal, impersonal and neutral image of science. Their work is directed towards the political implications of this critique and search for alternative political models. While Habermas (1971) described "technology and science as ideology", Andrew Feenberg exposed how liberatory and democratic interests can be engineered into the technical code (Feenberg 1999). Even though scholars such as Philip Kitcher have vouched for a "well-ordered science", (2001: 211) thereby proposing a procedural model of ideal deliberation, whereby deliberators with the aid of expert advice, develop

"tutored preferences" (Kitcher 2001: 117-35), new social movements such as antinuclear and environmental movements have politicized the technical domains which were hitherto out of the bounds from politics (Welsh 2000, Habermas 1981, Melucci 1989).

Ascendance of Deliberative Democracy

Considering the problems inherent in the democratic politics versus expertise, many scholars argue that the way out of this conundrum is deliberative democracy. Over the past couple of decades, the concept of deliberation and deliberative democracy has been at an ascendance. Democratic theory has taken a 'deliberative turn' (Dryzek 2000) where the focus of democracy has shifted 'a way of thinking about politics which emphasizes the give and take of public reasoning between citizens, rather than counting the votes or authority of citizens.' (Parkinson 2006a: 1). The importance of the process has been brought to the centre-stage and the hallmark of this approach has been persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation or deception. The simple proposition that deliberative theory maintains is that all legitimate decisions must be essentially *deliberative*; in essence the realization of political autonomy is contingent upon the public deliberation of the collective body politic (Chambers 2003), characterized by the "unforced force of the better argument" (Habermas 1990). In his earlier

works, following his notion of "discourse principle", according to Habermas legitimate decisions were the ones, which were accepted by all those who were affected through a course of a reasonable discourse. However, such a formulation was deemed as too idealized to reflect real-world situations. Therefore in his later work, he tried to reconcile his normative claims of deliberative democracy with the cultural, administrative and political realities of advanced industrial democracies (Habermas 1996).

Even John Rawls shifted his idea of theory from a metaphysical one to a more practical conception wherein he believed that theory should be political in orientation and rooted in existing constitutional tenets and traditions of interpretation. Introducing the 'public reason', he argued that even though citizens and public actors may have different moral motivations and religious traditions, nevertheless they could come to agreement on the basic terms of social cooperation (Rawls 1985). Following him, while Joshua Cohen reinforced the importance of "rationally motivated consensus" (Cohen 1998, 1999), Benhabib argued that rationality was an essential element of deliberation (1996). The cornerstone of deliberative democracy remains that citizens are obliged to justify their views to their fellow citizens using reasons that "should be accepted by all free and equal persons" (Gutmann and Thompson 1996:3).

Radical democrats like Chantal Mouffe have challenged this version of deliberative democracy. By defining her project of agonistic democracy as an alternative to deliberative democracy, she along with Laclau aims at restoring the centrality of the political "by bringing to the fore the shortcomings of what is currently presented as the most promising and sophisticated vision of a progressive politics: the model of 'deliberative democracy' which has been put forward by Habermas and his followers" (Laclau and Mouffe 2014, xvii). Prioritizing a vision of democracy, which is 'radical and plural', Mouffe stresses on the conflictual character of politics and recognition of pluralism. Making power central to her thesis, she wants theorists to acknowledge the ever-latent conflicts, which can never be wished away but only tamed with the help of democratic principles and institutions. There is an assumption of radical contingency about democracy, which is uncertain, fragile, and in need of constant re-articulation.

The return of realism

A new call for realism in political theory has emerged in recent times. Proponents of this approach like Raymond Geuss and Bernard Williams raise objections to the way in which contemporary political theory has ended up being applied moral philosophy. Their charge is directed against the

liberal theories of justice and discourse ethics, which they accuse of dabbling in excessive idealism and moralism. They advocate a bottom-up approach where political theory takes into account existing conditions on the ground and political constraints instead of seeking theoretical resolution to political conflicts prior to the work of politics (Geuss 2008: Williams 2005a, 2005b). It is not the case that both Geuss and Williams shun normativity completely in favour of a pure inductive political science. However they would prefer normativity to be closely aligned with the historical and empirical context in order to identify real constraints and possibilities.

The brief survey of the major strands of contemporary political theorization brings into sharp relief two specific aspects of this intellectual endeavour. First is the ahistorical nature in which the principles of these theories are articulated. Secondly, much of these theories are devised keeping in mind the advanced industrial western democracies. This may be the appropriate place to inquire into the relationship between political theory and modernity as well as the fate of the various principles of justice and equality outside the West.

"In the modern era, political theory takes it as its premise the individual as its site and sources of values, assumes the existence of a political realm

conceived of as formal and universal, and conceives of politics as the rule-governed process through which individual ends and values contend, are debated, and are coordinated. In doing so, political theory functions of "naturalize" the modern" (Seth 2001; 90) If that is the case, existing theories of politics do not have much to illuminate about regions where these conditions are absent. The postcolonial space is one such place where the relative silence of political theory can only be explained if the discipline is only seen as a modernist enterprise.

New accounts of world history detailing the asymmetrical relations between colonizers and colonized brought about by modernity has rarely found place in the literature. Even though there is great alignment between the subject matter of political theory and postcolonial studies, like theorizing power, state formation, community and identity; the conversation between the field of postcolonial and political theory has been muted.

The post-colonial approach to political theory

Postcolonialism is a range of anti-colonial perspectives that brings to the fore the hidden assumptions that continue to guide our social imaginary and political institutions even after five centuries of modern European colonialism. Originating in the writings of M.K.Gandhi and Franz Fanon

who during their anti-colonial struggles criticized not only the injustice of the colonial powers but also questioned the intellectual legitimacy of the colonial enterprise, the central concern of postcolonial scholars have been to interrogate the various forms of knowledge and their production (Loomba 1998, Gandhi 1998).

It is important to distinguish between postcolonial and the anticolonial. If anticolonial thought exposed the colonizer's claim that colonial values were enlightened or universal, postcolonial thought reflects on the categories and reflexes through which anticolonial resistance takes place. Postcolonial scholars have often criticized elite anticolonial nationalism since it tacitly reproduces the culture and values of imperialism. Partha Chatterjee argues that anticolonial thought combines a critique of colonial ideology but simultaneously embraces the norms and values of the colonizer. Therefore, 'postcolonial' does not just refer to the temporal period when a country got independence from colonial rule. It signifies a way of questioning the rules of representation of that period, not rejecting its representations.

"[T]he problem of nationalist thought becomes the particular manifestation of a much more general problem, namely, the problem of the bourgeois-rationalist conception of knowledge, established in the post-Enlightenment

period of European intellectual history, as the moral and epistemic foundation for a supposedly universal framework of thought which perpetuates, in a real and not merely a metaphorical sense, a colonial domination. It is a framework of knowledge which proclaims its own universality; its validity, it pronounces, is independent of cultures." (Chatterjee 1986, p.11) This particular conception of knowledge animates both in the making and the functioning of a postcolonial state. It is no surprise that the elite character and authoritarian tendencies of the modern state remain a critical target of postcolonial scholars.

The criticism of this kind of universal rationality has also been made by an attempt to search for autonomous spaces in India that lie outside the purview of Western modernity. Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that an alternative to the modern epistemic order is accessible by "provincializing Europe". The idea here is to point to local efficacy of non-European spaces that can negate the legitimacy of Europe's truth claims about universal rationality and categories of knowledge. He has examined "the capacities and limitations of certain European social and political categories in conceptualizing political modernity in the context of non-European life worlds" (Chakrabarty 2008; 20). The significance of this move for political theorization is that it makes

the discipline question its own assumptions of “state”, “democracy” and “modernity”.

The postcolonial approach to studying politics through historicization allows us to examine the trajectory followed by the independent state. What kind of social and political imaginaries were at play while deciding the future course of an independent nation? Were the categories through which the new nation was imagined a derivative one or decolonization ushered in an autonomous realm of thinking that guided state policies? Do we still see a reflection of those ossified universal categories of rationality in state practices of domination and development? The next chapter seeks to engage with some of these questions.

Chapter 2

Technoscience and the Postcolonial condition

There are two broad concerns that animates liberal political theories specially with relation to postcolonial states. First is the establishment of the "developed polity" based on the liberal democratic framework; and second is the maintenance of stability while this development process is underway. The notion of political development is a relatively recent invention in political theory. The assertion that polities need to take a certain trajectory of development to be considered progressing implies that there is a desirable template that states need to follow in order to be called civilized. This genealogy of thought was prevalent in the utilitarian philosophers of the colonial period like J.S.Mill and Montesque. In the order of ranking of civilizations, while the European ones were to be at the zenith, the colonised civilizations were to be ranked lower. Such societies were incapable of self-government and operationalizing sophisticated arrangements like representative governments was supposedly fraught with danger. Hence the imperial rule was a necessary introduction to these societies so that progressive legislations can wake them up from their slumber and strong political institutions can be created which can then take these societies on the path of progress and development.

The concept of political stability, however, is as old as thinking about political philosophy itself. The concern with stability can be found in the writing of Plato as well as Hobbes, Locke and Mill. In the post enlightenment era, this desire for political stability has come to co-exist with the appeal for social change. Any kind of political development had to reconcile with the imperatives for modernisation and social change while at the same time maintain stability. Nowhere was this contradiction more evident than in post-colonial societies after the end of World War II. What kind of a theorization can capture this dichotomy and what sites do we need to investigate in order to understand the complicated dynamics of modernisation and legitimacy.

Much of the existing literature on political theory has focussed either on the history of political thought where canonical texts are reinterpreted in an effort to seek answers to the questions that confront us today. The other variant has been building normative arguments based on thought experiments and ideal situations. While political texts from the developing world find it difficult to find its place in the pantheon of Aristotle and Hegel, the fluid nature of polities, heterogeneous societies and complex nature of group interests makes abstract theorization through intuition pumps and thoughts experiments far removed from the existing realities on the ground.

For example, any theorization about politics in India needs to comprehend the realities of the social structure, the relationship of the Indian state with class and caste, the sociology of identities and the functioning of the major institutions of democracy like the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Much of the literature whether in disciplines of sociology, politics, anthropology or law has indeed produced an impressive amount of scholarly work in recent times. My attempt however is to study democracy in the Indian context from a site often neglected by scholars on India. This is the domain of science and technology which is often seen as an elite preserve thereby evading scrutiny specially from scholars of democratic theory. But this failing is not limited to the Indian case, infact most scholars, specially political theorists shy away from science as it is often thought that the discipline of politics is messy and complex while science is the domain of the pure and authentic. The consequence of such a sharp demarcation is that many of the important questions regarding science which impacts on issues of rights, citizenship and the functioning of democracy are depoliticized to such an extent that contestations over them are either not allowed or they are too sacrosanct to be discussed in public. But before moving on to the empirical realities, this may be the right place to bring to relief the relationship between political theory and science as it has existed thus far.

Theorising Politics and its relationship with Science

There is increasingly a call for interdisciplinary research where the sharp boundaries between various disciplines gives way to greater exchange of concepts and frameworks considering the increasingly complex issues which cannot be dealt within the confines of the existing disciplinary frameworks. However, the division between science and politics has continued to remain robust inspite of the broader changes sweeping through research practices in academia. This conceptual boundary often sets the terms of debate regarding the different approaches to studying politics. It is not that political theorists have not paid attention to critiquing concepts such as "scientific reason" or "technological society", what has often been neglected are concrete human experiences and the scientific artifacts that are connected to the political life. This thesis is an attempt to reconceive those boundaries without which engaging with the questions of politics and their relationship with those artifacts will remain elusive.

While political scientists are often inspired by behaviouralism and rational choice in order to emulate the methodological predilections of natural sciences, political theorists consider issues of science and technology to be anti-political, apolitical or pre-political. Political theorists claim that their approach is different from political and social scientists because the logic of

political inquiry is different from that of science. In fact, Sheldon Wolin argues that there are even inherent dangers in following the scientific logic of inquiry following the behaviour revolution in social sciences while approaching issues of politics. For him, the behaviouralist mindset

"poses a threat not only to so called normative or traditional political theory, but to the scientific imagination as well. It threatens the meditative culture that nourishes all creativity. That culture is the source of the qualities crucial to theorizing: playfulness, concern, the juxtaposition of contraries and astonishment at the variety and interconnectedness of things. These same qualities are not confined to the creation of theories, but are at work when the mind is playing over the factual world as well." (Wolin 2016:18)

For Wolin both natural scientists and political theorists engaged in the task of proposing new methods and frameworks for understanding and interacting with the world. However, for him political theory offers a form of knowledge very distinct from both natural and political sciences. He writes, "Science's form of methodistic truth can be economical, replicable and easily packaged but theoretical truth cannot because its foundation in tacit political knowledge shapes it towards what is politically appropriate rather than towards what is scientifically operational". For him scientists change their theories to fit the world whereas political theorists (ought to try

to) change the world to fit their theories. Writing about the threats that instrumental reason poses for democracy, he equates instrumental reason-reason in the service of calculation, self-interest and efficiency rather than democracy, truth or the good life, with modern technology and 'the practices of positivist science'.

While this formulation of Wolin's aims to recover the autonomy of the political and establishes it as a distinct field of inquiry, by maintaining this division between science and politics, it ends up restricting the political theorists' analysis about science and technology to questions of ontology, ideology or the general character of modernity. While framing the issue about political subjectivity, the main concern of political theorists has been the relations among subjects or subject positions. One hardly finds a concern with the relationship between subjectivity, and the objectivity of science and technology. The lacuna has consequences about how we think about political life in the context of uneven development and trajectories of modernization specially in the decolonized world after World War II.

One of the ways to redeem political theorists' relationship with science is by extending the post positivist concern with scientific practice to the domain of politics. This approach is also suitable to inquire into the specific case of

India's nuclear program and the related science and technology issues associated with it. As Gyan Prakash writes,

"The emergence and existence of India is inseparable from the authority of science and its functioning as the name for freedom and enlightenment, power and progress. Standing as a metaphor for the triumph of universal reason over enchanting myths, science appears pivotal in the imagination and institution of India, a defining part of history as a British colony and its emergence as an independent nation. To speak of India is to call attention to the structures in which the lives of its people are enmeshed- rail roads, steel plans, mining, irrigation, hydroelectric projects, chemical and petroleum factories, public health organizations and regulations, bureaucracy and its developmentalist routines, educational and technical institutions, political parties, media and telecommunications, and now the bomb. Together they constitute a grid, a coherent strategy of power and identity underpinned by an ideology of modernity, that is legitimated in the last instance by science." (Prakash 1999:1)

If science plays such a crucial role in the developmental ideology of the postcolonial state, how is this mediated and what are the mechanisms by which complex scientific issues are deliberated? Who are the experts whose assertions get legitimized and what kind of networks enable those expert claims to be considered legitimate? Can we continue to maintain the clear

separation between political theory and science as it has been traditionally the case? Before answering these questions it is important to describe the role of science in general in our modern world.

Science and Knowledge Societies

In the contemporary world it is difficult to locate an area of human organization or behaviour untouched by science and technology. The dynamics of power and politics are inextricably linked to the broader scientific and technological currents sweeping through the societies at that particular moment. The meanings of citizenship and civic cultures, group solidarities and interest groups, the demarcations between the private and the public, the notions of freedom and the ideas of control are all negotiated by modern polities in the broader context of engagement with both the natural world and the manufactured environment in which we all exist. Our understanding of the world is circumscribed by what we can do about it as well as the perceived legitimacy of specific actors like experts in respective fields, the instruments they employ the course of their actions. Whether one conceives of power in the classical sense of a hegemon exercising its authority over its subject or in Foucauldian framework of discipline, surveillance and governmentality, science and technology remains at the forefront of that expression and execution of that power.

It becomes imperative for us to investigate the relationship between the ordering of nature through science and technology on one hand and simultaneously between the ordering of the society through various power mechanisms and cultural artifacts. There is an urgent need to figure out the connections between science's ability to reconfigure the natural world and the ability of human beings to bring stability to the society through laws, regulations and experts. The discourse on science and technology is often skewed in favour of a deterministic model but recent research has shown that it is not technology that "drive history" but it is the legal and political institutions which lead as well as are led by investment in science and technology. It is a fallacy to believe that technological innovation happens by accident. As Bjiker (1987) argues, the design of that innovation itself reveals the imaginative faculties, cultural preferences and economic and political resources of their makers and users.

Much of the literature on science and technology studies have shown that science and technology need to be studied as social practices whose purpose have been the establishment of structure and authority (Biagioli 1995; Jasanoff etal. 1995; Barnes and Edge 1982; Pickering 1995). Therefore any political theory of human existence needs to factor in the co-production of the joint

achievements of scientific, technical and social enterprise. Science and technology are not separate from the social activity but integrally linked to the societal evolution and once science becomes social in this way, it can be compared and contrasted with the other exercises in the production of power (Latour 1999; 1988; 1987). Even though race, class, ideology, gender, power and interest have been the staple of political theories, they have paid less critical attention to knowledge-making and knowledge-implementing faculties of human sciences.

In his influential essay *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Latour argues that the nature-culture divide is an artificial one created by humans in order to sort out the multitude of hybrid networks that constitute their cognitive and material existence. This presupposition does not rely on apriori demarcations of the world before the human imagination and labour works on it. The task of the theorist is to make visible those connections which coproduction renders invisible. His actor-network theory is rich, provocative and persuasive but fails to say much about the moral and political conflicts that accompany the creation and maintenance of systems of governance. The theory's shortcomings are on account of the fact that it does not engage with questions of people, ideas, preferences and institutions which are of the greatest concern to a theorist of politics.

Political theorists are more concerned with the role of representational practices that constitute political power. The works of Benedict Anderson and James C. Scott reveals that the power of representation lies mostly in the resources used in the dissemination of this representation in order to either alter the behaviour of the masses or make them believe a certain representational truth. Their work looks at the explicit political nature of resistance when grand representation of the reality is employed to win the allegiance of the masses. This framework can be a suitable lens to view the developmental trajectory for a newly independent post-colonial state like India. The representational claim of the Indian state may often be at odds with the perceived realities of the people on the ground. India's nuclear program needs to be seen in this light where the representation of its perceived benefits may not be convincing to everyone and thereby it has to be couched in terms of nationalism and development.

So far we have discussed the various conceptual issues associated with the co-production approach. But it is also important to turn our attention to the instruments which are employed to operationalize this co-production of order and knowledge.

The construction of identities is one of the main areas of investigation to understand this nexus of co-production. While the identity of the expert forms an important aspect of this study, it is also important to inquire about the construction of collective identities. This thesis will both look at how the experts get to have their say in critical matters of science and technology, and what tropes are used to legitimize their knowledge or assertions. It will also attempt to look at the collective identity of the people as inhabitants of a shared future co-existing in a certain political time. The co-production is not just between the natural and the social world but also between history and the future as in how historical experiences shape our imagination of the future.

In the co-production framework of understanding the world, as in the lived realities of people, institutions play a critical role. Mary Douglas (1986) defined that the task of institutions is to classify, confer identity, act as repositories of memory and forgetting, and make life and death decisions for society. Institutions are also sites where testing and reaffirmation of political cultures take place. Whether it is legal institutions or scientific ones, societies ideally have access to their repertoire of problem-solving, including preferred forms of expertise, modes of inquiry and dissemination of outcomes. They are expected to interpret evidence, frame laws, standardize methods, produce

knowledge or ratify new identities. But much of the institutionalist approach has taken into account case studies in the developed world. The institutional story has played out somewhat differently in the post-colonial world. The anomalies inherent in transposing institutions which have had a long gestation period in the developed world in contrast to the developing one are obvious considering the mismatch in their ability to deliver successful outcomes and the expectations from them.

The discursive choices institutions make also form an influential element of any institution's efforts to shore up new structures of scientific authority. Discourses help to redraw the boundaries between the safe and the dangerous, the desirable and the non-desirable when it comes to scientific technology. Existing discourses can often be appropriated and selectively tailored to suit the interests of a certain regime. Therefore, a focus on discourses becomes germane to understand how the co-production of science and society is managed, manipulated and disseminated. In the postcolonial setting, it is significantly important to understand the historicity of the discourses and along with that the material and political realities accompanying those discourses.

Last is the idea of representation. As stated earlier, representative democracy was seen as the most sophisticated form of democracy by political theorists of 19th century. And the colonial subjects when they became independent nations, most of the states tried to follow the same model of democracy as practiced in their developed counterparts. The nature of representation has been one of the core concerns of Science and technology studies since it attempted to understand scientific knowledge from the vantage point of the social world.

The topic of political representation has become increasing important for democratic theory. There is a disconnect between the standard accounts of democratic representation which focused on territorial based electoral representation and a political domain which is increasingly complex, more pluralized and a site where increasing number of deliberations and negotiations are being relied upon to garner political legitimacy. The erstwhile consensus about the division of labour where democracy was seen to be primarily the selection and organization of political elites has given way to more broad patterns of inclusion and exclusion in political representation. Recent efforts on the issue has focussed on questions of electoral design and thinking about democracy beyond the ballot.

There were two main sources from which representative democracy evolved. In the twentieth century the expansion of this model transformed liberal, constitutional regimes into mass democracies. Second, when filtered through the ethos of constitutionalism, electoral representation enabled a balance between the rule of the elites and the social and political democratization of the society where political parties of different ideologies and agendas displaced the parliament as the primary loci of representation. Representation is understood as a principal agent relationship where the principals are the constituencies formed on territorial basis. These principals then elect agents who stand for and act on their interests and opinions thereby demarcating the sources of legitimate power and those who exercise that power. Electoral representation identifies a space within which the sovereignty of the people is identified with state power. The electoral mechanism makes sure that there is responsiveness to the people by the representatives and political parties who speak and act in their name. Also, the universal franchise endows electoral representation with an important element of political equality.

However, the growing complexity of issues increasingly test the power of the representative agents, thereby compromising their abilities to stand for and act on the interest of those they represent. For example, on issues related to

technical and scientific complexity there are vast amounts of information and high levels of technology involved in most public decisions (Zolo 1992; Brown 2006; Beck 1997). This issue is further compounded by the political complexity that comes with multiple and overlapping constituencies (Andeweg 2003).

In contemporary times, the representative government is seen as a mix of aristocracy and democratic authorization. Some scholars believe that modern societies- with their bureaucratic concentrations of power, their scale, and their complexity- dictate that citizens are mostly passive, mobilized periodically by elections (Bobbio 1987, Sartori 1987, Zolo 1992). Pluralist democrats like Truman (1951) and Dahl (1956) argued that given the porous designs of liberal democracies, citizens can also push their interests onto the political agenda in addition to voting. Whereas participatory democrats pointed out that even though there may be channels of representation in pluralist democracies, these were mostly occupied by the wealthy and the educated, hence they believed in Rousseau's view of representation as essentially non-democratic (Pateman 1976, Macpherson 1977, Young 2000, Urbinati 2006).

The third and most recent wave in democratic theory, deliberative democracy, focuses on inclusive political judgement. For them the standard account of representative democracy with its emphasis on elections, pressure groups, and political parties, suggests that political judgments are in effect aggregated preferences. Instead initially by Habermas and later by Pettit (1999) and Rawls (2005), deliberative democrats focused on the construction of public opinion and judgement, how institutionalization of deliberation proceeds and the nature of the relationship between inclusion and deliberation.

According to them representation induces and enables forms relationships of judgment that enables democracy, either in formalized form like elections or by other means such as group advocacy, voice, the media, or indeed representative claims by any number of actors who may be inside and outside of institutionalized politics. (Rosanvallon 1998). Urbinati (2006) calls this indirectness in politics i.e. representation of citizen's judgment to them by their representative and vice versa. This is how the demos reflects on itself and judges its laws, institutions, and leaders (Ankersmith 2002). They believe that this reflexive relationship is crucial to making political judgment work in complex, pluralistic, democratic societies. Representation is not only endowed with the virtue of political equality, but it also serves to unify and

connect citizens, while also pulling them out of their immediate present and projecting them into future-oriented perspectives. In a democratic society, representative institutions tend towards transcendence of the present in a process that is punctuated by a dialectic between how things are now and what can be or ought to be (Przeworski 1991).

Even though the theoretical framework is a convincing one, often representative politics throws up challenges that cannot be solved by the dialectical reflexivity it espouses. One of the major drawbacks of the deliberative democracy framework is that it fails to recognize the schism that may exist between procedural and substantive democracy. This divide is more prominent in a postcolonial state because the gap between how things are at present and what the future holds has to be negotiated through multiple dimensions of power and contending narratives. The roadmap of where the people needs to go may have been set already by a select few without the mechanisms of deliberative democracy in place. And once the template of a desirable political order has been drafted, only minor tweaks may be allowed. Two interrelated themes one needs to take into account is first, often this template can be a very abstract one. This is not unique to postcolonial societies only, considering all normative frameworks of political order requires some sort of abstraction whether it is the idea of good life,

freedom, equality or even democracy. However, the critical point that deliberative democrats fail to account for in their model is the role of power and its linkages with knowledge production. It is through the various regimes of knowledge production and dissemination that political subjects are created, modified and governed. The second aspect the theory fails to engage with is the fact that people exist in different historical time and their imagination of the future as far as priorities go may be different from one another. Post decolonization as a number of states sought to establish a future narrative, often that story had to be written in the script of development. After decades of imperial rule and impoverishment, the urgent task of most states has been to focus on development. It was through development that political dispensations sought to redeem their legitimacy as well as the legitimacy of the institutions through which they were carrying out the tasks of governance.

Since science and technology provided the roadmap to human development specially since the industrial revolution, postcolonial nation states believed that all that was required for it to progress and be developed is to follow the already existing trajectory. What they failed to acknowledge was that science and technology was not just tools of development, but they were also co-terminus with social production and political subjectivities. Even though

representational politics gave voice to the millions of people who had been disenfranchised for so long under the colonial rule, some of the major aspects of their political life were kept depoliticized.

This depoliticization of issues is often carried out by recognizing certain aspects of human existence apolitical. Science and Technology which is meant to usher in development and progress has to be kept out of the messy world of politics. This division of labour which I alluded to earlier places a premium on experts in a postcolonial democracy. Because they are seen as repositories of knowledge about complex scientific and technical issues, lay people are often marginalised in those discussions even if the matter being discussed ultimately affects them. In an era where it has become difficult to distinguish between knowledge and opinion, the role of the expert has come under heightened scrutiny.

Democracy and Expertise

The role of knowledge in political decision-making has been central concern of normative political theory since Plato who in his Republic recommended that states should be ruled by philosopher kings. In discussions of legitimacy in recent times there has been an epistemic turn wherein the idea is that for

a political rule to be legitimate, it must deliver good outcome. But the question then arises that if improvement in outcomes is all that needs to be considered, chances are that it may end up being a case where the rule of the knowledgeable and educated will outperform a rule of the people (Marti 2006; Lafont 2006; Peter 2011). Critics argue that democratic government in contemporary times have been eroded as a result of the growing power of the experts.

An important question of our times is how to ascertain the limits and define the legitimate role of knowledge and expertise in decision-making. Because of the complex nature of modern societies, they have to rely on expert knowledge and judgment, and therefore we are confronted with 'a fact of expertise' (Kitcher 2011; Holst 2012). On the other hand, there is an inherent moral value in following democratic procedures wherein citizens have a right to equal participation. How does one reconcile between legitimate and illegitimate expert rule which may be at odds with democratic procedures?

Following Anthony Downs's (1957) classic portrayal of citizens as ignorant of facts, Guido Pincione and Fernando Teson (2006) and Bryan Caplan elaborate how democratic discourse systematically produces positions that disregards the best available evidence available scientifically. In contrast

Christiano (2012) outlines how expertise may function as a constructive 'filter' that enables the 'truth sensitivity' of policies and legislations passing through.

In recent decades science and expertise has become increasingly political. It's important to define here what is meant by political. Warren's (1999) formulation can be instructive according to which politics is,
"the subset of social relations characterized by conflict over goods in the face of pressure to associate for collective action, where at least one party to the conflict seeks collectively binding decisions and seeks to sanction decisions by means of power." (Warren 1999:218) Since politics is defined in terms of conflict within social relations, democratic discussions and political deliberations within constitutionally organized institutions are motivated by the possibility of resolution through collective coercion (Warren 1996). Thus, we have the domain of politics where economic, cultural or political power is present, and there is conflict in which a collectively binding decision is at stake.

If science and expertise become political, then it is not because values are embedded in or delegated to artifacts or because it involves the distribution of resources or expertise alters the material conditions of our lives. Expertise

becomes political to the extent that it is a site of conflict under the shadow of coercive decision. There are two broad anxieties about expertise in democratic theory. One is the danger of 'technocratic' politics runs the danger of narrowing the sphere of democratic debate.

For Habermas, there are to distinct elements to technocratic politics. The first is the 'scientization of politics' which consisted of technical refinement of political struggle and the increasing power of what he calls steering knowledges in the functioning of government. This leads to narrowing down of political choices wherein the expert determines the menu of 'realistic' choices. The second element of this technocratic politics is what Weber's 'decisionist' argument that those 'choices' are made in a context of ultimately irreconcilable value pluralism, and in the last instance cannot be rationally grounded. When the technical refinement of the means of political struggle and the rising power of expert steering knowledges in the conduct of government was couples with a decisionist account of political value, it produced a politics that limited the scope of citizen involvement and for reason in politics. Science, for Habermas, 'attains a monopoly in the guidance of action'. However, for Habermas, expertise and technocratic politics need not always be linked. One can always draw on the knowledge of experts without succumbing to the twin challenges of scientism and

decisionism. What he recommends is an improved communication between experts and non-experts as the pre-condition of democratic control.

But what if the process of communication and construction of power is mediated by various forms of discourse wherein expert discourse itself sets the limiting criteria for public deliberation and politics. The access to information and the methods that experts use has become the indispensable resources in governance. Borrowing from the Foucauldian tradition, this radical reading of expert authority discerns their performative capability that sets the boundaries within which meaningful claims can be made and simultaneously silencing those demands which fall outside those boundaries. 'The capacity of scientists to authorize and certify facts and pictures of reality is a potent source of political influence' (Ezrahi 1971).

However expertise is crucial to the enlightenment of the political will. They support democratic ideals by: informing public and political deliberation, empowering democratic collective action and telling truth to power from a position of non-interference and independence.

There are two different assessments of expertise in today's time. While one views it as frighteningly powerful, the other considers it as fatally weakened.

While the former prefers a heightened valorisation of agnostic struggle and contestation to unmask the political character of expertise, thereby opening up new sites of political engagement. The latter on the other hand emphasise more on formal mediating institutions to shore up legitimacy of expert authority in the context of public suspicion.

But none of these frameworks take historical experience into account. In many postcolonial states, often the lens through which an action is perceived legitimate or otherwise is by focussing on the historical lens.

This concludes the broad overview of the literature on egalitarian political theory, and the role of science and expertise in democratic societies. In the next chapter, we will discuss the ramifications of the divides that separates the experts from the lay people and its consequences in a representative democracy using the debate over India's nuclear program as a case study.

Chapter-3

Development, Progress and the Displacement of Politics

The concept of development has been a subject of intense debates and discussion in the past few decades. However, it has eluded a proper theoretical delineation from political theorists in relation to the Global South. While its linkages with operations of power, distribution of resources and the unevenness of its benefits is well documented (Crush 1995, Radcliff 1999), it is not very clear what impact development has on the normative conceptions of democratic politics. This chapter aims to show how the technocratic conception of development leads to a 'displacement of politics' thereby bringing into sharp focus the experiences of developmental ideology which reinforces the rule of the few over the many.

Even though there are numerous studies related to development, the word does not lend itself to easy or convenient descriptions. There is no broad consensus on what exactly the term 'development' means or should mean. Even though some scholars use the term in relation to evolutionary processes of social change (Russow 1960) and targeted political interventions into these processes (Chenery etal. 1972), the central driving force behind this articulation was the idea to improve the living standards of impoverished

nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. For a long time, the idea of development was akin to following the footsteps of the West. It was thought of as a phenomenon which involved processes of 'economic growth, industrialisation, social differentiation and mobilization, mental change, democratization and redistribution' which took place in the West but not in the rest of the world and the only task for developmental theory was to explain the reasons why the others fell behind (Menzel 1993, 132).

Development can therefore be seen as a matrix of interconnected and normatively positive processes that at some point of time took place in one part of the world, specially Western developed countries but the same did not transpire in the less-developed or under-developed parts of the Global South. James Ferguson's argument of 'development' as a name which not only has a normative value but is also a dominant problematic or interpretative grid through which the impoverished nations of the world are known to us is a perceptive one. It is through this all-encompassing prism of 'development' that the image of the poor and ragged populations of these countries are brought to sharp relief (Ferguson 1994). The concept and practice of development has come under sustained critique from the post-developmental school who argue that, "The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures

and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work." (Sachs 1992:1). According to Arturo Escobar, one of the most prominent scholars of the post-developmental school, the defining characteristics of this framework involve an abiding interest in alternatives to development but not alternative developments, which is borne out of the disappointment with the classical development paradigm. It also involves a critical disposition towards established scientific discourses, a keener interest in local cultures and knowledges coupled with solidarity with grassroot social movements (Ziai 2007).

The post-developmental critique of development derives its theoretical sustenance from the Foucauldian idea of discourse analysis where the central task of theorizing remains deconstruction of hegemony and power structures. However, the celebration of local resistance and knowledges often leads to a romanticisation of these functions thereby eliding the examination of the power structures that may be implicated within those local discourses. As Nederveen Pieterse writes, "while the shift towards cultural sensibilities that accompanies this perspective is a welcome move, the plea for 'people's culture', indigenous culture and local knowledge can lead to ethnochauvinism, to reification of both culture and locality, or people. It also evinces a one-dimensional view of globalization which is equated with

homogenization" (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:366). It also in effect denies the existence of multiple knowledge sources by solely validating local knowledges.

However, the singular focus on the idea of critique of modernity and scientific progress by default often leads to a rejection of Enlightenment values and the benefits that accrued along with it. There is an inconsistency which is revealed when post-developmentalist scholars insist on notions of anti-authoritarianism, democratization and emancipation of the individual when in fact these very ideas owe their genesis to the Enlightenment project to a large extent. The intellectual stance of being in the position of permanent critique is an unsustainable one if one needs to take the task of theorization seriously. This is not to belittle the efficacy of this critical project, as it has been immensely helpful in unmasking the hitherto unrevealed power structures and sites of domination. However, any act of theorization of our contemporary challenges and predicaments needs to move beyond mere critique.

Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom

Any understanding of development has to engage with material, discursive and normative elements in order to reach a comprehensive judgment about

the efficacy of the concept. While post World War II era conceptualization of the concept involved scientific measurement and objective parameters to judge the progress of a society, thereby embedding the concept in a normatively teleological framework simultaneously embedded in the philosophy of utilitarianism, contemporary critiques of development has given much more prominence to the discursive element often at the expense of material realities. Since 'development' is a slippery concept, theoretically it's often difficult to bridge the divide between the proponents and antagonists of 'development'. Amartya Sen's work on '*Development as Freedom'* is one of the most remarkable theoretical enterprise that tries to combine the material conception of 'development' with the ideational normativity of 'freedom'.

Whether it is the analysis of poverty and famines, or the significance of capabilities in securing substantive freedoms, Sen's philosophical outlook is the result of his critique of contending accounts of the meaning of development and the measurement of economic success. He objects to utilitarianism on the ground that it provides for a space of economic evaluation that is insensitive to human difference and thus to the distinct needs and capabilities of individual human agents. As he put it in the Radcliffe Lectures of 1972: 'The trouble with this approach is that

maximizing the sum of individual utilities [pleasure, happiness, welfare] is supremely unconcerned with the interpersonal distribution of that sum. This should make it particularly unsuitable for measuring or judging inequality' (Sen 1972: 16). To quote from his seminal work, *Development as Freedom*,

"Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms . . . is constitutive of development. However, for a fuller understanding of the connection between development and freedom we have to go beyond this basic recognition (crucial as it is). The intrinsic importance of human freedom, in general, as the preeminent objective of development is strongly supplemented by the instrumental effectiveness of freedoms of particular kinds to promote freedoms of other kinds. The linkages between different types of freedoms are empirical and causal, rather than constitutive and compositional. For example, there is strong evidence that economic and political freedoms help to reinforce one another, rather than being hostile to one another (as they are sometimes taken to be. Similarly, social opportunities of education and health care, which may require public action, complement individual opportunities of economic and political participation and also help to foster our own initiatives in overcoming our respective

deprivations. If the point of departure of the approach lies in the identification of freedom as the main object of development, the reach of the policy analysis lies in establishing the empirical linkages that make the viewpoint of freedom coherent and cogent as the guiding perspective of the process of development' (Sen 1999: xii).

The theoretical and political project that shines through this formulation is that Sen wants to privilege the space of freedom, or the removal of substantial unfreedoms. By having a commitment to foundationalism, universalism but simultaneously paying attention to human difference, Sen's work insists that development is defined as a process of expanding real freedoms. Real freedom is defined in terms of certain human and civil rights that must be guaranteed for all. It also incorporates the framework from John Rawls' theory of justice as 'fairness' to define real freedoms in terms of distribution of primary goods. The ingenuity of Sen's formulation is that it goes beyond Rawls' in its attentiveness to individual agency, the importance of choice as freedom in itself, and to individual human differences. In trying to bridge the universal with the particular, his account of development argues that individuals must be free to choose their own accounts of the good life. This is in sharp contrast to the drive for normalization that most projects of high modernism were committed to in their quest for development (Scott 1998).

Thus one can see that Sen's work brings to the fore a variant of egalitarianism which is relational in nature and thereby not only avoids setting out a ready template that needs to be forced from above to conceptualise egalitarianism but also leaves the space for politics which can be articulated through negotiation, deliberation and reasoning.

The idea of democracy that Sen envisages is one which is a 'demanding system' based on public discussion and deliberation rather than a mechanical condition based only on elections and voting (Sen 1999b, pp.8-9). This conception of democracy embodies and ensures the intrinsic, instrumental and the constructive importance of individual participation in matters of social choice and public decision-making. Political freedoms and civil rights allow for "informed and unregimented formation of our values [through] openness of communication and arguments". Free speech, public discussion and democratic choice are required to achieve "a proper understanding of what economic needs are" and "express publicly what we value and to demand that attention be paid to it" (Sen 1999a: 152). Sen gives "a central place to guaranteeing free public discussion and deliberative interactions in political thought and practice" (Sen 2003a) and considers democratic freedom "critically important for the development of human capabilities" (Sen, 2002, p. 79).

Even though Sen's framework is a comprehensive one that tries to go beyond utilitarian and libertarian approaches, his insistence on public discussion and reasoned social choice required for the formation of social arrangement that enhances individual capacities and freedoms, makes it necessary that the fact and the requisite quality of discussions becomes significant aspects that are in need of scrutiny. While his argument that each society chooses its values, capabilities and standards for justice itself is persuasive, it is also imperative for critical public reasoning and decision-making processes that every individual can effectively participate in such choice. In the absence of effective opportunity to participate which will require adequate and fair protection, often issues can be highjacked by vested interests and elites at the expense of the marginalized and disadvantaged. Where Sen's framework falls short is in providing the minimum requirements for the public reasoning and decision-making processes which enables a society to continue its processes of determination and evaluation of social arrangements.

While it is clear that Sen's idea of development as freedom has received enormous appreciation as evident from various policy documents of international organizations like the UN with the UNDP's Human Development Report being a case in point, it is not clear what the

implications of these principles are in the context of mass democracies. Much of the debate about its principles have engaged within the binary opposition of democratic and authoritarian regimes where the analysis has restricted itself to a question of prioritisation as in whether economic well-being matters more than political freedoms or vice-versa. But the crucial aspect of public-reasoning and decision-making in mass democracies, its impact on personal freedoms and mechanisms for negotiating diverse political interests requires further examination.

In modern mass democracies, the functions of critical reasoning and public deliberation is carried out through the process of representation. It is highly improbable that everyone can be involved in the processes of deliberation to vote on each and every issue of concern in a complex society with multiple interlinkages and issues. Therefore, representatives are chosen by the electorate who deliberate on their behalf in the Parliament or the Senate or the council as per the institutional designs of a particular society. This delegation of responsibility within the representative structure has its own benefits but also certain shortcomings. Sen's failure to further specify and defend preconditions for individuals' substantive democratic freedom renders his arguments for democracy vulnerable to criticism that he does not protect against unfair disparities in political influence and functioning which

is an integral part of modern democracies. Stewart and Deneulin argue that "democratic discussions are not so easy to have and democratic understandings even more problematic ... Sen's concept of democracy seems an idealistic one where political power, political economy and struggle are absent" (Stewart and Deneulin, 2002, pp. 63–64). Hence, one requires a more comprehensive elaboration of 'political freedom' whose focus is on the constitutive components of such freedom. James Bohman's work on political equality is a case in point. He argues that the proper normative criterion for legitimacy in public deliberation (which requires that citizens be equal and their reasons be given equal consideration), as "equality of effective social freedom, understood as equal capability for public functioning" (Bohman, 1997: 321–322). He elaborates, "all citizens must be able to develop those capacities that give them effective access to the public sphere [and then] sufficient respect and recognition so as to be able to influence decisions that affect them in a favourable direction" (Bohman, 1997: 323–324).

As mentioned earlier, most modern democracies are representative democracies of some variant. Therefore, the realization of all the attributes that require the development of capacities which can give the citizens access to decision- making powers has to be realized through the representative framework. The idea of representation is crucial to any formulation of a

political theory or critique of existing paradigms. This focus on representative democracy is germane also to this current study because the case study of India, which is in its nature and function, very much a representative democracy.

The idea of Representation in Democracy

There are four main features of the standard account of representative democracy. "First, representation is understood as a principal agent relationship, in which the principals—constituencies formed on a territorial basis—elect agents to stand for and act on their interests and opinions, thus separating the sources of legitimate power from those who exercise that power. Second, electoral representation identifies a space within which the sovereignty of the people is identified with state power. Third, electoral mechanisms ensure some measure of responsiveness to the people by representatives and political parties who speak and act in their name. Finally, the universal franchise endows electoral representation with an important element of political equality (Urbinati & Warren 2008). Representatives are entrusted with the task of bringing upon popular opinion to bear on issues of public policy and also act as mediums of accountability. They act as a mediators and conduit agents between the citizens and the state.

The political landscape of any society consists of a number of actors involving political parties, the media, social associations, neighbourhood groups, professional lobbies, NGOs, non-profit organizations, social and political movements as well as labour movements involving trade unions. All these disparate groups have specific constituencies whose interests they profess to bear upon any policy decisions. Democratic politics also involves protests, demonstrations, strikes and petitions through which citizens present their demands to the state. However, in modern democracies, political parties have a number of advantages vis-à-vis other modes of political representation. First, they have the advantage of representing all members of a particular territorial constituency as opposed to any particular interest or social group. Second, the periodic elections are a mechanism to hold the representatives of political parties accountable to their constituents which is not the case in NGOs or other such organizations. Finally, the legitimacy of the elected representative is borne out of the fact that s/he is elected by the people s/he is representing. A combination of all these aspects has brought about an institutionalization of competitive party system to negotiate the dilemmas of complex mass democracies in the twentieth century.

In the aftermath of India's independence, the faith in the institutional of political party to represent the aspirations of a new country, their interests

and needs, was not only established but validated by the presence of a political party in the form of the Indian National Congress (INC). The INC is the oldest political party and continues to represent a substantial section of India's population electorally. In fact the party has been in power for maximum duration in the history of independent India. Even though the legitimacy of political parties has deepened with increasing participation in elections which are held periodically, one major issue in which the political system has failed the people is in the domain of responsiveness and accountability.

The thesis that there is a crisis of representation in India is well documented. On the eve of India's independence, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's speech had stated, "the service of India means the service of millions who suffer...it means the ending of poverty, ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity' (Nehru 1947). The promise was to usher in a transition from a nation under colonization to a substantive democracy through the institution of representative democracy. In hindsight, it is in this sense that those transitions have not been possible and the crisis of representation thesis alludes to the fact that it is precisely the nature of representative politics in India that has failed in its endeavor to extricate the country from want and

deprivation by heeding to the popular will and listening to the demands of its most oppressed social and economic groups.

Representative politics also suffer from over-bureaucratization of political parties, a single-minded dedication to occupying power where power is not the means towards a goal but the goal itself, and the insensitivity towards the needs of the people being represented. Conceptually there is an inherent paradox at the heard of representation as enunciated by Hannah Pitkin (1968). While something has to be represented, the medium through which it is doing the act of representation has characteristics of its own. This leads to a slippage between the interest of those who are being represented and the act of representation. Laclau in similar vein argues, " 'no pure relation of representation' is obtainable because it is of the essence of the process of representation that the representative has to contribute to the identity of what is represented'" (Laclau 1996:87). The logic of this charge goes something like this: representatives do not only register the will of the people but are also responsible for determining of the will of the people. It may very well be the case that 'representation' is the very moment of constitution and decisiveness of the political will; and this very moment may be more about the dynamics of power and dominance without caring about the needs of the people to bear on policy. Therefore, there is nothing representative about

representation and people who believe that their representative is embodiment of democracy, in effect, are short changed.

While the above criticisms of representation have been discussed in the literature, there is another kind of phenomena that has been neglected specially by theorists of politics and justice. For a society to be free of domination and enhancement of liberty, it has to overcome, what Miranda Fricker (2012) defines as *epistemic injustice*, or wrongs done to a person specifically as a knower. She identifies two kinds of epistemic injustices: i*) distributive epistemic injustice* (unfair distribution of epistemic goods such as education or information) and ii) *discriminatory epistemic injustice* (a more specifically epistemic kind of wrong). Within the discriminatory epistemic injustice rubric, there are further two kinds of injustices, namely, *Testimonial injustice* (a reduction in the credibility of a speaker due to prejudice in the hearer) and *Hermeneutical injustice* (reduction in the intelligibility of the experience of a person who is a member of a marginalized group, either to herself or to others, due to a lack of hermeneutical resources in the community). Epistemic injustice is not only ethically wrong but as Fricker argues, it also has a political dimension wherein "epistemic justice is required in order to achieve non-domination, understood as "secured non-interference." (Fricker 2012: 1321). Testimonial justice is required to ensure

that what is said by the contester or on her behalf is given its due weight. Hermeneutical justice is required to ensure that what is said by the contester or on her behalf is available for saying and/or understood—"because if the citizen suffers an unjust deficit either of credibility or of intelligibility, then s/he precisely cannot get the fair hearing that contestation requires." (p.1324)

Fricker's framework of understanding an epistemic notion of justice is crucial to navigate the divide that exists between experts and lay person. It does not mean that this divide can always be bridged or even in cases, it may be better for this division to persist. However, one has to be conscious that keeping this wedge as it is without making an effort to give a fair hearing to the other side amounts to injustice and has both moral and political implications for a liberal democracy. In the case of experts versus the lay person, the issue is further confounded by the fact that in democracies it is the representative of the lay person who speaks for or on behalf of their constituents. So the citizen has to first make herself intelligible and credible to her representative and only then the representative can enter a dialogue/discussion/contest with the expert. The representative may be herself in a position where she may struggle to enter the dialogue with the expert given her intelligibility, or lack of comprehension of complex scientific details.

In India, where nuclear power plays a pivotal role in framing the contours of development, the logic of democracy by discussion is often shortchanged because of the specialized knowledge and technical expertise the subject seems to demand. In the rest of the chapter these theoretical issues will be discussed in the context of India's nuclear program with an emphasis on nuclear energy, its importance for India's development and growth, and the debates for and against it by political representatives, scientists, academics, experts and opinion makers.

Nuclear Power and the Indian State

The Indian state's project of postcolonial modernity would not be successful without the adoption of a scientific outlook and at the 'nuclear technology' was seen as 'a symbol of the modern times' (Nehru 2003, p.40). The importance Nehru attached to it can be gauged from the 1948 Constituent Assembly debates on nuclear energy where he said the following:

"Consider the past few hundred years of human history; the world developed a new source of power, that is steam- the steam engine and the like- and the industrial age came in. India with all her may virtues, did not develop that

source of power. It became a backward country in that sense; it became a slave country because of that. The steam age and the industrial age were followed by the electrical age which gradually crept in, and most of us were hardly aware of the change. But enormous new power came in. Now we are facing the atomic age; we are on the verge of it. And this is obviously something infinitely more powerful than either steam or electricity" (Nehru 1987: 427).

There is a sense that precisely because India lacked a scientific temper, that it missed the steam age, the industrial revolution and the electrical age. For Nehru, a new independent and impoverished India after decades of colonial rule cannot miss out on the atomic age. Along with the dam, the steel mill and the planned cities, the nuclear reactor was a 'technological artefact which would transform traditional landscapes through their sheer power' (Abraham 1998, p.20). As Nandy (1988) argues, nuclear technology emerged as 'theatrical science' which will 'create the illusion of spectacular development'. It is not that Nehru was not aware of the potential dangers of nuclear technology, he was witness to a world that saw the impact of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But when it came to the pursuit of nuclear energy, events around the world were not to be allowed to hinder it. He noted, "India may have to follow other

countries in having a great atomic research institute also, not to make bombs, I hope, but nevertheless I do not see how we can lag behind in this very important matter, because atomic energy is going to play a vast and dominating part, I suppose, in the future shape of things." (Nehru 1984a: 377-8)

This is not to argue that Nehru was single-handedly responsible for this particular trajectory of the evolution of nuclear science in India. As Anderson[1] shows in his deeply historical work, "Well before its independence in 1947, India had more than a handful of people who anticipated what a modern scientific community will look like and what its scientific institution will require to survive" (Anderson 2010:2) What is more significant is the extraordinary influence this scientific community exerted in the aftermath of India's independence in deciding the dynamics of science-state relations.

Between the anti-colonial mobilization of the Indian people against the colonial powers and the acceptance of the authority of the sovereign state, there existed a fundamental contradiction. It was difficult to reconcile the automatic transfer of popular allegiances from a political effort to get rid of colonial masters to a new state apparatus which remained unchanged in structure. The ideological function of the state remained to be theorized at the moment of independence and this crisis had to be averted by naturalizing the categories of modern and scientific within and through the processes of 'state building' in India. The development of nuclear reactors and assorted

[1]Anderson's book is a historical account of the relationship of three particular scientists Meghnad Saha, Shanti Bhatnagar and Homi Bhabha with Nehru. Tracing their scientific career and their institutions with the evolution of nuclear science in India, this work provides a detailed narrative of its progress since the 1920s to 1980s. The central events relevant to this thesis however pertains to events after that i.e.1998 and 2005-2008.

technologies became the touchstone through which the legitimation of the Indian state needed to happen.

There were two conceptual issues that the Indian state had to confront in its quest of building a 'modern' state. First was the notion of secrecy. Secrecy is germane to all forms of modern state, theoretically expressed as the

power/knowledge nexus. However, secrecy as an institutional practice also reveals many of the inherent attributes of that system. While through the mechanism of secrecy the state tries to ameliorate its structural ambiguities, it also reveals the limits of public information, accountability, recognition and knowledge. Deliberative or participatory democrats who argue for greater participation of the people in issues of science and technology thereby considering it as an antidote to technocracy will find it challenging to contest the idea of secrecy. Under such structural conditions, the population will always experience epistemic injustice, as alluded to in this chapter earlier.

The Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was created in 1948 by an act of the constituent assembly aimed at moving all activities relating to atomic energy under one agency and providing for sanctions against any breach of its many stricture. In a long note that Homi Bhabha sent to Nehru few days later, he emphasized the paramount importance of secrecy while delivering a blueprint of the organizational character of the AEC. The Atomic Energy Commission was to have its own secretariat, thereby delinking itself from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Bhabha, as the chair of AEC should be allowed to continue negotiations with Britain, France, and Norway, under conditions of complete secrecy, and with the intent of producing a final agreement that would only then be

submitted to the government. Three weeks later, in a cabinet note that Nehru wrote to his colleagues, he says, “"Any consideration of this matter [atomic energy] involves a discussion of highly technical processes many of which are secret.” The AEC, which would be a small, “high-powered body” would report directly to the Prime Minister’s office.

Nehru as Prime Minister and Bhabha as Chairman of the AEC virtually monopolized all decisions related to the atomic energy. While Bhabha was given full permission to negotiate with other foreign countries on behalf of the state, Nehru took on the responsibility at the cabinet level, to manage and oversee the atomic establishment. The final result of this division of labour was a complete legal insulation of the atomic energy establishment from scrutiny of the public or elected legislatures, and also remove the atomic energy board from oversight by scientific or other committees both within and beyond the state structures. When the bill enabling the creation of the AEC was introduced at the Constituent Assembly in early 1948, Nehru gave two reasons for the imposition of secrecy, both somewhat disingenuous: “The advantage of our research would go to others before we even reaped it, and secondly it would become impossible for us to cooperate with any country which is prepared to cooperate with us in this matter, because it will not be prepared for the results of researches to become public.” In response to one

member of the assembly pointing out how, in the British act, secrecy is restricted only to defense purposes and demanding to know if in the Indian case secrecy was insisted upon even for research for peaceful purposes, Nehru publicly admitted: "I do not know how to distinguish the two [peaceful and defense purposes]."

Max Weber made this observation about bureaucracies, "Bureaucratic administration always tends to be an administration of 'secret sessions': in so far as it can, it hides its knowledge and action from criticism. In facing a parliament, the bureaucracy, out of a sure power instinct, fights every attempt of the parliament to gain knowledge."(Weber 1991:233) The interlinkages between science and national security has enabled India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to keep its activities secret with much more success than many modern bureaucracies.

This secrecy of the nuclear establishment makes it difficult to hold them accountable or question their activities. Here's an example of how any attempt to question them is thwarted, even when the individual is a Member of Parliament:

"I have been a Member of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for Defence and Atomic Energy, and have tried time and again to raise issues

relating to public safety, both at Parliamentary Committee hearings, and in the Rajya Sabha, and have achieved precious little for my pains. Since I was an MP [Member of Parliament] at the time, and a pretty aggressive one, I had to be dealt with. But they simply drowned me with totally obscure and incomprehensible scientific terms and explanations, which sounded impressive, and meant nothing. The rest was simply not forthcoming because they claimed it was "classified." I have repeatedly raised the issue of the hazards of radiation leaks, safety procedures, and environmental contamination that might flow from the atomic power station at Kalpakkam, but have always received the bland and meaningless reply that the radiation was "within acceptable limits." (Quoted in Ramana 2009:45)

The above statement reveals the inability of even representatives to question the workings of the nuclear establishment. Laclau's statement above that in representative democracy the people are short-changed sounds very prescient. In another instance when the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which audits various public accounts related to finance and expenditure, pointed out the discrepancy in the cost estimates of heavy water production at the DAE's facilities, the DAE responded by saying, "Heavy Water being strategic material, it is not advisable to divulge information relating to its production and cost to functionaries at all levels." In a system

of representative democracy where checks and balances are integral to its functioning, the CAG in 1994 complained, "The proforma accounts of Heavy Water Pool Management for the years 1982–83 onwards have not been sent for audit so far despite this fact being mentioned in successive Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India: Union Government (Scientific Departments) since 1987." (Ramana 2007: 3486-3487)

The legal structure also enables this culture of secrecy. The 1962 Atomic Energy Act and the Official Secrets Act are the most trenchant impediments to transparency and accountability. While the former enables the DAE to restrict any information related to atomic energy, the latter is used to strongly prohibit any "misuse" of official information regarding facilities relating to the military establishment or electricity "works," especially with "foreign agents". The laws not only shield the DAE from unfavorable criticism, some of its provisions have been altered to allow for harsher punishments. In a series of article in the early 1990s, a journalist Rupa Chinai, documented stories about safety violations, leaks and near accidents at the Trombay complex of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). The reportage involved details of contract workers forced to work in areas of high radioactivity with little or no protective gear, staffs locked in sealed room as the reactor was started up, and contamination of groundwater and soil

around the complex with radioactive waste. In her report, she also writes about the statistically alarming proportion of genetic abnormalities in the surrounding villages near the Rawatbhada nuclear power station in Rajasthan. These reports were either stonewalled or denied initially and when they finally came out, the atomic establishment tried to discredit her with the help of compliant journalists. In light of these reports, the DAE's further response was to "amend the 1962 act to increase punishment for unauthorized disclosure to 5 years rigorous imprisonment instead of 3 earlier and to allow them to prosecute without first seeking the solicitor general's approval." (Ramana 2009:48)

In 2003, six workers at the Kalapakkam Reprocessing Plant were exposed to severe doses of radioactive radiation. Within a month of the workers association of the plant calling for a strike, the president of the association was transferred. It was only after 6 months that the Director of BARC, B.Bhattacharjee admitted , " This is the worst accident in radiation exposure in the history of nuclear India." S. Basu, the BARC in-charge of the Kalapakkam facility however had this to say, "If you accepted atomic energy you cannot shy away from radioactivity. In a radioactive area you are bound to get some radiation exposure." Such an argument runs counter to the ethos

of a framework based on public reason as the justification for the argument fails to provide a reasoned account; instead, it resorts to a rhetorical reply to a matter of serious concern.

This lack of accountability is compounded by the absence of independent sources of expertise on nuclear matters outside the DAE. This paucity of knowledge outside the nuclear establishment about various aspects of science and technology involved acts that are, in effect, a source of secrecy in two ways: certain facts do not come out in public because no one has asked the right questions, and the establishment can escape responsibility for scientific and technical obfuscations, whether deliberate or inadvertent.

This lack of expertise on nuclear issues among laypersons has further reinforced the DAE's secrecy practices. Even those who are normatively opposed the nuclear program are apprehensive to speak out about nuclear issues thinking they are not technically equipped to engage in that conversation. The effect has been that even on the limited information available in the public domain related to economics, safety, environmental impacts, occupational health hazards and public health have not been scrutinized effectively.

In few occasions when the nuclear establishment have been questioned, the response has been to brand the individual or the organization anti-national and inimical to India's progress in the arena of high technology. For example, in 1984, a journalist Praful Bidwai wrote a series of articles in the Times of India documenting how poorly the DAE's heavy water reactor facilities were functioning. Raja Ramana, who was the Chairman of AEC at that time, convened a press conference to denounce the journalist as unpatriotic and said that the publication of those stories was a waste of newsprint (Bidwai 1996: 96-101).

The media has been criticized often for reporting failures of the nuclear establishment. When journalists reported a leak at the Tarapur nuclear reactor on March 14, 1980, for example, the DAE secretary Homi Sethna went into "a tirade against the press" describing "reporters as 'irresponsible,' 'self-styled experts' writing about things on which they lack even 'elementary knowledge.'" Often journalists who ask uncomfortable questions are ostracized by the DAE. Gopi Rethinaraj, who had a masters degree in physics and could understand relatively technical material, read a report on heavy water and found a passing reference to the extraction of tritium from irradiated heavy water in Indian reactors. He rightly recognized the importance of tritium for thermonuclear weapons and wrote about it in an

international defense journal. Soon after, Rethinaraj was no longer allowed into the DAE's press conferences, which effectively banned him from the "nuclear beat." He ultimately quit journalism and pursued a Ph.D. in the U.S.

In the absence of expertise, the media's role also gets curtailed in bringing to light the intricacies of nuclear energy. This was evident from the media reportage of the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. As we will see later, much of the reportage was concentrated on statements of political parties about support and opposition to the deal. The op-ed pages which were filled with opinion pieces from defence experts, military analysts and senior columnists focused more on the benefits of the agreement without a dispassionate analysis of the performance of the DAE since independence, the risks involved with nuclear energy or the lack of proper redressal mechanisms for those who were or are going to be affected by the quest for nuclear energy. But before going into the details of the media reportage, it is important to briefly describe the broad contours of the Indo-US nuclear deal.

The Indo-US Nuclear Agreement

The Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation agreement was a broad framework agreement that encourages engagement in nuclear commerce.

However, to enable the two countries engage in nuclear commerce, a few conditions had to be met, including a change in US domestic laws, an NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group) waiver and an India-specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA. While the US-India nuclear agreement was not designed to put restrictions on India's strategic programme; the US wanted to ensure that no technology or fuel transferred for India's civilian programme could be used for its military programme. These elements also had to be inserted into an India-specific IAEA Safeguards Agreement. Only after these conditions had been met would India be allowed to do business with the US or any other country in the nuclear arena. India also had to put in place a new export control mechanism before the two countries could proceed with the agreement. Accordingly, India harmonized its export control laws with that of the NSG and the MTCR Guidelines, although India is not a member of either of them. Similarly, India's "Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005, which entered into force in June 2005, brought about more stringent non-proliferation regulations and tighter export control measures was meant to exhibit India's commitment to non-proliferation.

The path to the final agreement included many steps, each of which was controversial in India and/or the US, though usually for different reasons.

Following the July 2005 statement to engage in civilian nuclear cooperation, President Bush and Prime Minister Singh signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in March 2006, during Bush's visit to New Delhi. Accordingly, in May 2006, a separation plan was announced by the Indian government, separating its develop a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel to "guard against any disruption of supply"; and in case of disruption, the US and India agreed to put in place alternatives - countries like France, Russia and UK, which might be able to restore fuel supply to India.

After the separation plan was agreed upon, the Hyde Act was signed into law by President Bush in December 2006. The Hyde Act, considered the parent act of the 123 Agreement, provides the legal basis for nuclear commerce between India and the US, since India is not party to the NPT. The Hyde Act came under sharp criticism because of certain clauses which stated that India would work with the US in containing Iran's nuclear programme and that the two would work together on a Fissile Materials Control Treaty. However, these were more by way of advisories than binding commitments. Nuclear testing was another issue debated during the passage of the Hyde Act. The BJP, the main opposition party in the Indian parliament, focused on the right to test as a serious issue, arguing that the deal would prevent India from conducting future tests. This is a false claim for nothing in the

deal says that India cannot test. There may be consequences if India tests, but even these have been minimised because under the conditions of the deal, the US will have to take into consideration the circumstances under which India may have been forced to test, such as nuclear tests by India's neighbours. Moreover, if India conducts a test, it will have to face international opposition irrespective of the deal.

Once the 123 Agreement was finalised, the next steps involved the conclusion of an India-specific IAEA Safeguards Agreement, which was secured in July 2008 and a waiver of NSG rules that came through in September 2008. Thereafter, the agreement was sent to the US Congress for approval, where despite enjoying bipartisan support for strengthening US relations with India, the agreement faced stiff opposition from the strong nonproliferation lobby. While supporters of the deal like Senators Richard Lugar and Christopher Dodd stated that the deal was in the long-term interest of the United States, those opposing it argued that it would seriously undermine the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Senator Dodd highlighted some of the "compelling geopolitical reasons" like India's geographic proximity to China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as reasons to strengthen this relationship, while Senator Lugar emphasised the importance of

strengthening US partnership with an India that shares its democratic values and which could "exert increasing influence on the world stage.

However, even those like Strobe Talbott, former Deputy Secretary of State, under President Clinton, who had worked hard to build a close partnership between India and the US, maintained that the Bush Administration had given away too much and made "an India exception" to the NPT. He worried that the "India exception" will be viewed as a precedent by several other countries who may want to work out a similar deal with their allies/friends. A case in point is China which wants to strike up a similar deal with Pakistan. Robert Einhorn, former Assistant Secretary of State for Non-proliferation, and a critic of the deal, maintained that the Bush Administration had given away too much and that India had managed to get it all – "acquiring the ability to import uranium and nuclear reactor technology, obtaining recognition for India's status as a nuclear power, and preserving all of India's strategic options, particularly the ability to increase substantially its production of plutonium for nuclear weapons."(Einhorn 2006)

There were three broad responses to the deal in India's domestic politics. The nuclear hawks were opposed to the deal. For them, nuclear energy and

nuclear weapons were part of the same integrated complex, hence no such distinction was possible. They saw the separation of the civilian and military facilities as constraints which will prohibit India from having a larger nuclear weapons arsenal, which they believe was essential for India's quest as "great power" status. Former Prime Minister of the BJP, Atal Bihari Vajpayee argued that " "[s]eparating the civilian from the military would be very difficult, if not impossible.... It will also deny us any flexibility in determining the size of our nuclear deterrent." The "flexibility" he alludes to is the ability to use what may be classified as civilian facilities to increase the pace at which the nuclear weapons program could be expanded. This point of view was shared by many retired officials of the nuclear complex.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his party held a second set of views. They saw the deal as offering recognition of India as a nuclear weapon state, pointing out that the joint statement says India will have "the same benefits and advantages as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology, such as the United States." More practically, they saw it as a way to sustain and expand the nuclear energy program while not restricting the building of what they describe as a "minimum" nuclear weapons arsenal. Even though what exactly constitutes the "minimum" has never been specified India's nuclear strategists and policymakers, it is often used to

portray India's "restrained" nuclear aspirations and a credible international actor which follows the spirit of non-proliferation even though it is not formally part of any non-proliferation regime like NPT and CTBT.

Singh explained to the Indian parliament on July 29, 2005, that the deal offers a way whereby "our indigenous nuclear power program based on domestic resources and national technological capabilities would continue to grow," with the expected international supply of nuclear fuel, technology, and reactors serving to "enhance nuclear power production rapidly." At the same time, he made it clear that "there is nothing in the joint statement that amounts to limiting or inhibiting our strategic nuclear weapons program." As an assurance that India would have the final say in implementing the deal, the prime minister announced that, "before voluntarily placing our civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards, we will ensure that all restrictions on India have been lifted."

A different source of opposition to the deal comes from India's left-wing parties, which otherwise support the Congress-led government. These parties have traditionally supported the nuclear energy program, but they opposed the 1998 nuclear weapons test and have pressed for India to play a larger role in global disarmament efforts and to do more to reduce nuclear dangers

in the region. Their greatest concern is that the deal ties India too closely to U.S. policies.

However, it would be a mistake to equate opposition with accountability. This chapter concerns itself with the nature of debate in a representative democracy and show how only certain issues get framed, discussed and debated which does fulfill the necessary criteria of deliberation in a democratic system but is not sufficient enough. The Indo-US nuclear deal and the nature of the Parliamentary debate on the issue reveals the fact that even if it was one of the most vigorously debated foreign policy in independent India, its contours were often circumscribed by ideological grandstanding rather than precise discussions on the complex nature of issues involved. Moreover, in cases where it had not been ideological, the compulsions of coalition politics in a democratic system like India limits the nature and content of the issues being debated.

Parliament Debate on Nuclear Deal[2]

It is true that there are a number of procedures available for Members of Parliament through which they can exercise their influence on discussions regarding foreign policy. Questions, Short Duration Discussions, Motions, Calling Attentions, Discussion on Demands for Grants, etc. provide ample

[2] The discussion that follows here is borrowed from the transcript of the speeches given in the Parliament and accessed through the official website of the Parliament of India.

procedural avenues for political representatives to express their opinions and contribute to debates in both houses of the Parliament. On issues related to foreign policy, the Ministry of External Affairs responds to queries by members raised on the floor of the house. Often there are special Parliamentary committees set up to discuss in-depth contentious and important issues. But the recommendations of the report that these committees prepare are not binding on any Government and are advisory in nature. Because of a number of reasons, which include long interregnum between Parliament sessions, the inability of MPs to comprehend complex issues of foreign policy due to lack of knowledge and expertise, frequent disruptions to the proceedings of the Parliament are some of the institutional shortcomings that inhibits representatives from influencing foreign policy initiatives. This becomes all the more crucial when an organization like the AEC works in absolute secrecy and issues related to its functioning are barely discussed in the public domain because of the reasons discussed earlier in the chapter.

The July 2005 Joint Statement

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in his statement to the Lok Sabha on July 29, 2005 briefed the Parliament about his recent visit to the United States where he discussed a wide range of bilateral and global issues with President

George Bush. The visit also opened up new opportunities and possibilities for promoting India's energy security and pathways to accelerated social and economic development. In the discussion that followed in the Lok Sabha after his statement, Prabodh Panda of the CPI (Communist Party of India) alleged that the Joint Statement and the Indo-US Defence Framework were a continuation of the pro-US shift in India's foreign policy that was initiated in the previous government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He expressed his anguish at the thought that India was becoming a major non-NATO ally of the US thus constraining India's options as an independent foreign policy actor in the international arena. Rupchand Pal of the CPI(M) spoke on the same lines questioning if this pro-US tilt was in conformity with the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP).

The defence from the Congress was that it was the erstwhile BJP government which started the process of the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and "the NDA had been trying for six years and failed." Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his reply to the debate informed the House that he conveyed to the US that "if United States genuinely felt that it had a change of heart with regard to India, then it must do something to lift these 35 years of restrictions, which hampered our quest for a faster access to nuclear energy." He further stated, "It is true. Because, in the international parlance, the Nuclear Weapons

States are the ones, which are identified in the NPT Treaty. We are not a party to that Treaty...What we have done with the United States is that we have virtually got all the benefits that go with being a Nuclear Weapon State without having the *de jure* status of a Nuclear Weapon State."

The March 2006 Separation Plan

On March 11, 2006 the Prime Minister began the debate on "Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation with the United States: Implementation of India's Separation Plan". C.K.Chandrappan from the CPI reiterated the charge that the government with selling of India's independent foreign policy. He said, "India's foreign policy of peace, solidarity and the policy of disarmament that stood against the arms race has been bartered for a little nuclear energy and arms, which they are sending us and probably will instigate arms race in this part of the world." Rupchand Pal, another vocal critic of the deal from the CPI(M) demanded that a Parliamentary Committee be set up to look into the nitty-gritty of the discussions of the Separation Plan, including the civilian deal.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Anand Sharma defended the Government and stated, "India shall only determine as to what would be our requirements, which facilities our nuclear establishments

concur with to put in the civilian list for the IAEA safeguards and which facilities should remain in the strategic list." His larger argument was that by entering into this agreement with the US, the UPA government was trying to unlock the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and he further assured the House that if the deal were to go through, it would not only take care of the present security interest of the country but also ensure its long-term energy and security needs. The Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Ocean Development, Kapil Sibal, argued that India's decision to go nuclear was merely to deter its adversaries and the country was firm in its commitment towards a weapons-free world, and a non-nuclear world regime.

The Prime Minister made an elaborate speech to clarify the Government's position with regards to his statements on July 29, 2005, February 27, 2006 and March 7, 2006. He ensured that those statements reflect the Government's intention of proper accountability and transparency in dealing with a sensitive and important issue of Indo-US Co-operation on civilian nuclear energy in India. Responding to the apprehension of the Left parties who were part of his coalition government, the Prime Minister stated that India's foreign policy has been rooted in its civilizational heritage and the government is pursuing the nation's enlightened national interests. To

allay the fears of engaging in a tighter embrace with the US, he said that while his government is working towards strengthening its relationship with the US, that is not at the expense of its traditional strategic partners like Russia and France. "We have not compromised our autonomy with regard to our strategic programme. We have not agreed to any formula or any proposal, which would amount to a cap on our nuclear programme. We have made sure that we have taken care of India's present requirements and future requirements, as far as possible humanly. This is the essence of the arrangement that we have made with the United States of America."

The Prime Minister further stated that closer engagement with the US is not only restricted to the use of civilian energy but the agreement also deal with a number of other important knowledge initiative in the field of agriculture, use of technical knowledge, experience and expertise available in the USA to enhance the quality of agricultural research through the various agricultural universities and agricultural research institutes. History too was invoked to acknowledge the help of the Land Grant colleges of the US in playing a major role in setting up agricultural universities in India which would later go on to facilitate the Green Revolution.

From the opposition, Kharabela Swain of the BJP inquired if the Government has ensured the availability of sufficient fissile material and other inputs for the country's strategic programme. In its reply, the Government assured the Lok Sabha that the Separation Plan was drawn up in such a manner that it would not adversely affect India's strategic programme. As far as the India-specific safeguard agreements with the IAEA were concerned the PM stated, "India will not accept the safeguard agreements signed by non-Nuclear Weapon States under the NPT...This is Precisely because our military facilities will remain outside the purview of safeguards like those of other Nuclear Weapon States." He went on to say, "We will take all possible steps to ensure that there is no adverse fallout on research and development", and "the confidential information on our national security and the strategic programme has been and will remain fully protected."

The Winter Session Parliament Debate 2006

The Indo-US nuclear deal was again a subject of discussion in the Lok Sabha during the winter session of the Parliament. The Minister for External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee in his statement to the House shared the developments regarding the implementation of the understanding between the United States and India on the resumption of civilian nuclear energy

cooperation. He assured the House, that the text of the 123 Agreement which was being negotiated by the two parties would fully reflect the assertions made in the July 18 Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan. He reiterated the objective of the deal to overcome the denial of technology by various regimes which was essential for India's accelerated national development.

The Leader of the Opposition, L.K.Advani however quoted various assurances made by the Prime Minister on the issue and questioned whether the Government is capable of keeping its promises in the House. CPI (M)'s Rupchand Pal asked what kind of costs the country has to pay for this deal and whether the benefits accrued are commensurate with the costs involved. In reply, Prime Minister Singh stated, "We have never discussed with the United States or anybody else about the content and scope of our strategic programme. Our strategic programme will respond to our own decisions and will not be subjected to any international scrutiny of any country." Drawing a sharp contrast with the main opposition BJP, he alleged that the previous Government was negotiating in secret with Strobe Talbott whereas his Government has valued transparency and taken the Parliament into confidence at every stage. He reinforced his Government's commitment to translate the vision of the July 2005 Statement into reality keeping in mind

India's vital national interests are protected, and he would continue to stand by his commitment to the Parliament.

The 2007 Monsoon Session of Parliament

While making his commitments towards protecting India's national interest, little had Prime Minister Singh anticipated the political storm that was to ensue. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP, insisted on a discussion on the Indo-US nuclear deal, that was objected by the UPA on the ground that since the Cabinet had approved of the deal, another discussion on it in the Lok Sabha was not required. The result was that there was regular obstruction of business in the Lok Sabha , daily chaos which led to the House being adjourned *sine die* much before the due date for the Monsoon session was to end. It did not help matters when the US State Department spokesperson, Sean McCormack stated in August 2007 that all civilian nuclear cooperation would be terminated in the event of India conducting a nuclear test. The External Affairs Minister in response could only say that there was "no authentic record" of what had been said by the concerned spokesperson.

Further, the Indian Ambassador in the US, Ronen Sen, in an interview to a US news magazine allegedly described the Parliamentarians who were

criticizing the deal were behaving like "headless chicken" which saw very sharp reaction from diverse sections of the Parliament. Even the Minister for External Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee had to admit that if the report was correct, the Ambassador deserved strong condemnation and action. In fact Sen had to personally appear before the Privileges Committees of both the Houses of Parliament separately and tendered in an unconditional apology.

The UPA government was dependent on outside support from the Left and relations between them and the Prime Minister nosedived as the left threatened to withdraw support to the Government if it refused to renegotiate the deal. This forced the Prime Minister to convey his frustration publicly in an interview to the Calcutta daily *The Telegraph*, "I told them it is not possible to renegotiate the deal. It is an honorable deal. We cannot go back on it. I told them to do whatever they want to do; if they withdraw support, so be it." The leader of the CPI(M) Prakash Karat retorted, "Even before the nuclear cooperation agreement was finalized, the UPA began to tune its foreign policy to the strategic alliance with the US." On September 24, 2007, the CPI(M) Secretary General hinted on the possibility of withdrawal of their support if the government goes ahead with the deal, when he said, "Before taking another step on the deal, the Government must remember that the Congress has just 150 MPs. The Government is running

on Left support." CPI's A.B.Bardhan stated that the "honeymoon (with the UPA) is over" and the Left will not hesitate to "file divorce papers if it comes to that."

Not only were the allies mounting pressure on the government to withdraw from the deal, the opposition too upped its ante. The NDA Convener, George Fernandez remarked, "If it were China, they would have settled it with one bullet in his head. The Prime Minister of the country has betrayed the nation by continuous bluffing, something unbecoming of the head of the government.. The Americans chose to make a monkey of our PM by using the 60th birthday of India to spill the beans...what PM has succeeded in doing is to strip our armed forces from the strength that was created by the Vajpayee government."

The other political parties like the DMK, RJD and NCP spoke both in favour and against the deal during this time. While Karunanidhi, of DMK expressed doubts about the deal, Lalu Prasad Yadav of the RJD denied any prediction of the Government falling resulting in mid-term polls. The NCP leader, Sharad Pawar remarked, "It's a good deal but we all must remember that it is a coalition Government, allies and partners' feelings must be considered." Seeing the volatile nature of the debate on the issue, the Prime

Minister conceded, "We are not a one-issue Government. If the deal does not come through, it will be disappointing. However, in life one has to take disappointments. The deal is not the end of the life." The growing chasm between the Left and the UPA government was somehow redeemed for the moment.

The Government continued with the negotiations in the hope of clinching the deal. The Prime Minister reached out to both the stalwarts of the main opposition party, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K.Advani to "seek their party's cooperation in the deal when the issue came up for discussion in the Parliament". Both the leaders refused to review their position on the deal and L.K..Advani said, "BJP's concerns on the nuclear deal have not been addressed." Failing to get support from the opposition and contradictory voices within its own coalition, the UPA sought to clarify the doubts of the critics by making the following statement in the Lok Sabha, "Whatever is stated in the Hyde Act is not binding on us. How they deal with it is their problem." This was in response to the BJP's opposition to the Hyde Act under which India would be banned to undertake further nuclear tests.

With regards to the Left, the government had set up the UPA-Left committee to redress the grievances of the Left who expected that the Government

would give them a report on their stand on the nuclear deal. Even though a couple of meetings took place, the Government failed to persuade the Left of its position. The former Prime Minister quipped, "How democratic is the stand of the Prime Minister who insists on a deal, which is opposed by the majority of the parliamentarians.?" The CPI(M) Politburo member, Sitaram Yechury indicated that it would not allow the Government to go to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Debate on the 123 Agreement in Winter Session 2007

The discussion on the Indo-US nuclear deal in this session of the Parliament took place in the Lok Sabha on November 28, 2007. CPI (M)'s Rupchand Rai demanded to know about what those 'India-specific' safeguards were and what guarantees the Government can give to the House. He stated that considering the majority of the sovereign House were against the deal, the Government should take cognizance of the sense of the House and not proceed further with it. He believed that the deal will have a serious bearing on the country's economy, on its nuclear programme, on its autonomy and might damage India's relations with the other countries in an increasingly multi-polar world. The Leader of the Opposition, L.K.Advani referred to the statement by US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns who was quoted in a Press Conference that, "In the Hyde Act the US

Congress made it quite clear that if India were to test a nuclear weapon, American cooperation with India would cease." Prime Minister Singh responded by saying that the Hyde Act is not binding on India. It is bound only by the 123 Agreement, which does not contain any provision that prevents the exercise of India's sovereignty to conduct further nuclear tests."

Biju Janata Dal's (BJD) B.Mahtab demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee be constituted to study the deal. CPI's C.K.Chandrappan articulated the Left's position by opposing the agreement citing it as an unequal treaty.

The Nuclear Deal Debate in the Rajya Sabha

Similar to the lower House of Parliament, the Lok Sabha, the upper House, Rajya Sabha too was witness to a terse debate on the Civil Nuclear Deal. BJP's Rajya Sabha member and former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha raised the issue of comments by US Congressman Tom Lantos with regards to India's vote on Iran at the IAEA. He accused the Government of entering into an unequal partnership and asked, "Should Parliament remain a mute spectator when all this is going on?" CPI(M)'s Brinda Karat saw this deal as a reflection of a major shift in the contours of India's independent

foreign policy and added, "The UPA Government is only following the policies of surrendering to the United States."

Various other leaders in the Rajya Sabha like Arun Shourie of the BJP and Sitaram Yechury of the CPI(M) raised objections to the agreement. The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Jaswant Singh stated that whether it is the Left or the Samajwadi Party or the TDP or the AIADMK, the BJP, they all are for seeking the sense of the House on the agreement.

In his reply, Prime Minister Singh assured the Members of the House stating that "negotiations with the United States regarding the civilian nuclear deal have not led to any change in the basic orientations of our policies, or affected out independent judgment of issues of national interest." He categorically made it clear that there would not be any compromise on the assurances that he had given to the Rajya Sabha regarding the Joint Statement or the Separation Plan.

He reinforced India's autonomy in decision-making matters related to research and development and underlined that reciprocity was the key to the implementation of the agreement. With regards to the moratorium of fissile material, the Prime Minister explained that India would join only a non-

discriminatory multilaterally negotiated and internationally viable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). He also tried to allay the concerns of senior scientists like Dr Sethna by making it very clear that sensitive nuclear technology facilities were not covered in the Separation Plan.

Giving an alternative explanation, Sitaram Yechury argued that nuclear power was expensive and the same MW of energy that would be produced by nuclear reactors can be produced through thermal and hydro-electricity or through gas. In his opinion, by using these alternative sources of energy, the country can save huge amount of money that can be utilized to build new schools and hospitals. D.Raja of the CPI saw the deal as just another medium to further US business interests. He stressed on the need "not to proceed further to operationalize the Civil Nuclear Deal"

In response to the debate, Pranab Mukherjee stressed that his Government is commited to an independent foreign policy and the vote against Iran at the IAEA Board was made out of pragmatic considerations rather than succumbing to US pressure. The Government's decision to go ahead with the deal was supported by leading scientists like K.Kasturirangan who spoke positively about the deal and its importance for India's nuclear energy sector. Kapil Sibal retorted that those who opposed the deal, the nation will not

forgive them. Even though the Government put up a valiant defence in favour of the deal, the Left parties and the opposition were not convinced. They asked the Government to seek a fresh mandate if they wanted to pursue the deal.

The UPA Government had to call for a trust vote in the Lok Sabha once the Left withdrew its support on the nuclear issue. The Government managed to win the trust vote which was held on July 22, 2008 but the vote was not without its own share of controversy.

The above discussion about the tenor of the debate on the India-US nuclear Deal and the monopoly of the scientific establishment over the production of knowledge on all things nuclear reveals the weakness embedded in the representative form of democracy in the postcolonial context. The post-colonial state's agenda is often structurally motivated by the imperatives of development. However, the essentially contested nature of a concept like development manifests in privileging a certain teleology of development resulting in the marginalization of other worldviews. As mentioned in the preceding sections with regarding to the idea of epistemic justice, the nature of testimonial injustice does not remain an individual concern but becomes a structural

condition of the postcolonial state. The representative system will always fall short to alleviate this feature of the state because in a system characterized by multiple testimonial injustices, ignorance will repeatedly prevail over potentially shared knowledge when the stakes in political power are so high. Such a system will always have a normative lacuna at its core which will manifest in periodic challenges to its authority with the probability of collapsing under the incessant assault over its authority leading to a crisis.

This long and comprehensive debate on the merits of the deal might give an illusion that no question was left unasked and all perspectives got debates adequately during the course of the negotiations. It could have been a moment when much more serious questions about India's indigenous technological capability could have been asked thereby fixing greater accountability on the nuclear establishment. A thorough assessment of India's slow scientific progress in the nuclear domain could have been done during these debates and reasons sought for the weaknesses in the nuclear establishment. As the debates in the Parliament reveal, the arguments hovered around anti-Americanism, intentions of the Prime Minister who will never do anything against national interest and other such subjective judgments. And the manner in which this debate was framed in the media itself has consequences for fair deliberation in a democratic system. Writing about the deal, Mehta (2006) observed, "...the debate is muddied by another peculiar fact. Newspapers and television channels are entitled to run their

editorial lines depending upon what they judge to be the right thing in this matter.

But I cannot recall a single issue on which large sections of the media have acted as virtual lobbyists for one or the other side, as they have on this issue (and it has to be said, largely for the deal). The word "lobbyist" is advisable, because advocacy of a particular point of view has gone beyond sticking to editorial lines, carrying op-eds favouring the deal: it has permeated even reporting and presentation through and through. There is an unprecedented ideological blitzkrieg on the issue that goes beyond usual media enthusiasm and calls for some reflection, if not explanation. The very ugliness with which arguments are being made makes you wonder what we think the deal is about."

This is not to propose for abolition of the representative form of democracy and the utility function it performs in modern mass democracies. The above discussion was meant to highlight how the notion of public reason can often get eluded if deliberation is entered into with very strict positions. The fundamental principle of representative democracy involves a measure of entering into deliberations in good faith, the willingness to seriously consider opposite point of view and reach a negotiated compromise. It should be emphasized that most elites which includes business interests, strategic and foreign policy experts and media houses were in favour of the Indo-US nuclear deal. Each of them may have a diverse set of justifications as to why the deal was good for India but their impact on public discourse was that it

was awash with a cumulative justification that India should sign the nuclear deal. In the next section I will discuss how, since India opened itself up for reforms in 1991, the political economy of the country has been transformed in a manner where a globalized elite has cornered much of the benefits of those reforms leaving a huge swath of Indian population by the wayside thereby deepening inequality. It will argue that elites and experts have jointly supported policies and framed the contours of democratic debate wherein their interests are couched in the language of national interest. Indian democracy has been procedurally democratic in form but often plutocratic in substance.

India's new Elites and Inequality

India has gone through enormous structural transformations since the 1990s when the state was deregulated, and global capital was allowed to invest in the economy. Prior to that decade, the Indian state was a coalition of dominant class interests. The three most dominant of these classes, as identified by Pranab Bardhan (1984), were the rich farmers, the capitalists and the bureaucrats. One of the important aspects of this arrangement was that even though it was a bourgeoisie democracy, the state had enormous legitimacy with respect to the masses. As discussed in the previous chapter,

one of the ways in which this legitimacy was constructed and maintained was through the use of science and technology. Among the three dominant classes, the rich agrarian class had a greater clout in the political system as evidenced by the writings of Varshney (1995) and Lloyd and Rudolph (1987). Borrowing from Gramsci's idea of "passive revolution", Kaviraj (1980) argued that these three dominant classes were always in competition with each other thereby resulting in constant ascendancy and demotion of one group or the other. This led to a sharing of power and simultaneously not allowing for any group to establish its 'hegemony'.

This structure of political power was transformed owing to the liberalization of the Indian state in the early 1990s. The license-permit raj was abolished, more foreign investment was encouraged, the Indian market was opened up for consumer goods which were earlier restricted by huge tariffs, and a number of important sectors like banking, insurance, transport, mining and telecommunication where foreign capital was welcomed. The business houses which thrived on protection from the state slowly gave way to companies which were not wary of competing with foreign players. The information technology revolution is a case in point. With high growth rates and an increasing number of people coming out of poverty, India was on the rise.

This rise of India on the global stage also came with the added dynamics of a change in the composition of the capitalist classes. Earlier while the landed elites exercised a greater share of political power, in new India the locus of political power has shifted in favour of the corporate capitalist class. There is another significant change that has occurred in the mindset of this newly emerging urban middle class. First, it has entrenched a sense of meritocracy among this class which believes that much of what they have achieved in the past three decades has been an outcome of their own hardwork and ingenuity. They believe that the entrepreneurial spirit of India was muffled by a highly centralized state in the past and once those regulations were lifted, this class could succeed and compete with the best in the world. The second and more important aspect that came about in these years is that the state came to be seen as inefficient, bureaucratic, patronage driven and raven with corruption.

This pro-business tilt has important implications for the functioning of Indian democracy normatively as well as institutionally. As Aseema Sinha (2019) in one of her recent chapters argues, the boundaries between the state and the business have become blurred and the Indian state has become more porous. The structural power of the businesses is being enhanced in the business-state relationship whereby business actors are having a more dominant role

in agenda-setting and also penetrating the various institutions of the Indian state through brokers, business associations and have found new protagonists in political parties as well as politicians who will do their bidding in different policy forums. To quote her,

"To demonstrate my argument, I collected new data on the incorporation of business within new policy spaces created by the government to further second-generation reforms in India. Occupation data for the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha (India's legislative bodies), and state-level legislative assemblies, data on politicians' and their families' business links, and data on the PM's Advisory Council and independent agencies allow me to document multiple access points and movements of business across fuzzy boundaries of the state. This new evidence and data reveal a fascinating picture of subtle and invisible ways in which political and business actors are interacting together within institutions of a democratic developmental state. Together, they point to the emergence of porous boundaries (the porous state) that India's democratic structure encourages and engenders." (Sinha 2018:53)

This porous nature of the Indian state has important implications for its democratic legitimacy. If the state legislatures entrusted with the responsibility to frame laws and policies have conflict of interests with business houses, organizations, power brokers and mediators, the impartiality of the laws devised gets compromised. Considering the fragile nature of India's

regulatory structure and the manner in which the political powers are beholden to narrow business interests, often it compromises the priorities of elected representatives.

It was the very porous nature of the state which was in full view during the debates on the merits of the Indo-US nuclear deal. While debates raged in the Parliament about why India should or should not be a party to the deal, the discourse in the media overwhelmingly favoured the government of the day's position on it. The government which was elected on the promise of development, progress and inclusion argued that nuclear energy was essential for the country's economic growth. This moment could also have been the opportunity to discuss a whole array of questions, for example, at a time when most countries were getting rid of nuclear energy why India was so keen on it. Whether there were larger business interests at play which were forcing the government to even stake its survival on the deal. Activists and commentators who raised sharp questions about the deal were either deemed inimical to progress, anti-development and even accused of working against the national interest of the country.

The role played by the business elites in furthering the deal cannot be underestimated. As one public commentator put it, "While the desirability of

India's energy strategy can be debated in technical terms, the political consequences of this deal are far more uncertain than India is acknowledging. The nuclear deal is simply one aspect of an Indo-US relationship that is acquiring unprecedented momentum. For the first time in its history the fortunes of India's elites are so comprehensively and intimately tied up with the fate of America." (Mehta 2006)

One of the least appreciated areas of research on India has been the relationship between foreign policy and public opinion. Much of the policies related to foreign affairs is the preserve of a handful of elites who discuss, deliberate and write in public forums like newspapers or appear on television programs. Basically, 'the public hold attitudes about foreign policy, but determining which aspects of those attitudes will get expressed is neither straightforward nor automatic. Elites appear to retain some leeway in shaping the expression of public opinion, but the mechanisms that give them that leeway are still little understood' (Aldrich et al. 2006: 487). As in any other political debate, much of what gets discussed in the realm of foreign policy is contingent on the nature of framing, the candidness with which governments would like to divulge information and manipulation of the terms of the debate.

In the Indian scenario, foreign policy decision-making has been the realm of the executive. But there have been times that certain individuals have exercised undue influence on the shape and contours of India's foreign and security policy. At independence when Jawaharlal Nehru was in charge of Indian foreign policy, he was more open to criticism not only by opposition parties but even to individual Parliamentary members thereby ensuring the sanctity of the Parliament while going ahead with any foreign policy decision. (Bandyopadhyay 2006:112). Since there existed a Congress consensus, the role of media also was marginal. However, with the fragmentation of the polity and issues becoming more contentious, the media and certain individuals started having greater influence. For example K.Subrahmanyam, who is regarded as the doyen of India's foreign policy, "'demonstrated the extraordinary possibilities for leveraging the power of the media not only in shaping the public discourse on foreign policy, but also as a tool to mobilise pressure on the politicians and bureaucrats deciding foreign and national security affairs". (Raja Mohan 2009: 6-7).

As Devesh Kapur writes, "Political and policy elites often deploy public opinion to buttress their case, but in most cases it is unclear whether they are simply invoking public opinion to mask their own preferences or actually reflecting it, and even then which 'public' do they have in mind? The intense partisan political battles at the time India was considering signing a nuclear

cooperation agreement with the United States (between 2005 and 2008), triggered claims on all sides that they were responding to public opinion—but with little evidence. Where did the Indian public stand? How do Indians think about issues with foreign policy implications—and in particular about the United States?" (Kapur 2015: 3) These kinds of questions are often kept beyond the pale of deliberation where discussion comes to mean battles between the subjective opinion of the elites.

This is a testament to the fact that even if a democracy is procedural, it may not be substantive. While it may be difficult to devise a canonical template to measure the substantiveness of a democracy, what is indeed clear from the above discussion is that even though India is a mass democracy, the workings of the polity is very elite-centred. Considering the fact that during the time in which India has seen spectacular growth and lifted millions of people from poverty, this has been accompanied by deepening inequality. Dreze and Sen (2011) conclude in one of their essays, "There is probably no other example in the history of world development of an economy growing so fast for so long with such limited results in terms of broad-based social progress." They go on to add that in the period between 1990-2009, "...in most other respects [Life Expectancy, Infant Mortality Rate, Under 5 Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Ratio, Access to Improved Sanitation,

Child Immunization, Mean Years of Schooling, Percentage of Underweight Children –] India's rank has worsened, in fact, quite sharply in many cases. Overall, India had the best social indicators in South Asia in 1990, next to Sri Lanka, but now looks second-worst, ahead of only Pakistan. Looking at their South Asian neighbours, the Indian poor are entitled to wonder what they have gained—at least so far—from the acceleration of economic growth. (Dreze & Sen 2011) All the statistics which portray a gloomy picture of a vast swathe of Indian population led Atul Kohli to write, "No decent society should claim it is "shining" when nearly half of its children remain undernourished." (Kohli 2012: 225)

This dissertation did not set out to define the ideal form of equality but attempts to lay out a framework where such inequalities can be ameliorated. It is a paradoxical feature of the analysis of Indian democracy that even though it has spoken the language of dominant classes and coalitions, it has not engaged with the resources available in the literature on elite democracy to think about the infantilization of its masses who often are sidelined from debates and discussions that may have impact on their lives. This is not to argue that every citizen is competent to engage in discussions of highly technical nature. But in a polity dominated by technocrats where the nature of state institution is porous enough to let mediators and power brokers to

influence decisions which may benefit a few rather the many, we should aim at a more realist democratic aspiration.

Elites, non-elites and legitimacy of democracy

Even though democracy promises to uphold the principle of one person, one vote thereby affirming the equal political worth of every citizen, the lived realities of people in liberal constitutional democracies exhibit a different story. As shown in the previous section, most decisions on behalf of the citizens is taken by a handful of elites who set the terms of the debate, advocate policies from their vantage point and have access to mechanisms of power. The egalitarian aspirations of a liberal democracy are thereby undercut because of this divide between the few and the many. Much of political theory elides this distinction as it normatively attempts to affirm the dignity of an individual without attending to the powerlessness that the many experience in liberal democracies.

This state of affairs wherein a few have access to the levers of power is the problem of plutocracy which liberal democratic theory has been unable to address. In its ideal variant, a liberal democracy should ensure that inequalities in material wealth should have no impact on the educational and political opportunities of its citizen. While such ambitions of a liberal

democracy is praiseworthy, one should also not be under any illusion that disproportionate difference in economic and material wealth will not have a detrimental effect on this goal. In fact, it would be an illusion to believe that a liberal regime can be a bulwark against such distortions of power because the problem of plutocracy is endemic to liberal democracies. The educational advantages and social capital one accrue on account of access to material wealth in fact leads to widening of this differential between the few and the many instead of bridging it. Protection of private property and family inheritance which liberal democracies seek to uphold in principle militates against the egalitarian goals of equal access to educational and political opportunities.

Rawls is alluding to this very tension when he writes in his *A Theory of Justice*, " [T]he principle of fair opportunity [with regard to education] can be only imperfectly carried out, at least as long as the institution of the family exists. The extent to which natural capacities develop and reach fruition is affected by all kinds of social conditions and class attitudes. Even the willingness to make an effort, to try, and so to be deserving in the ordinary sense is itself dependent upon happy family and social circumstances. It is impossible in practice to secure equal chances of achievement and culture for those similarly endowed." Most liberal philosophers either ignore or avoid the

problem of plutocracy in their theorization. They do not take into account the impact of socioeconomic inequities that exist in accessing fair equality in educational opportunities and equality of access to political power for all its citizens. Economic inequality has significant bearing on the political equality as possession of wealth is linked to political power.

Thus from the discussion above about plutocracy being an unavoidable aspect of liberal democracy and in the case of India wherein we have seen how elites dominate the political structure of the state, it is surprising that not much attention has been paid to the elitist framework of democracy as enunciated by Schumpeter to think normatively about the egalitarian aspirations of liberal democracy. Schumpeter's theory of elite democracy is a response to the problem of representation in democratic theory. Representatives are elected by voters in a democracy, but once elected, voters do not have any control over what their representatives wish to do once in power. In an ideal world, elected representatives should be responsive and accountable to their constituents. However, what counts for responsiveness and how to measure accountability are vexed issues.

There is another issue that Schumpeter alludes to which is the faulty assumption that citizens in a democracy all have well-formed opinions about

all the issues and they can articulate their preferences cogently. Most citizens do not have opinions and interests in their possession which just requires to be represented. It is assumed that representation works when the representative takes into account and responds to opinions of their constituents. However, this mechanism will not work if these opinions are not formed in the first place. Most citizens do not have any idea how they will go about drafting or proposing a piece of legislation if they are asked to do so because they have never been in that position before. Most of us experience politics as a spectator and do not undertake political decisions based on well-defined preference and interests.

Schumpeter attempted to circumvent this problem of representation by focussing on the idea of politics best understood as elite competition. Even though his idea has been much used and critiqued in the domain of economy, in the realm of politics his formulation has the advantage of forcing the elites to engage in open public contestation and the vibrancy of a democracy rested on the willingness of the elites to risk their political capital in the battle of ideas. This "competitive struggle" also enabled a democratic atmosphere where no political power can afford to be complacent as uncertainty over their ability to win over their electorates would be looming over their horizon constantly. The normative claim such a Schumpeterian competitiveness will

make is that by enhancing the competition through a host of tools such as public debates, media questions, stringent background checks and questioning the elites past performance, the hold on power of the elites can be made fragile thereby prohibiting entrenchment of only a certain political elite within the system.

Since the argument that is proposed in this chapter is that modern liberal democracies suffer from a divide between the few and the many, borrowing from Schumpeter's idea of elite competition forces us to reorient our thinking from greater public participation and deliberation to a renewed focus on the most advantaged class which are the few. This is not to say that democracy does not require public participation, nor should it be construed as advocating a passive citizenry. As Schattschneider (1960) points out, "The central political fact in a free society is the tremendous contagiousness of conflict." Writing at a time when the power of business seemed to overwhelm the democratic polity, Schattschneider argued that "We need not be dismayed that business is powerful. Power is inherent in modern business organization. The object of the game is not to destroy business power but to match it with governmental power" (pp. 124-5) There was a realization that the practice of democracy might be flawed in the manner it may become the handmaiden of dominant interest groups thereby enabling access to a privileged set of people

as enunciated by one of his oft-quoted phrases, “The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent” (pp. 34-5). But he was also conscious of the fact that only through democracy and competition for political office can people prove their semi-sovereign selves.

Contrary to much of democratic theory’s fascination with agency of the citizen and the promise of the sovereign people, Schattschneider was willing to acknowledge that politics is at best competition between elites but did not foreclose the option of newer issues being brought to the table thereby socializing conflict and transforming a conflict into a political issue of consequence. The fact that democracy’s ideals were too lofty to be attained was a limit that was inherent to our political lives. “The problem of modern democracy is the problem of learning to live in the modern world ... The problem is not how 180 million Aristotles can run a democracy, but how we can organize a political community of 180 million ordinary people so that it remains sensitive to their needs. This is a problem of leadership, organization, alternatives, and systems of responsibility and confidence” (p. 135). His articulation about political life is important to us because it avoids the illusion that in a democracy everyone can engage in a political discussion and deliberation irrespective of their status as experts or lay-people. This is

markedly different from recent calls of democratisation of science where more participation by ordinary people is seen as an antidote to technocracy.

The problem of inequality that disfigures our moral conceptions of citizenship has to be tackled by first grasping the truths that Schumpeter and Schattschneider professes. Deliberative democracy cannot exhaust all forms of conflicts that a democratic life entails neither can it achieve the desired ends of removing gross inequality through policies that have been deliberated by all. Since the upper class will always have a disproportionate access to power, our political theories should be oriented towards accepting that reality and then imposing regulative burdens on the few most privileged. The rhetoric of Indian democracy being a success precisely falls into that trap because it seeks to argue that huge improvements have been made by the country since independence. What follows is a procedural story and how institutions, even though dysfunctional, still exist. The flaw in this mode of thinking is that it is only a matter of time before we will be able to rise up the ranks of human development index with better schools, hospitals and other such public institutions.

The exaggerated focus on the policies for many will always fall short because the powerful few who are in charge of making those policies are mostly

unaffected by them as they have the means to exit the system, or they do not have any stakes in the system since they have the wherewithal to access those goods from the market without getting involved with the state. Democratic life involves making demands on the state, more so in a country like India where gross poverty exists alongside obscene wealth. These demands should not be just limited to asking for the goods from a benevolent state but also demand that the rich needs to take a larger share of responsibilities as they are inordinate beneficiaries of the unequal system.

Chapter 4

Postcolonial (in)securities of a Nuclear Weapons State

The central concern of this chapter is to reflect on the relationship between nationalism and democracy and inquire into the manner in which the dynamics of nationalism bear upon the democratic ideals of a nation. In doing so, it argues that the stultifying dynamics of nationalism, specially in a postcolonial setting can bring to disrepair most of the hallowed ideas of democratic citizenship and freedom. The first section will cover the conceptual issues related to nationalism in political theory and look at the ways in which it has been conceived as a modern phenomenon. The next section will discuss the implications of ethnic nationalism for postcolonial India and inquire into the contradictions that emanate at the end of formal colonization and with the assertion of popular sovereignty. Then the chapter will look at the empirical case of India declaring it as a nuclear weapons state in 1998 and study the relationship of its nuclear status with nationalism.

Defining Nationalism

Despite the innumerable variations in the ways the term has been used, the conceptualization of nationalism has not been attempted as extensively as questions about what constitutes a nation. Most scholars define it as the

ideology that demands that the boundaries of states align with the boundaries of nations or cultural communities. But such a definition is inadequate for our understanding of the complexities of nationalism. This understanding of the concept restricts itself to a nationalism that only strives for national self-determination and relegates the dynamics of nationalism as a second order issue once a nation has been constituted.

Nationalism needs to be understood as resting on the belief that nations should have the sovereignty over the organization of their political lives rather than mere congruence of territorial and national boundaries. The demand of nationalists is to have a say on the future direction of the states of nations. Broadly from this perspective, nationalists prefer that a relatively older form of traditional community, the nation, should have the final word over a relatively new form of political organization that is, the modern state. As a form of political organization, the modern state demands a singular hierarchical structure of authority to be extended evenly throughout its territory with clear and distinct borders which sets it apart from other organizations. National communities are often mixed up within or extending across these clear and distinct borders and often there are multiple nations who have strong ties to the same territory. So in any attempt to give nations control of the organization of their political lives is bound to stir up conflicts

about who gets to set up states where and to control the particular territories to which they are attached.

The prevalence of nationalism as a powerful force results from the anxieties about the ability of any nation to control its political affairs. While well-established states express their anxiety about the way both external and internal enemies aim to undermine their ability to control their political affairs, smaller nations convey their predicament of losing control over their political lives because they have to survive in close proximity to more powerful states. This understanding of nationalism is crucial to make sense of why democracy have turned out to be a catalyst for an idea like nationalism which has been a relatively old concept. It is only within nationalism that people can find a sense of belonging who together wants to make a state which is its own creation rather than a state which is its master. Nationalism is the crucible on which the subjective sources of connection that could connect individuals to a shared concern of the future is found.

The rise of democracy in itself is not responsible for the nationalist passions to come the surface which may have been suppressed by authoritarian regimes, but it did enable the political significance of national loyalties. The spread of nationalism has taken place by riding on the waves of democracy

and the very logic by which democracy has demolished rival conceptions of political legitimacy has simultaneously led to an assertion of nationalism. All modern democratic movements had their genesis in the urge to assert popular control over the modern state apparatus by using the institutions of the state to extend the authority of the people over a specific territory. But to understand the state as an entity that is to serve the ideals of the people, it is important to imagine the people to be existing separately and prior to the state. This allows the people to delineate the purpose of the state, what would be its nature and the future direction it needs to embark on rather than the state where it is a reflection of the whims and fancies of those who already hold the levers of power. But this idea of the people prior to the state is an abstraction rather than a distinct social reality. If the aspiration is to make a state which will be a reflection of the will of the people rather than the state dictating the terms of how the people should live, there is a need to find subjective sources of bonding amongst the people where individuals are not only concerned about their own interests but also have a stake in their shared destiny. It is in the nation that modernity has found the ideal site to ground those connections.

One of the useful ways to understand the concept of nationalism is to see it as an "ideology" as in the way psychologists define it; as an identifiable

pattern of attitudes, beliefs, values, and needs in human personality. An ardent form of "love of one's own kind" that is ego-defensive and involves some degree of fearful dislike or positive hostility to "outsiders". As Ashis Nandy explains, "it is ego defensive because it is often a reaction of the inner, unacknowledged fears of atomization or psychological homelessness induced by the weakening or dissolution of primordial ties and the subsequent growing individuation, by alienating work, and by the death of vocations, which are in turn brought about by technocratic capitalism, urbanization, and industrialization. Often such nationalism is honed by the uprooting- and the consequent sense of loss- that urbanization brings about." (Nandy 2006: 6)

Nationalism often compensates for a lack and according to Arendt, provides in the form of a nation, a pseudo-community. Also, one needs to be aware that the international system is organized and dominated by nation-states, where the rules of international diplomacy, power play and national interest have been framed keeping in mind this very conception of nation-states. To survive in such a system, nations should have the knowledge of the rules and the skills in their repertoire to handle the complex issues they are confronted with in that arena. The language of states becomes the default vocabulary of such nations. Thus, within nationalism the state holds a central position in public life.

The insistence on the primacy of national identity over other subnational identities involving religions, castes, sects, languages and ethnicity is of paramount importance to nationalism. All other identities are expected to be subservient to the national identity and often an insecure state may see the presence of other identities as potential rivals. However, one must also acknowledge that nationalism as an ideology has a positive connotation to which the nationalist must adhere. What constitutes the exact boundaries of that formulation can be debated and may be loosely defined but its presence cannot be denied. This malleable feature of nationalism also opens up the possibility of identifying individuals or communities as deviants, traitors or anti-nationals making them susceptible to witch-hunts. Also, since nationalism is an ideology, it also requires a theoretical frame which will include "a set of ends and means; a series of propositions on national culture and national community, their origins and differentiae; and an idea of national interest that supersedes the interests of aggregates larger and smaller than the nation. These are seen as the building blocks of an existing or potential nation-state." (Nandy 2006:8) This theoretical frame enables the homogenizing role it was expected to perform in the first place. Nationalism is seen as an inescapable part of the nation-state wherein even its critics, who

might see it as an unmitigated evil, usually believe it to be an unavoidable stage in a country's political life.

Lastly, nationalism at its core is uncomfortable with ambivalence and has contempt for targeted beneficiaries. Just as there was the left-Hegelian discomfort with the masses who were deemed to be insufficiently revolutionary, similarly in the specific case of India, Hindutva's contempt for the Hindus who seem "inadequately masculine, martial and organized.", makes nationalists always nervous that the nation is not nationalistic enough. They think it is "gullible about its own interests and security needs, insensitive to humiliation, and ever unwilling to actualize its full potentialities.. Hence the more the nationalists come to love the abstract entity called the nation, the more they dislike the real-life persons and communities that constitute the nation." (Nandy 2006:9)

It is this very ambivalence coupled with sense of insecurity, humiliation and resentment that is at the heart of understanding India's aspirations to be a nuclear weapons state. In the ability to acquire the technological prowess to obliterate its enemy in the future if it so demands with the use of nuclear weapons, the nationalists feel the wrongs of the past will never be inflicted ever again. The acquisition of nuclear weapons also completes an intellectual

puzzle in the study of nationalism. If we understand nationalism as an ideology, it should be bound by logics of space and time. However, the content of nationalism has not differed much over cultural and geographical boundaries. If there was any argument to be made about nationalisms of the anti-colonial moment and following it the hope that the nation would have taken a different trajectory of progress, the acquisition of technologies like nuclear weapons puts paid to such ambitions. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that finally India is moving towards a textbook version of nationalism (Gellner 1983) which can imitate nationalist sentiments in fashion across the globe.

The 1998 Nuclear Tests and Hindu Nationalism

In 1998 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power, it conducted five nuclear tests in contravention of the existing non-proliferation efforts globally. As Itty Abraham argues 'crossing the test threshold was symbolically significant as it sought to signal identity with dominant international norms of nuclear meaning" (Abraham 2004: 4999). The official position of the BJP has long been to promote a nuclear policy that would be more within the realist worldview of international relations where nation-states are in the pursuit of military power in an international system which is anarchic and riddled with security dilemmas. This push towards a more hardline militaristic outlook was constant with the ideological moorings of the party

which traces its origin in the thoughts of V.D Savarkar, the founding ideologue of Hindu Nationalism. At the core of this ideology was to 'Hinduise all politics and militarise Hinduism' wherein he urged 'all Hindus to get themselves re-animated and re-born into a martial race'. (1949: 302, 201). Similar to Nehru, Savarkar also believed that 'science would lead all material progress and would annihilate superstition'(Quoted in Corbridge 1999: 227). However, when he spoke about the idea of bringing 'the secret and science of the atom bomb to India and make it a mighty nation', he was outlining a vision that was more militaristic that Nehru's idea of getting nuclear energy to drive India's developmental needs. (Quoted in Corbridge 1999:227).

Savarkar believed that decades of subjugation that India had to face in the hands of the British was due to a degeneration of a once strong and masculine Hinduism based on martial valour, courage, physical strength and organizational efficiency (Banerjee 2000: 67). Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi and to whom Savarkar was a mentor said this at his trial:

"the teachings of absolute ahimsa (non-violence) as advocated by Gandhiji would ultimately result in the emasculation of the Hindu community and

thus make the country incapable of resisting the aggression or inroads of other communities, especially the Muslims" (Quoted in Veer 1994: 96).

For Godse, it was the feminine and devotional brand of Hinduism that Gandhi practised which was responsible for the partition of India, "Gandhiji failed in his duty as the Father of the Nation. He has proved to be the Father of Pakistan. I as a dutiful son of Mother India thought it my duty to put an end to the life of the so-called Father of the Nation who had played a very prominent part in bringing about vivisection of the country- our Motherland' (Quoted in Nandy 1980: 83) For Godse, it was because of Gandhi's 'old superstitious beliefs such as the power of the soul, the inner voice, the fast, the prayer and the purity of mind' that led to his failure of performing the duty as father of nation to defend the Mother. The end of Gandhi for Godse would ensure that India would be 'practical, able to retaliate, and would be powerful with the armed forces' (Quoted in Nandy 1980: 91). Thus, 'the nation would be free to follow the course founded on reason which I consider to be necessary for sound nation-building'. (Ibid:91)

This faith in reason manifested itself in the nuclear weapons testing of 1998. In a speech given in May 1997 at a conference in the United States on the future of nuclear weapons, Jaswant

Singh, who would go on to be the BJP coalition government's first External Affairs Minister, bemoaned that fact that in 1974, 'India demonstrated an ability, but disclaimed the intent', and argued that:

"Had we straight thereafter conducted a series of other tests and established clearly our ability, then it would have been easier to cope with all the confusion of subsequent years, these current international pressures, and all the other difficulties of today. Instead, we went into a nuclear trance; pretense replaced policy."

The flaw, according to him lay in India's 'high-civilizational sense of chivalrous warfare' and its 'belief that our opponents would also fight in the manner to which we subscribed. Invaders down the ages routinely, outmaneuvered us because we remained wedded to the tactical doctrines of honor..' (Singh 1998)

For Singh, the continuous depiction of Indian civilization as one based on ethical and moral norms was a liability when it comes to the international system. And even in independent India this flaw has been entrenched by invocations of Gandhian pacifism and non-alignment (Singh 1998). To bring about a radical shift in India's outlook towards the external world, the BJP's election pitch was a promise to carry out a comprehensive strategic defence

review, re-evaluate India's nuclear policy, and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.

On 11th May 1998 India conducted the underground explosion of a fission device, a low yield device and a thermonuclear device announcing to the world that India has a proven capability for a weaponized nuclear programme. Two days later on 13th May, two more explosions of low yield devices were carried out. On the same day a letter from Prime Minister Vajpayee to US President Bill Clinton was leaked to the *New York Times*, in which the Prime Minister explained his rationale for going nuclear:

"We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distrust that country has materially helped another neighbour of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbour we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years. And for the last ten years we have been the victim of unremitting terrorism and militancy sponsored by it in several parts of our country, specially Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir" (New York Times 1998: 14)

Thus India's justification for carrying out the nuclear tests rested on the argument that it faced adversaries in the neighbourhood, i.e. China and Pakistan, both of whom are in cahoots to weaken India. And it was because of such a deteriorating security situation in the neighbourhood that India was forced to go nuclear. This chapter will not burden itself with explaining the dynamics of the India-China relationship since its concern lies elsewhere. Instead it attempts to analyse the ethnic dynamics of the India-Pakistan conflict and how within that dyad Hindu nationalism, the nuclear bomb and the impact it has on the nature of identity politics of India is examined. Once we have engaged with the moral psychology of the conflict and the concept of identity in general can we move over to the hitherto overlooked normative frameworks to understand community relations.

The India-Pakistan rivalry

The postcolonial history of the subcontinent has its genesis in the manner of decolonization after the departure of the British empire. The realities of partition and the communal animosities that led to it has left scars on the moral template of these two nations which generations have been grappling with in multifaceted ways. The complicated nature of the birth of these two entities has not only led to two separate geographical entities. If nation-states are the creations of logics of modernity, myths too have been a constant

companion. For India, its neighbour, apart from being a nation has a mythic identity of its own. This myth has the ability to transcend any empirical and geopolitical reality. The origin of this myth lies in India and this is what dominates much of the discussion about what constitutes Pakistan thereby shaping behaviour and policy.

Pakistan was created by carving out the Muslim majority provinces of British India in 1947. The original version of Pakistan which was composed of West Pakistan and East Pakistan ceased to exist in 1971 after a war that led to the creation of a new state called Bangladesh. Even though India won the war, shrunk Pakistan to half its original size and made it suffer the ignominy of defeat, the myth continued that even after that no change in Pakistan's behaviour was brought about as it continued to harbour the same animosity that it had against India in 1947.

The myths that sustain cannot be accounted for in any objective or rational sense of judgment and it is precisely because of this nature, myths have the ability to colonize our imaginations. What ultimately matters are the fact that Pakistan is full of Muslims, most of whom are from north-west India and belong to 'martial- races. This idea of what constitutes Pakistan leads to further myth-making that since Muslims are hot-headed, tough, masculine, anti-democratic and prone to fundamentalism, they need to be handled firmly if democracy and

progress in India is to be protected. Juxtapose the ideas of Savarkar, Godse and in recent times Jaswant Singh, and it is easy to grasp the line of reasoning about how this irrational and fanatical Muslim state poses grave dangers to an emasculated Hindu culture. Pakistan is something that India does not want to be. As India's progresses by refining the mechanisms of a modern nation-state. Pakistan becomes "both a double and the final rejected self." (Nandy 1997).

The nuclear tests of 1998 by India led to a reciprocated gesture by Pakistan thereby nullifying India's conventional military superiority. The nuclear tests of 1974 which was termed by the then government as 'peaceful nuclear explosion' led to Pakistan's search for parity which finally culminated in both the countries coming out and declaring they are nuclear weapons states. It would be difficult to point out the material sources of insecurity that India harbours vis-à-vis Pakistan considering its own resources and also Pakistan's own internal turmoil.

In order to make sense of the puzzle where India's hatred for Pakistan is simultaneously accompanied by the inability to be indifferent to it, one has to look into the shared memories of Pakistan's separation from India.

The ambivalence is a product of two distinct images in the psychological terrain that inhabits the cognitive psyche of the Indian mind. The first is the image of Pakistan as a product of a conspiracy between India's erstwhile British rulers who followed a policy of divide and rule and the religion-based parties like the Muslim League. The legitimacy of the state to exist is questioned. The fact that Islam is a Semitic creed and most Pakistanis are Punjabis adds to the perception that even if Islamophobia exist in the West and Pakistanis themselves may be suspicious of its designs, Pakistan will always remain a natural ally for the West. This leads to an inability of the Indian rulers to distinguish the people of Pakistan from the Pakistani government which has been led by a series of military or theocratic regimes. Not many in India are willing to understand the Pakistani state deeply enough to understand the fierce opposition to military rule that Pakistanis have had, or the inability of the Islamic parties to gain any substantive support base electorally. It is taken for granted that since the demand for the Pakistan state was made on the basis of religion, the success of Islamic fundamentalism is a feature embedded in the state.

The second image has been of Pakistan being this successful conspirator against India because the state, culture and the state are seen to be working in a seamless triad working towards a single goal, i.e the destruction of India.

This understanding further gives credence to their belief in the super-human capabilities and efficiency of the Pakistan state. This image provides a justificatory logic to understand why the Indian state is so inefficient and the reasons are alluded to the "obstinate inertia of the ordinary Hindus and 'soft', 'non-martial, fuzzy-ended 'effeminacy' their religion inculcates in them. Hence the perennial demand for more masculine, tough foreign policy from the Indian state and plea to take cues from Pakistan while imagining a garrison state. The fear of separatism, the unidimensional tendency to see all demands for greater devolution of power as conspiracy against Indian unity, the non- responsiveness or authoritarian responses to any criticism of state violence, when it comes to thinking about the nature of state going forward, India has been happy to frame the template from the one it imagines Pakistan to have. In a way, the mythic Pakistan becomes the very definer of Indianness. As Ashis Nandy puts it,

"It is a means of self-analysis and self-intervention. If mother India can be put on an analytic couch, the enterprising psycho-analyst who does so will not miss her schizoid personality and the mix of paranoia and admiration with which some of her selves look at each other. That one of these selves is identified with Pakistan is now part of South Asia's psychological landscape. In the dynamics of that self lie crucial clues to the nature of the Indian nation-state." (Nandy 1997).

Just like India lives with a mythic Pakistan, Pakistan too has a myth about an India that is its own creation. And this myth is propagated by an official ideology which believes in a version of India and it is only that India which counts in the scheme of things. Apart from the official India there is another unofficial India too within Pakistan but that has the potential to subvert the official narrative and hence has to be delegitimized or every effort must be made to blunt its assertion. So in this mythic conception, India is led by a westernized highly professional upper-caste Hindu elite who dominated the Indian subcontinent taking advantage of early modernization. The evil designs of the Hindus had already started in the 1920s when Gandhi had started using Hindu idioms and symbols into the national movement and refused to grant equal parity to the Muslims even though they were the largest minority and the erstwhile rulers in the subcontinent. It was the Hindu elite in their reluctance to make Muslims equal powerholders in the independent India that forced the Muslims to ask for a separate state. In the aftermath of partition, India had evil designs against the nascent Pakistan state which is evident in the subsequent dismembering of its eastern front in 1971. And even after that India continues to stoke ethnic tensions within Pakistan and its Brahminical elite treats its Muslim minorities with disdain. In this mythical conception, Muslims and other minorities in

present-day India are oppressed; even their leaders who brandish their secular credentials are subservient to the Hindu elite who rule India with an iron hand. Even Muslim leaders who speak against Pakistan in India are portrayed has having gone astray because of their political ambitions wherein they want to project themselves as more loyal than the king to the Indian state.

There is an attitude akin to schizophrenia that exists among the two countries vis-à-vis one another. Most social theories will find themselves handicapped since the dynamics inherent in this relationship are difficult to encapsulate within a single theoretical framework. What this chapter started out arguing is that it is in the logic of moral psychology one needs to engage with this complex maze of identity and history that bedevils this relationship. The identity aspect becomes crucial because, as mentioned in the previous section, Hindutva nationalism has potent implications for India's secular fabric. The acquisition of nuclear weapons, the symbol of modernity is not just the ability to have another weapon in the arsenal but often can be interpreted as a trope for greater majority consolidation that has the potential to make the minorities i.e. the Muslims in this case more fearful.

This combination of myth with technology should not be surprising neither is it specific to the India-Pakistan dynamics. As Walter Benjamin already observed in his masterpiece of 1936, "*The Artwork in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*", in National Socialism, that association was evident:

"The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its *Fuhrer* cult, forces to its knees, has its counterpart in the violence of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values. All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. "*Fiat asr-pereat mundus*," says Fascism, and expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. Mankind['s] self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order." (Benjamin 1969:19)

In modernity, the coming together of myth and technology has led to the tragic fact that myths can serve to intensify rather than diminish the threats that the latter poses. After all, Hobbes attempt to keep the two spheres of the myth of the sovereign and science and technology separate is unsustainable after all, considering any attempt to give the myth exalted status above the other paradoxically leads to greater predominance of science and technology

within the mythic sovereign state. The Frankfurt school of Horkeimer and Adorno sought to disengage this mutual relationship between myth and technology through the threshold of reason. However, this project proceeds to make a move in a different direction as follows.

If science and technology has been used as ballast to reinforce the nationalist credentials of a nation, the terrain of reason will be unable to provide us with adequate intellectual resources to combat the dangers of nationalism. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to bring in theories of moral sentimentalism to think about the problem we began with. However, before that, it is important to understand the moral psychology of identity which is at the heart of antagonistic relations in South Asia specially in the India-Pakistan context and has often led to acrimony between the majority-minority community in the context of India.

The Moral Psychology of Identity

I borrow the definition of moral psychology from Akeel Bilgrami who defines is as "the psychology of agents by which their choices and actions are explained, and in particular explained normatively in the sense that the explanation does not merely say why they chose or did what they did, but also sees it as essential to explanation to assess whether what they did was

rational by the lights of their own desires and values." He goes on to say that he does "not just mean that one explains why they did in some non-normative way *first*, and *then* make the normative assessment whether what they did is in accord with their desires and values. Thus this normative element in the study of human individual and social behaviour is not some extra tacked on to an otherwise purely descriptive enterprise." (Bilgrami 1997). The purpose of making the move towards moral psychology is to extricate oneself from the binaries of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. While nationalists believe in a strong sense of national identity aligning with certain ethnic attributes and territoriality, cosmopolitans expect all sovereign barriers to diminish. In my opinion this approach has led to a cul-de-sac in the debate over nationalism and liberal political theory.

Rationalist theories of politics often subsume nationalistic fervour under irrational behaviour which a liberal theory is unable to account for. However, going by contemporary events it would be difficult to argue that citizens of a nation can transcend those national sentiments and aspire to create a world bereft of nations. What is needed is a moderation of those sentiments, while at the same time acknowledging the lived reality of nationalism. This requires abandoning the distinction between two myths as Bernard Yack calls it: the myths of ethnic and civic nationalism. The former attempts to assimilate the nation to a natural community,

suggesting that people are distinctive, and they originally belong to the lands they inhabit. The latter presents the national community as a chosen community, making nationhood a construction for our own purposes. In reality however, community is neither completely natural or artificial but something in-between. "Nationalism, then, is more than just a strong attachment to one's nation and its members but the result of the working of more complex forces. It gets its impetus from our capacity for communal loyalty or attachment, but is given shape by beliefs we acquire about political legitimacy. It is not just a matter of loyalty to a group; but neither is it something that can be created among people who lack that sensibility or feeling of attachment." (Yack 2012:158).

Yack goes on to argue that the moral problem with nationalism arises out of the 'intensification of communal hostility inspired by this convergence of sentiment and conviction, rather than from the intrinsic limitations of either communal loyalty or popular sovereignty'(Yack 2012:158) The issue is not that we are predisposed to form contingent communities like the nation but the "propensity to become hostile to other communities when national sentiment strengthens. Kukathas (2014) asks a valid question which is germane to our understanding of national sentiment in the India-Pakistan case as well as the minority issue within India. He says, "why such sentiments

should develop in this way and why this should inspire communal hostility? In order to answer this question, the move he resorts to is recognizing the role of particular actors -political elites who provoke such sentiments in order to gain by generating it. We will return to the role of elites later but at this moment it will be worthwhile to return to our commitment in favour of sentiments and passions over reason.

The role of Passions in a Democracy

One of the highly contested questions in democratic theory is the role of passions in democracy. Conventional deliberative democrats insist on leaving out passions so that rational judgments can be made in a democracy. However, there is an old 18th century tradition from the Scottish Enlightenment which emphasised on the role of moral sentiments while designing democratic institutions and thinking about moral judgments. In this section I borrow from Sharon Krause's (2005) work which contends that passions can and should contribute positively to democratic deliberation since they are already involved in practical reasoning.

Krause states that "our theories of moral judgment and democratic deliberation have been caught on the horns of a dilemma: they have either been too rationalistic to motivate action and decision, or they have been too

indiscriminately rooted in the passions to carry normative weight." (Krause 2005:6) She argues for a notion of impartiality that takes seriously the role of moral sentiments in democratic practice. The theorist she reaches out to is Hume because of the "fruitful way in which his theory of judgment combines impartiality with affective engagement". We can see how Hume can come to our rescue in resolving the problem that we discussed in the last section of liberalism's uneasy relationship with nationalism. While Rawls and Habermas focus on rationalistic positions on the motivations for practical reasoning, scholars such as Gillian, Nussbaum, Damasio and Young trade their impartiality in favour of sentimentality.

The reason why a Humean approach may be suitable is because it "is not devoid of intellect, but...involves more than merely intellect. The process of practical reasoning is a holistic one, in which cognition and affect are deeply entwined". As Krause notes, "judgment and deliberation cannot do without passions, [so] the best hope for impartiality lies not in trying to transcend the passions but in reforming the political context that shape them" (Krause 2005:110) Expanding our horizons of concern and our sympathies to the sentiments of others is essential to reforming the political world. Doing so moves on beyond the "familiar terrain of our families and social groups". The political context must include diverse groups and intellectuals, and we must allow ourselves

to be open to experiencing sympathies for those unlike ourselves. She argues that deliberation requires cultivating the capacity to "feel with the widest range of others" and not simply have a familiarity with the *other*. Sentiments play more than simply a motivational role; they have a central function in reconstructing what we mean by *reciprocity*. If deliberation takes sentiments into account, it cannot simply be cognitive. Rather, the affective concerns of others must become our own or "at least they must connect up with concerns that [we] have.".

A Humean political society is marked by a diversity of groups or tendencies, each with its own view of the nature of the world, its own attachments, its own conception of right, and its own interests. Factions are dangerous to 'public liberty', and any society which is to be secure must be wary of the threat they pose to order. But unlike Hobbes, Hume is not driven by a fear of disorder to construct a politics of suppression. As Isaiah Berlin notes, fear was the major motive in Hobbes' theory: "That's why he was against the varieties of opinion, particularly religion. Sects are like worms in the entrails of the body politics. You must suppress them." (Berlin in conversation with Jahanbegloo 2007) Hume on the other hand, asked not how this diversity might be destroyed but rather how it might be accommodated – or even turned to advantage by thoughtful institutional design. It is no wonder that Hume perhaps was the first pluralist to offer a

systematic analysis of the operations of political parties or factions in modern politics, along with a consideration of how the negative consequences of their operation can be ameliorated.

Hume's essay, *A Dialogue*, provides a good starting point for understanding Hume's pluralism. This dialogue between Palamedes and his interlocutor (Hume) is an attempt to figure out the possibilities of universal moral standards in a world of such diversity of moral customs; and the burden Hume takes upon himself is to show that this diversity is consistent with his argument that the principles upon which morality is founded are constant.

Acknowledging the evident dissimilarities among the French, the Greeks, the Romans, Palamedes asks: 'What wide difference, therefore, in the sentiments of morals, must be found between civilized nations and Barbarians, or between nations whose characters have little in common? How shall we pretend to fix a standard for judgments of this nature?' To this Hume replies: 'By tracing matters ... a little higher, and examining the first principles, which each nation establishes, of blame or censure. The Rhine flows north, the Rhone south; yet both spring from the same mountain, and are also actuated, in their opposite directions, by the same principle of gravity. The different inclinations of the ground, on which they run, cause all the

difference of their courses." Thus, diversity for Hume is the product of the environment. At the biological and psychological level, human beings are the same; they have the same basic needs and the same basic motives, which become manifest in different forms under different conditions.

For Hume is in search of the possibility of moral unity which he believes is rooted in our common nature. However, he does not attempt to deny the differences or suppress these in his quest for that moral unity. Neither does he argue that the practices of others should be condemned or ridiculed, or even necessarily criticised. Instead he proposes us to consider how our own beliefs and customs, may in some respects, differ only marginally from those we find distant; to put ourselves in the position of others and see how our practices may be seen from the other end; to concede that it is circumstances that give birth to different customs; and often our differences in beliefs are only a matter of degrees and not substance which no reason can successfully demarcate those distinctions.

Hume also rejects attempts to build rational foundations for morality. Since moral distinctions are not founded on reason, he believed rationalists who thought there were immutable, eternal principles which could instruct us on right conduct, and provide us with determinate answers on questions of

moral behaviour will always fail in their efforts because they could not comprehend the fact that people lived by different and diverse answers. For him, the positive foundation of morality lay in human nature. Morality for him, even though undersigned, is a human construction; of creatures the operations of whose nature could not help but issue in patterns or regularities of conduct, which emerge, become settled, and then entrenched. The important thing to consider here is that the characteristic of all human beings which is essential to explain the emergence of morals is that they act on motives. For Hume, human motivation consists of many other attributes other than self-interest. In human nature, if we find selfishness, we also have to reckon with the reality of benevolence. Our moral sense guides us to be moved by our estimation of what counts as good and bad behaviour.

The precise content of morality may not be the same everywhere; and the diversity of motives and circumstances will produce differences of moral evaluation, i.e. moral distinctions. But what is important to note is that all these distinctions can be 'traced' back to elements of our nature. The implication for this line of reasoning is that it opens up the possibility of a dialogue between people from different groups and factions. In his opinion, in morals the diversity can be accommodated if we concede that difference could as easily prompt humility as outrage; our own morals are, in so many

instances, no better founded- and no less absurd- than those of others. And recognition of that difference need not inevitably lead to conflict.

It is not the case that Hume was sanguine about human nature neither did he imagine that the toleration of difference would come easily to people. He saw that 'such is the nature of the human mind, that it always lays hold on every mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully fortified by an unanimity of sentiments, so is it shocked and disturbed by any contrariety. Hence the eagerness, which most people discover in a dispute; and hence the impatience of opposition, even in the most speculative and indifferent opinions.' He is well aware of the history of human conflict: of wars fought over differences of race and religion.

However instead of suppressing those differences, Hume saw the task of political institutions to preserve an order within which conflicts keep in check but not for the purposes of bringing about social unity or cultural or religious or moral harmony. The state for him arose in order for individuals to pursue their different ends. What we find in Hume's political essays is a theory — perhaps the first theory — of interest group politics, for here he offers an account of politics as a process involving elite conflict and interest-based divisions. As Sheldon Wolin observes:

"Hume saw clearly, as the later philosophical radicals did not, that the arena of practical politics was not peopled by individuals pursuing their own aims in the splendid isolation of self-interest. Rather, the basic elements were political groups held together by individual leaders and by the cement of common interest and professed principles" (Wolin 1954:1014)

The importance of Hume's insights cannot be overstated in relation to the empirical case that we discussed previously. If the acquisition of nuclear weapons has entrenched the forces of nationalism setting in motion conflictual dynamics externally between India and Pakistan as well as between the majority and minority community in India, the answer cannot be to rewind the clock or usurp other scientific institutions. What is required is an imaginative working of political and social institutions that work on the moral sentiments of different factions.

Now that we have a theory of moral psychology where we argue that moral sentiments and passions should be part of any deliberative discussion, this may be an appropriate place to return to that question as to what explains the propensity for intense hostility towards other communities. In the discussion about the India-Pakistan dynamics, this chapter earlier discussed the notion of myth-making that is prevalent in both the countries

with respect to one another. It is the foundation of these myths that enables the elites in both the countries to stoke the fear and instill the hostility of the other nation. Human beings are capable of rational engagement but the motivating power of myths are what leads to nationalistic fervour. These nationalist and group sentiments are enhanced by elites precisely because of the incentive structure of electoral politics in multi-cultural democracies. As Steven Wilkinson has shown, most ethnic riots in India have been on account of the nature of political parties and electoral competition. The normative claim that this chapter would like to forward is that the incentive structure which sustains the dynamics of riots and ethnic violence has to be transformed. If it is the elites who profit from stoking the fears of one community against the other, or one country against another, the institutional designs have to be construed wherein they do not see any advantage in carrying out the politics of conflict or they feel they have more to lose if such incidents take place.

Most studies on the role of technology in societies as well as on issues of group identity have focused on the critiques of the impact they have on a polity. However mere explanation or critique at higher levels of abstraction does not assist us in laying the normative criteria through which to define principles of co-existence. The march of technology entrenching frenzied

nationalism is less a mark of what science is capable of doing to our notions of tolerance and more a call for taking our flights of imagination in unchartered territories.

Cultivation of Passions and Social Relations

Since the division of the subcontinent, while the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has had its own share of issues related to the contentious complex of religion and politics along with the role of its military in determining its future trajectory, the plight of secular India has also been marked by ethnic riots and communal politics involving Hindus and Muslims. The persistence of Hindu-Muslim riots in India often belies its secular credentials. More importantly, these riots also impact the moral fabric of the nation impeding the cultivation of relational egalitarian ethos. Why do these communal riots take place in India and why does Hindu-Muslim relations based on the ideals of equal citizenship has had such a spotty history in post-independent India?

In attempting to figure out the central reason behind the outbreak of such riots, Paul Brass in his influential study argued that the reason for animosity between Hindus and Muslims do not lie in past hostilities or prejudices among the two groups. He argues that such riots are neither natural or accidental but a product of an "institutionalized riot system" that exists in

India which includes a network of actors with resources at their disposal and incentives to carry on these acts for violence. He asserts that, "the decisive factor is the action that takes place before the precipitating incidents and immediately thereafter, action that is often planned and organized and that fills the intermediate space and time between past history and immediate circumstance". (Brass 2003:11) He goes on to suggest, "the maintenance of communal tensions accompanied from time to time by lethal rioting at specific sites is essential for maintenance of militant Hindu nationalism, but also has uses for other political parties, organizations, and even state and central governments." (Ibid.:9)

There is a communal anxiety that Brass alludes to when he emphasises the rational for militant Hindu nationalism which considers it important that the Muslims do not get a veto over the political direction of the nation. It is precisely for the same electoral reasons that Wilkinson too argues that the reason why communal conflicts take place in India is because, "democratic states protect minorities when it is in their interest to do so" pointing to two possibilities; 1) "when minorities are an important part of their party's current support base, or the support base of one of their coalition partners in a coalition government", or 2) when the overall electoral system in a state is so competitive... that there is therefore a high probability that the governing

party will have to negotiate or form a coalition with minority supported parties in the future, despite its own preferences." The implication of this reasoning as he goes on to suggest is that, "Politicians in government will restrict the supply of security to minorities if... overall levels of party competition in a state are so low that the likelihood of having to seek the support of minority-supported parties in the future is very low". (Wilkinson 2004:7). Therefore in the Indian context, the chances of Muslims being protected from riots are higher in an electoral arena which is more competitive as the ruling party will have an incentive to garner their votes as these small groups may play the deciding role in swinging elections one way or the other in a highly contested terrain. Wilkinson could very well have borrowed from the Schumpeterian idea of elite competition, as discussed in the previous chapter, to explain why the state or the ruling dispensation would have an interest in preventing riots.

But this analysis of a state wherein riots are prevented by the ruling party to protect the minorities does not bear out empirically when we consider post-independent India's relationship with riots. Irrespective of the parties in power, whether it is an avowedly secular Congress or a supposedly Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), riots have occurred in India with constant regularity. Varshney in his study of ethnic conflict in India

goes beyond both the essentialist and the instrumentalist approaches to argue that both Brass and Wilkinson cannot account for the fact that communal riots take place mostly in towns rather than villages nor can they explain why riots do not take place all over India.

From a dataset between 1950 and 1995, Varshney notes that Hindu-Muslim violence has been an urban phenomenon and it has been highly prevalent in eight cities of India, namely Ahmedabad, Aligarh, Baroda, Calcutta, Delhi, Meerut, Mumbai and Hyderabad which accounts for nearly 45.5% of death due to communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. These eight cities account for only 18% of India's urban population and 5% of the country's population as a whole. Apart from the data, Varshney makes an important distinction between ethnic conflict and ethnic violence. Very often in the analysis of Indian democracy and secularism, this distinction is conflated. "Ethnic peace should, for all practical purposes, be conceptualized as an institutionalized channeling and resolution of conflicts,... it should be visualized as an absence of violence, not as an absence of conflict." (Varshney 2001:366) This differentiation is important since conflict is an inalienable part of public life. In fact, agnostic democrats would even welcome the prevalence of conflict and contestation as many such theorists see consensus frameworks getting imbued with unjust power relations. The argument being made here is not

that public life should not have conflict, but a public life suffused with violence is normatively undesirable.

If the assertion goes that ethnic conflict is an omnipresent aspect of public life, the important concern for us should be when and why ethnic conflict turn into ethnic violence. Many scholars attribute the reason to atomization of individual in a modern urban society, the spread of fake news and propaganda through large number of mass communication mediums, and a sense of disenchantment with modernity and what it fails to offer in terms of metaphysical foundations. All of these could be valid conditions of life in modernity, however, Varshney asks a pertinent question, "If there are enough places, in spite of modernity, do not have communal violence... the explanatory focus will have to shift from modernity to institutions or factors that make it possible for communities to live together." (Varshney 2002:111)

The key explanatory variable he focusses on is the strength and weakness of intercommunal civic life and vibrancy of civic engagement. "The pre- existing local networks of civic engagement between the two communities stand out as the single most important proximate cause of rioting... [w]here such networks of engagement exist, tensions and conflicts were regulated and managed; whether they are missing, communal identities led to endemic and

ghastly violence." Therefore, in cities where strong intercommunal ties existed, they worked as a bulwark against ethnic conflict spiraling into ethnic violence. However, if those ties are weak or absent, minor disputes or conflicts had the potential to cause havoc. This is not to say that there won't be any violence in a city with strong inter-communal ties, just that those cities will be less riot-prone than the ones which does not have those kinds of engagements.

We can link this argument of strong inter-communal ties with the discussion on moral sentiments in the previous section. The creation of civil society is not just an institutional artifact but also a mechanism imbued with human passions, emotions and sentiments. Precisely because we as human beings do not function as isolated individuals but also who care for others, the cultivation of moral sentiment which is the motivating factor behind our actions is a significant normative endeavor. Most analysis of politics in India and Hindu-Muslim relations have focused on the logic of representation and closely related aspect of majoritarian Hindu nationalism. Because in a representative democracy, the power of numbers determines the power of a community as every single person has one vote, the electoral logic does explain why the Hindu community may aspire for greater consolidation under a single religious umbrella vis-à-vis the Muslim community. This

aspiration for Hindu dominance also performs the function of fueling other multiple passions such as hatred, pride, insecurity, and fear. However, our normative ideals of relational egalitarianism, in this case between the Hindu and Muslim communities, takes a backseat when some of these sentiments work against those ideals.

The need for nuclear weapons for a country like India may be justified in a neighbourhood with two other nuclear powers. However, the possession of a nuclear weapons when placed in the historical context of South Asia can itself become a interpretative grid through which loyalty towards the nation is often demanded. This burden of loyalty is much harsher for the minority community in India who are constantly called upon to prove their patriotism. This test of loyalty for a certain section of its population is not unique to South Asia. Whether it was the Weimar republic where the Jews were hounded or in the US during the McCarthy era of the Cold War, the state constantly attempts to shore up its power at the expense of dividing its populace between the loyal and the disloyal, the patriot and the unpatriotic. It is no wonder that the famous German jurist Carl Schmitt while answering the question about what is the political made the sharp friend/enemy distinction.

This friend/enemy distinction gets more complicated in South Asia and Hindu-Muslim communal relations because of its historical context in which the subcontinent was divided after British rule and the politics it spawned thereafter. The sense of emasculation that a certain section of Hindu population perceives because of centuries of domination by what they consider as foreign power, has led to a politics of post-independent India where security of the nation has often been seen through the prism of both external enemies and also the imaginary internal ones. The sentiment of insecurity and fear feeds onto one another thereby prohibiting the flourishing of egalitarian relationships between the majority and minority community. This should not be taken to mean that India as a nation is always rife with Hindu-Muslim animosity where violence is breaking out every day. The point is to highlight that the majority-minority dimension is an inalienable axis of political contestation in India.

As Varshney's work shows, the importance of civil society has been an important variable to understand why ethnic conflict leads to or does not lead to ethnic violence. The normative argument this thesis proposes is that those civil engagements should not only restrict themselves to rational instrumental concerns of interdependence and efficiency but those sites should also infused with sentiments and passions.

Identity, Insecurity and the Representation of Danger

In *Writing Security*, David Campbell talking about the identity of United States, argues that its identity as a nation-state is constantly secured by conjuring up "representations of danger", where the danger does not exist out there but is an outcome of considered judgments made by policy makers within a certain historical context. This Self/Other dichotomy, similar to the friend/enemy distinction in the previous section is an imagination which does not have a fixed centre but is constituted by constant negotiation with relations of difference. The logic of representation gets inextricably linked with the problem of territorial sovereignty since a liberal subject cannot have rights without a sovereign who is going to protect its rights. The construction of boundaries is essential for a state and thereby distinctions between insiders and outsiders are a natural outcome of such a state of affairs.

Critical constructivist scholars argue that insecurities are societal and cultural productions rather than natural facts. Here culture is seen as "...encompassing multiplicity of discourses or "codes of intelligibility", through which meaning is produced...insecurities are cultural in the sense that they are produced in and out of "the context within which people give meanings to their actions and experiences and make sense of their lives."

(Weldes etal, 1999:10) Since there are issues of meaning, assumptions and fungible social identities involves, and the representation of the Other is a matter of interpretation, the definition of insecurity is often contingent on the construction of this relationship between Identity/Otherness. In the context of this thesis whose aim is to diagnose the processes and dynamics that hinder an egalitarian polity, the constructivist idea of malleable identities without a fixed centre is instructive. The rationality of insecurity and the sentiment of fear are social constructions and the passions therein can be tamed before those sentiments result in violence.

An egalitarian theory of politics should be open to moral judgements which are embedded in reflective passions. Theories of deliberation and proponents of justice focus on the importance of reason to achieve impartiality in judgment. This thesis is not an exercise in repudiation of reason or intellect but a plea that the separation between reason and passion into two distinct categories wherein passion should not impinge upon reason is an untenable one. Infact it is through affective modes of sharing passions with others that the violent repercussions of rationality can be ameliorated. Unless we factor in the passions and sentiments, our political lives will always suffer from a motivational deficit.

For Hume, the important task that sympathy does for us, even if it is not a passion in itself, is that it communicates passions to us as well as helps to stimulate passions in us. This transmission of passions is what forms the foundation of our moral sentiments. These moral sentiments are in turn responsible for the way we perceive others, their acts or their feelings with approval or disapproval. Hume says, " As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature." Thus sympathy within ourselves and among ourselves results in the formation of moral sentiments of good and bad, beautiful and ugly, approval and disapproval. The values which such a theory of moral sentiment upholds is not arrived individually but inter-subjectively.

Sympathy can have both rational and irrational forms for Hume. Passions were irrational if they were "founded on the supposition of the existence of objects which really do not exist" or " when exerting any passion in action, we choose means insufficient for the designed end and deceive ourselves in our judgment of the causes and the effects." Because sympathy can go wrong in one or both the ways, it is pertinent that it is accompanied by sound reasoning while inferring the passions of others or in the process of

accomplishing a task, while deliberating over the best course of action that the shared passion suggests to us.

In Hume's scheme of things, all human beings are similar and most of them experience passions which are uniform in nature. However this generalization should not mean that in moral judgments all kinds of feelings are justified. It is only "when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil." Sentiments which are not arising out of private interests are the ones only capable of adjudicating between the good and the evil, the right and the wrong thereby generating moral obligations. This move from the individual to the general is what facilitates social coordination for Hume by introducing affective impartiality in judgement. Through this impartiality, Hume makes the important distinction between what we do approve of and what we should approve. These distinctions are often not very clear in political life and hence Hume was aware that he was speculating in the realm of ideals. But his philosophy was based on naturalistic assumptions about certain general facts are common to all human beings. This minimalist conception of sympathy is embedded in our moral psychology but the sentiments that generate impartial judgment may not be naturally extensive.

This generalised notion of sympathy imbued with impartial judgment is not as commonplace even though human beings share similar passion. Hume was aware of the fact that our sympathies do not extend to everyone equally but often prioritises our closest friends, or family. Pursuit of self-interest can also distort our sympathies which then become impervious to impartial judgment. Hence the generalized conception is not something that comes to us naturally but is learned through life's experiences, socialization, civic education and needs to be cultivated. As Hume notes,

"When we form our judgments of persons, merely from the tendency of their characters to our own benefit, or to that of our friends, we find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and such an uncertainty from the incessant changes of our situation, that we seek some other standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation." (Treatise 583)

Our ability to live together in a society in a coordinated matter is hampered if our judgments are based on self-interest and sympathies which are not generalisable. A relational egalitarianism framework that dismisses the sentiments of certain people without proper reason for Hume lacked the moral quality of "humanity". This generalised perspective, properly cultivated, enables us to make judgments even in cases where we may not be

familiar with since our imagination allows us to make the leap from cause to effect even if we have not exhausted our engagement with all the possible causes before reaching a conclusion. As earlier mentioned, for Hume it is not that reason is sacrificed for the passions but in fact, "it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment." The affective modes of consciousness have to be linked with the cognitive ones in order to reach a judgment. Sentiments which were coloured with prejudice, ignorance and superstition were not deemed worthy by Hume. Prejudice was antithetical to sound judgment and generated erroneous sentiments.

Hume's thinking about impartiality in our moral judgments and our ability to sympathise with the other is instructive in thinking about the distortions that are created in the egalitarian scheme of things with respect to Hindu- Muslim relations in India. The rationale of security is privileged over the consequences of a nuclear-war while the religious identity of Indian Muslims is often conflated with that of the neighbouring republic of Pakistan. It would be inappropriate to burden Hume with the concerns that animate us today and look for every answer to our present-day conundrums. Where Hume is useful in thinking about is how to make impartial moral judgments which are rational, yet sentimental but also impartial thereby upholding the normative justification of egalitarianism. Hume never attempted to define a theory of

impartiality from a position outside of our own political and social contexts. He believed in social conventions and therefore was of the opinion that those principles of justice will be jointly arrived at by an inter-subjective evaluation of approbation and disapprobation.

The tasks that this chapter set out to do was to describe how norms of relational egalitarianism between individuals gets compromised at the altar of security and fear. In the Indian case, the literature has engaged with debates about secularism, minority rights and the question of representation. This literature has aimed to affirm the values of secularism as enshrined in the constitution, studied voter mobilization among the majority and minority community, the political parties and their discourses to garner votes within a democratic constitutional arrangement, ethnic mobilization and various logics of social engineering in the electoral arena. We have also discussed how scholars have understood the logic of ethnic conflict and riots in India through the lens of electoral competition.

However, rational analysis fails to account for the sentimental attraction of nationalism and how those passions may themselves become an obstacle towards fulfilling the egalitarian claims of equal citizenship and equal rights when it comes to majority-minority relations. It is

understandable that in the context of a neighbourhood with two nuclear powers possession of nuclear weapons may have strengthened the sense of security of a population and that will be a justified sentiment. But a political discourse which uses the pretext of security and a strong nation to divide its own people thereby whipping up a nationalist frenzy and making demands on the weak and vulnerable inculcates moral sentiments which are partial, vindictive and prejudiced.

As indicated earlier, democratic life is infused with conflict because of the differing conceptions of the good and often such conflicts can have positive generative effects resulting in reflective sentiments towards the state of affairs. However, when we make moral judgments on the sentiment of fear which can either be real or artificial, we lose our ability for impartiality. This is to be kept in mind that here impartiality does not behove a Kantian rationality or a Rawlsian idea of justice as fairness but more of justice as a virtue which is impartial. The feeling of insecurity can come to us in many forms, however, when our insecurities coalesce with historical resentments, our sense of judgment suffers. The desire for more security that such a sentiment spawns has the ability to make individuals gloss over the inter-subjective nature of our common existence. When such a fellow-feeling dynamic is lost, in Hume's evocative words, we suffer from "want of humanity".

Arguing for Passions in Egalitarian Democracy

Consider the debates regarding India acquiring nuclear weapons and become only a handful of countries in the world to possess nuclear weapons. Possession of nuclear weapons then is not just a strategic choice but also defines the political values the country wishes to espouse. The rational argument will be that these weapons are necessary for self-defence against Pakistan who harbours enemy intent against India. This reasoning might have empirical validity based on factual informational and military calculations. But connected with the assertion that now India has nuclear weapons, is also a multitude of passions. For those who prefer a strong state this might propel a militaristic nationalist passion. Those who abhor such weapons of mass destruction would be disappointed with the acquisition of such weapons by the country. However, the most animating passions will be reflected in inter-community relations between majority and minority community where the loyalty of the minority community might be deemed suspect due to its religious affinity with the religion of the neighbouring country. A rational approach to politics would like to sanitise its theorisation by erasing the influence of these multiple passions reflecting diverse values.

When the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged on the national stage with the help of its virulent brand of Hindutva, many scholars were of the opinion that in a representative democracy like India, the compulsions of coalition politics will force the party to blunt its extreme edges. However the dominance of the party in two back to back elections in 2014 and 2019, has proved such hypothesis to be wrong. As Sanjay Ruparelia argues, "...students of democracy in general [need] to rethink the explanatory power of institutional theories of political moderation that underlie the self-limiting thesis or similar versions of it." (Ruparelia 2006:318) The macro-institutional explanations seem to flounder because in this case, a political solution based on rationality and deliberation is deemed adequate to answer the social contradictions and demands of representative politics.

This is not to argue that all passions are equally good. But to make a case similar to Rousseau's that it is not advisable not possible to eliminate passion from politics as, " a man who had no passions would be a very bad citizen" as such a man would find it impossible to feel himself as a part of a larger community. A community requires an emotional commitment from its members and this commitment is expected to find its reflection in patriotism or nationalism. It is only through passions that a

different world can be imagined, not through docility and apathy. As Walzer writes,

"no political party or movement that sets itself against the established hierarchies of power and wealth will ever succeed unless it arouses the affiliative and combative passions of the people at the lower end of the hierarchies. The passions that it arouses are certain to include envy, resentment, and hatred, since there are the common consequences of hierarchical domination...But anger at injustice and the sense of solidarity among the passions aroused by any anti-hierarchical politics, which means that we have good reasons not to surrender too quickly to the anxieties. May be things will not fall apart; may be the centre can hold; may be a new centre will form. Meanwhile, there is no way to join the parties and movements that are struggling for social change, and to support the "good" passions and convictions against the "bad" ones, except to do so-passionately." (2002, 631-32)

A flourishing democracy requires cultivation of the passions and in the case of Hindu-Muslim relations, these passions can be cultivated through civic engagement as Varshney's work showed. In a deeply diverse society like India bound by the rules of electoral politics and the historical realities of the modern Indian subcontinent, affinities and passions across communities and

religions become more important for individuals than affinities towards the nation. The cultivation of passions requires imaginative frameworks where the two affinities are aligned together rather running at cross-purposes. It should not be construed that one is advocating for more passion in politics but making a case that our reflective faculties cannot extricate themselves from sentiments and passions. This reflection itself involves the ability to engage with our passions in a diverse number of ways and not restricting them to mere binaries of how to control our passions or let ourselves be consumed by them. It also allows us to reflect on what it means to be an ideal but also an active citizen who can cut through the propaganda that people in power would like us to get swayed by in order to entrench their own hold over privilege. Moreover, as we have shown above, by inculcative affective impartiality in our judgments, we allow ourselves to be open to views, opinions and worldviews of people and communities radically different from us as our expanded horizon enables this fellow-feeling.

Chapter 5

Resistance, Dissent and the Democratic Voice

In one her most celebrated pieces, *Can the Subaltern Speak*?, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak argues that the very attempt to give voice to the silenced itself is a mere repetition of the silencing. But within a political culture embedded in material inequalities, social dispossessions and lacking the minimum bases of self-esteem, those at the receiving end of injustice cannot but help raising their voice. The eruption of dissent or the resistance to hegemonic institutions does not merely signify a disruption in democratic life but can be a harbinger for democratic renewal.

There has been an upsurge of anti-nuclear movements around the world in the past two decades. Often described as the period of "Nuclear Renaissance" by the nuclear energy industry, this period has seen a wave of opposition to nuclear energy policies in countries like Poland, Sweden and Russia. Even though these countries had dissimilar historical legacies with respect to nuclear energy industries as well as political systems, there was marked similarity in the manner in which these anti-nuclear campaigns were carried out. While environmental NGOs and advocacy groups relied on non-

confrontational strategies such as lobbying and advocacy, a number of confrontational strategies have been resorted to at the grassroot level.

At the official level the relevance of nuclear energy is always defined in terms of economic development, energy security to mitigation of climate change. Nuclear energy is perceived to be cost-effective and comparatively more environmentally friendly than fossil fuels like coal and other hydrocarbons. Governments across the world also prefer to have a diverse energy mix so that they are not reliant on a single source of energy and nuclear energy helps in that diversification. In fact, concerns over climate change has been one of the significant drivers behind the nuclear renaissance and its public approval. The discourses surrounding the benefits of nuclear energy are often aligned with the discursive logic of "progress" and modernization. To be modern in an era of ecological fragility involves relying on clean energy resources.

Anti-nuclear activists on the other hand focus on the issues related to uranium mining, its effects and also disposal of nuclear wastes. They also often cite the unviability of the nuclear energy as another reason why it should not be pursued. Also related are themes of health issues which finds mentions in their arguments against nuclear energy. Considering the complexities involved in nuclear technology, it often belies the participatory

principle embedded in any democratic framework. Much of the public debate involving both sides of the divide have rested on convincing the other side of its viewpoint with substantive arguments. Because it is seen as a crucial source of energy in the face of impending climate crisis, the force of the arguments of anti-nuclear activists often gets diluted. This in turn has the effect of making the issue of nuclear energy non-political as in an issue that's been "solved" and hence require no public deliberation i.e. politics. Moreover, when pitched against the rhetoric of 'energy security', the oppositional attitudes to nuclear energy is often blunted. The logic of cost-effectiveness, progress and the belief of experts monopolises the terrain of nuclear discourse, scientific terms are brandished, and debates take place within a certain "analytical" framework where instrumental reasoning is highly valued while emotional appeals are neglected.

In this chapter we will discuss the case of anti-nuclear activism in India and its implication for theorizing political life in general. The central question that this thesis has been concerned with is how to think about an egalitarian politics in the context of relational inequality that exists between experts and lay people. In the previous chapters we have discussed how the issues related to 'development' and 'security' are often employed to immobilize egalitarian demands for equity, participatory democracy and silencing of the 'voice'

either by framing issues within frameworks that allow for only specific issues to be deliberated upon or by treating questions that are raised as irrelevant thereby displacing them from the political space. The anti-nuclear protests are often seen by the establishment in India, involving the government of the day, its nuclear experts and scientists as well as a large number of its population as nuisance, disruption or having an anti-national character who are inimical to India's rise as a great power and its prosperity. How can we make sense of this assertion of making oneself 'heard' theoretically? Should citizens be mere subjects who should accept the decisions taken by the government on their behalf? What is the justification for protest and resistance in democracy and what do these insurrections signify?

This chapter will argue that it is in those very moments of protest, resistance and alternative claims where the formation of the democratic subject takes place. It is here that by publicly enacting their demands the subject forces a conversation that has not been allowed to come to the fore. It creates new subjectivities essential for democratic flourishing by going beyond the mere voting procedure or sanitised parliamentary discussions. The democratic subject is not a given that exists already, but it is created in these moments of confrontation. The central burden of this chapter is to outline a theoretical framework to appreciate this democratic identification as in how citizens

become democratic subjects. It will attempt to do so by engaging with the works of Wittgenstein, Ranciere and Cavell. I believe that these thinkers provide us with the resources to think through the question of subjectivation in democratic theory, which has elided reflection in much of literature on deliberation in democratic life. But before engaging with their thoughts, a description of the anti-nuclear movements that raised questions and demanded answers on the basis of being equal citizens is necessary.

Anti-nuclear movements – The Indian experience

Even though India's nuclear program started in 1948, it is only in the past couple of decades that the country has seen unprecedented opposition to it on the ground. These protests have accompanied Government of India's decision to push for more nuclear energy infrastructure by getting mainstreamed into the global nuclear order. The Indo-US Nuclear Deal and the special waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) paved the way for India to engage in global commerce of nuclear material for energy purposes. This meant that the Indian market was now open to foreign nuclear energy corporations. This surge in enhancing India's nuclear energy infrastructure has also coincided with the Fukushima nuclear disaster of 2011 in Japan thereby bringing in nuclear programs and expertise under greater scrutiny and public criticism. People are unwilling to take for granted

whatever the government tells them, they are more conscious and raising their voice to articulate their concerns about livelihood issues, safety, land appropriation, and cultural loss. These anti-nuclear activists are not only engaging in demonstrations to make themselves heard but also submitting public interest litigations in the courts and presenting alternative sets of viewpoints by having experts within their own ranks. These experts are often retired scientists, public officials and other civil society members who are unwilling to accept the version presented by the government of the day and speaking out against nuclear energy for a variety of reasons.

In the worldview of India's political leaders, technocrats and scientists, nuclear energy is crucial for India's new economy, addressing climate change and for a population of more than 1 billion, ensuring energy security. However, this vision also has to contend with the questions raised by anti-nuclear activists about risk and safety, the insistence of the tribals to maintain sovereignty over their land and preserving their communal way of life. While policymakers are more concerned about lack of access to energy to rural population and absence of economic development in large parts of the country, their explanation of the benefits of nuclear energy on the lives of common citizen is often countered by grassroots movements who are now more knowledgeable in scientific and legal matters related to design of

nuclear reactors, their functioning and the legalities involved with respect to due processes about safety and environmental issues.

Since the inception of its nuclear program, the government's stated posture has been that of 'nuclear exceptionalism' where the discourse was confined to two sets of arguments. On one hand, it exercised its right to have nuclear weapons by being in a neighbourhood which was highly volatile and hence nuclear weapons were required for its security. In fact, this was the argument made when India went overtly nuclear in 1998. The second strand followed the logic that the so-called nuclear powers practised nuclear apartheid by not recognizing India has a nuclear state and depriving it of nuclear technology and resources required for its development. This terrain of nuclear discourse has further widened in recent times. Earlier anti-nuclear and peace activists made the moral case against possessing nuclear weapons, criticized the secretive manner in which India's nuclear establishment functioned and raised questions about the consequences of nuclear hazards and radioactive wastes on health and environment. The government of the day treated them as 'mild irritant' without paying much heed to what they were saying. However, in contemporary India things have begun to change. The reality of the Bhopal Gas disaster in the 1980s wherein the guilty are yet to be punished and people being more aware of the injustices of the case along

with knowledge of what happened in Fukushima has brought about a decisive shift in the manner in which citizens perceive the government and its institutions in general.

This attitudinal change is reflected in the manner in which farming, fishing and mining communities in India who will be affected by the new nuclear infrastructure projects are protesting these developments and aligning with other movements that are questioning the systemic and structural injustices involved in land acquisition, control over resources and livelihood issues. Within the dynamics of these multi-issue protests and how these protests are finding common grounds to articulate their demands is the site where contemporary Indian democracy is taking shape and being reimagined.

One of the places where the government of India's nuclear energy plans has faced massive resistance is the coastal town of Koondankulam in the state of Tamil Nadu. However, the place has seen anti-nuclear protests in as far back as in 1989 when the then Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi reached an agreement with the Soviet Union to build a nuclear power plant there. Then the National Fisherman's Forum had organized a march of 10,000 people against the proposed plant as they believed that the plant will contaminate the water and destroy their fish. Those protest marches were dealt with a

heavy hand by the police and ended in bloodshed and violence as the police fired on unarmed crowd including women. (Kumar 1989). Another issue of contention then was the fact that it was believed that the nuclear plant will get its water supply from the nearby Pechiparai reservoir and this meant that people dependent on agriculture will suffer. But soon after as the Soviet Union disintegrated, Gorbachev lost power and Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning for elections in the state of Tamil Nadu, the Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) of India called off the project.

The project got a new lease of life in 1997 when the then Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda signed a supplement to the earlier 1988 agreement and Russia was willing to supply two standard high pressure VVER-1000 water cooled and water-moderated reactors. However, protestors against nuclear energy had by then been aware of the Chernobyl disaster which happened because of a design fault in the nuclear reactor, made in Russia, similar to the ones to be installed in Koodankulam. These reactors were constructed without the consent or any consultation with the local people. The nuclear authorities refused to entertain any queries of the public nor shared the basic information about the project. When they were asked questions about a host of issues like the 'daily routine emissions' from the reactors, the amount of nuclear waste that would be produced and how it will be managed, the

liability on Russian companies in case of accidents or impact of the plant on the sea, which was a source of livelihood for the people, the authorities did not come forth with any explanations.

The anti-nuclear resistance movement gained momentum once again in 2011. The Fukushima disaster of March 2011 which the villager saw on their television brought home the reality of the consequences of living in the vicinity of nuclear power plants. In July the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) decided to proceed with the 'hot run' of the first reactor. The locals were asked to participate in a mock drill which heightened the sense of anxiety among the local population. This was preceded by the reactor emitting smoke and loud noises were heard when the 'hot run' was operationalized. This led to the local population from Idinthakarai and Koodankulam to come out on the streets and protest against the power plant. A day long hunger-strike was organized on 16th August at Idinthakarai while a three-day fast was held on 17-19th August at Koodankulam.

Taking cognizance of the protest, the authorities invited them for talks and asked them to postpone their agitation till September considering the forthcoming festivals ahead in the month of August. However, the DAE went ahead with the announcement that the first reactor will go critical in

September 2011 disregarding the concerns of the protestors. The protestors resorted to another round of hunger strike in September which also involved roads blockades thereby hampering traffic movement on the state road. The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J Jayalalithaa was forced to pass a cabinet resolution requesting the central government to discontinue all work at the plant till the apprehensions of the local people were addressed. There was another round of talks with the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Office, however, those talks proved to be inconclusive.

In blatant disregard for the state cabinet resolution the nuclear authorities refused to halt the work at the plant which forced the protestors to lay siege on the plant from 13-16 October 2011. From 18th October 2011, the protestors have been on a continuous relay hunger strike and in addition to it they have conducted rallies, campaigns, village meetings, put forth their concerns in seminars and conferences, and also demonstrated their opposition at times by shaving their heads, cooking on the street and setting to fire models of the nuclear power plant.

The Government of India's response to these protests have involved coercion, harassment and physical attacks. Electricity to the villages were cut

off and houses of the villagers in Idinhakarai were smashed down by the police when the members were out in the sea. Schools run by members who were part of the movement were vandalized and people were scared away by the police. The government deployed thousands of security personnel around the village thereby cutting off access to essential supplies for the villagers. They engaged in mass arrests, issuing grave charges against the protestors, which included sedition and assault. At least 3500 people were facing police investigation into charges of sedition and "waging war against the state". India's sedition law, section 124A of the Penal Code, prohibits any words either spoken or written, or any signs or visible representation that can cause, "hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection," toward the government. The Supreme Court, in 1962, ruled that unless the accused incited violence by their speech or action, it would no longer constitute sedition, as it would otherwise violate the right to freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution.

One of the people S.P.Udayakumar was leading the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE) was also charged with sedition and accused of taking foreign money to stoke these agitations. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told Science magazine that NGOs involved in such protests were being funded by United States and Scandinavian countries. He

said, "The atomic energy program has got into difficulties because these NGOs, mostly I think based in the United States, don't appreciate the need for our country to increase the energy supply". (Manmohan Singh interview to Science magazine 2012). These remarks by the Prime Minister were used by officials to investigate a number of NGOs for possible violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA), a law that allows the government to regulate foreign funding being received by non- governmental organizations and non-profit groups. Villagers resolutely countered the allegations of foreign money and conspiracy theories. As one of the protestors involved with the movement who makes her living by rolling beedis and contributed 10% of her earning to the movement said;

"We are capable of collecting funds of upto Rs one crore through contribution from villagers. This is how each one of us supports the movement. This is how we built the church in our village. Every festival in our village is organised only though our contributions. If we can organise festivals every year, we can also support the movement with our earnings. Allegations of foreign funds are baseless." (Senthalir 2012: 24).

Apart from allegations of foreign funding, the government gave responses that were unsatisfactory. It argued that there was no danger of tsunami at the Koodankulam coast. A leaked correspondence also revealed that one of the containment domes for the new reactor were completed without the critical

cabling. Allegations also arose in an official Russian probe that substandard materials were used in critical sectors of the nuclear facility. Even after a group of scientists wrote a letter to the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, expressing concern over safety issues and asking for an independent panel of 'experts' to do a safety review, the government refused to address those concerns. It is important to note that these scientists in their latter made it clear that they were not for or against nuclear energy but were "of the opinion that when dealing with complex and potentially dangerous technologies transparency, honesty and a rigorous adherence to the highest quality standards are imperative." (Letter dated May 13, 2013).

In a hearing before the Supreme Court on the issue, in May 2013, it gave its nod to the commissioning of the plant saying, "its safe". "Kudankulam plant is safe and secure and it is necessary for the larger public interest and economic growth of the country. Nuclear power plants are needed in the country for the present and future generations," a two-judge bench said, adding that the plant was meant for the welfare of the people. The court said that nuclear power plants were required for the present and the future generations in order to provide cheaper energy. In its estimation, the project was for welfare and the concept of larger public interest must outweigh minor public inconveniences.

In an interview with the newspaper *Indian Express*, KNPP Site Director R.S.Sundar stated that the villagers protesting against the plant have no clue about nuclear energy. "We met them several times, tried to tell them they are safe. But they asked questions of which they have no knowledge," he says. When asked about the allegations of safety violations, he opined that most of the complaints were incorrect. "Multiple agencies and experts from the Centre have certified all the necessary clearances. Unfortunately, villagers refuse to believe people like A P J Abdul Kalam." A P J Abdul Kalam, regarded as the father of India's atom bomb and former President is often invoked by the government authorities to embellish their argument in favour of the nuclear establishment. The figure of a spartan scientist with impeccable credentials is a trope often employed rhetorically to deviate and obfuscate genuine questions that the government finds difficult to answer convincingly.

A couple of responses from those who were part of the movement is instructive. Many of their assertions are not taken seriously on account of them not having enough expertise about nuclear issues and its complexities. Mildred Raj , who along with her three children took part in the protests against the plant admits that she doesn't know about the technicalities of

nuclear energy but she asks, “Why have there been a dozen emergency shutdowns and abrupt drops in output if it is that safe? Why have commissioning tests failed repeatedly and deadlines postponed? How many scientists have been punished for violating safety guidelines that led to accidents?” (Janardhanan 2016).

One of the other protestors, Sundari, who served jail time for more than three months on charges of sedition, says, “I was a woman who used to watch only movies and TV serials. Now I watch news bulletins first.” This transformation from a homemaker to a “dreaded terrorist” in the eyes of the law took her all of one year. She is still unconvinced by government’s assurances of nuclear power being safe, “For people who live in cities, we are all illiterates as they think they are intelligent with their English education. So they want a nuclear reactor in our backyard to run their air-conditioners, to run their offices and luxuries. But we know why we are unsafe, how incapable is our government. When the tsunami struck in 2004, no one came to rescue us or our boats. The government didn’t even know it was coming despite all its big rockets and satellites. They are not even capable of tracing a missing aircraft and Army men from the seas. And they want us to believe that everything is fine with the plant? We need to fight our battles alone anyway.” (Janardhanan, 2016)

The question we need to address is how can democratic theory account for the voices of Mildred and Sundari? A theory of politics should be able assess the transformation that these women allude to by immersing themselves into the protests, agitations and demonstrations of anti-nuclear movement in Koodankulam. This theory will be less concerned with evaluating the successes or failures of the movements in terms of its ability to halt the commissioning of the plant. Instead the events of Koodankulam should be a lesson in democratic subjectivation. The demands and claims made by the protestors on the authorities was not just made on the ground of rational argumentation based on the pros and cons of the project. It was made on the basis of democratic identification where questions were asked of the state on the basis of equality which the state had to engage with. The case is also a good study of the conditions under which democratic activity can flourish. It is not the outcome but the moments in which democratic subject identifies herself as one rather than a passive citizen. The Koodankulam movement has gone on for more than 25 years. The important question to address is what normative resources participants rely upon to sustain their struggle. How do democratic norms and principle become knowledgeable to them which enables them to make their claims and demands be heard. To address

these concerns, the next section engages with Wittgenstein's notion of 'aspect change'.

Aspect Change and the Grammar of Politics

Broadly defined, 'aspect change' can be termed as a transformation in the sensibility that is brought about through experience. It is a different way of looking and seeing a thing which allows a citizen to realize that she sees things differently than she used to see them in the past. Deliberative democrats advocate greater public participation in decision-making processes through deliberation thereby politicizing issues of concern and relying on the force of better argumentation. The underlying logic is that through rational discussion parties can come to appreciate the other's side's point of view. The primary concern for deliberative democrats has not been formation of subjectivity but adherence to due procedure. (Habermas 1997).

According to Habermas, "the success of deliberative democracy depends not on a collectively active citizenry, but the institutionalization of the corresponding procedures and conditions of communication". Other deliberative democrats argue that the very process of rational deliberation is instrumental in playing a constitutive role which enables citizen to reach an equilibrium of reasonableness. This process invites people to partake in

a space of reason but it is not necessary that by mere participation in rational deliberation, a critical self-examination of one's own assumption is possible, or it will lead to a certain disorientation among the participants that it can induce "aspect change". The citizen does not become a democratic subject just by participating in reasonable deliberations, though that may be necessary too, but it becomes a democratic subject when through democratic practices there is a self-identification of oneself as to what it means to embody those democratic ethos. Democratic subjectivity does not merely consist of rational deliberation but should also involve rhetoric, persuasion, and embodied inscriptions.

For Wittgenstein, passionate engagement and the attributes of persuasion are as important as rational deliberation. He quips, "Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and heretic. I would say I would "combat" the other man- but I wouldn't give him reasons? Certainly, but how far do they go? At the end of reasons come persuasion." (Wittgenstein 1969) For him both the moment of constitution of the democratic subject as well as its political participation are equally enriching avenues of identification with democratic ethos. It is not only through voting or having Parliamentary deliberation on issues that citizens can identify as democratic subjects. In fact, the process of democratic

subjectivation consists of a plethora of democratic practices ranging from violent revolution to rhetorical persuasion. For him, we should try to shift our attention from theoretical reasoning to the richness of political practice since it is within those practices that the reconfiguration of the self happens, and new forms of social existence emerges.

The most significant attribute of 'aspect change' is that it not only alters the way one looks at a situation thereby gaining a different understanding but also enhances the appreciation of the fact that things do not have to be as they are and a multiplicity of 'ways of being" can be imagined. In Wittgenstein's famous duck-rabbit representation, once someone has seen both the duck and the rabbit, one cannot just go back to seeing only one of them. This transformation in the identification of oneself as a democratic subject has consequences for democratic life. It enables citizens to examine their own place in the scheme of things and their relationship with a wider set of practices in a democratic setup. This self-examination of the democratic subject takes place when the traditional ways of doing things gets disrupted. The protestors of Koodankulam came on the streets precisely because the government had failed to keep up its share of the bargain. It infantilized them thinking of the villagers are ignorant fisherfolks who cannot comprehend the complexities of nuclear technology.

The recurring refusal to answer their questions, the blatant disregard for procedures and the imagination of a dystopic future if things did not change is what brought about the political moment of dislocation and re-orientation among the protestors thereby creating the democratic subject and the moment of identification. It is important to emphasize that this moment has to be a new one in the sense that the world is imagined differently but then the newness cannot be such a departure from the past that it becomes unintelligible in the present context. In Koodankulam, this self-identification was not followed up with any radical gestures that the world has not seen before. It followed the Gandhian template of hunger strike, human chains, and blockades thereby imparting their 'aspect change' with embodied character. The mode of protest had to be in a manner which could activate a newness among the protestors, something that they have not done before, but it was also not to be so alien, that people would not be able to make sense of what they were doing. In doing so, they were articulating a fresh grammar of politics through which different possibilities could be imagined. It is not necessary that this grammar will come up with a concrete vision of the future but what it does ensure is that things will not be allowed to pass as they have been.

The protests in Koodankulam need not be explained as an outcome of pre-existing political subjectivities articulating their demands through their 'voice'. Instead the raising of the 'voice' is what opens up the space where different subjectivities are enabled thereby dislocating existing discourses and ways of doing things in a community. It is in those moments of "identification-as" equal citizens whose demands, claims and assertions matter through which democratic subjects affirm their place in a community. In the present case, the existing structure of a patronage state which believed in taking decisions for the poor and uneducated masses for the greater good of the community i.e. the nation, is dislocated by the protestors who are staking their right to be heard affirming themselves as part of the same community. As Owen writes, "it is through the exercise of one's political voice that one discovers (ongoingly) where one stands politically...and how one stands politically in relation to others (the depth and extent of one's agreement with others". (Owen 1999:587).

The anti-nuclear protests enabled to reorient the terrain on which experts and lay people operated. Since independence the nuclear establishment functioned without any sense of vertical accountability. It did not deem necessary to answer questions raised about its functioning nor found it necessary to be transparent about its operations. When faced with

uncomfortable questions, the strategy had always been to argue that either those questions were irrelevant as the person or organization did not have adequate technical expertise, or they were branded as anti-national elements who were inimical to India's progress. What the protestors at Koodankulam did was destabilize that existing arrangement by not only justifying their protests because it concerned their livelihood and the future of their children. They also roped in civil society actors including scientists and policymakers and academics who could dissect, probe and point to the logical inconsistencies in the pronouncements of government authorities. The unsaid arrangement between the experts and non-experts had been dislocated as alternate sites of knowledge production came up and the nuclear authorities lost their monopoly on matters related to nuclear energy. Wittgenstein's concept of 'aspect change' is helpful in understanding the formation of the democratic subject in those moments of assertion and is a reminder to the fact that democracy requires consistent activation and rejuvenation of those moments. Every existent order is contingent and transitory, and therefore when democracy lacks those persistent engagement through bodily practices, activism and novel articulation of fresher demands by newer communities, it gets settled into hegemonic practices. But this notion of Wittgenstein's 'aspect change' is understood as imagining new grammars of subjectivity. The account needs to be complemented with an

understanding of politics and the institutional contours within which it functions. While the new mode of subjectivation of the anti-nuclear protestors can be understood in terms of their identification as democratic subjects, their politics of disruption still remains to be theorized.

Ranciere's Politics as Disruption

In Ranciere's scheme of things, what we think of as politics – 'the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, and the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution' – he called 'the police' (Ranciere 1999: 28) For him policing is the practice of maintaining order by governing a community where each 'part' is assigned a particular place in the whole scheme of things. Whereas politics for him exists only when that well-ordered framework is distorted and a 'part' refuses to identify itself just as a 'part' but with the whole. This is not merely transferring power from one part to another, for Ranciere that is what takes place in police, but when an entity refuses to be a part in the existing scheme of things is when actual politics happens because it is at that moment that the injustices of the existing social order is brought into sharp relief.

When a certain group of people refuse to be a part of the whole but insists that they are indeed the people, Ranciere terms this assertion as *disagreement*. The idea is to discard the logic of the 'part' and the 'whole' through which the mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion, enumerated/non-enumerated are employed in modern political communities where the social order has established a template according to which subjects lead their lives and rights are distributed. For Aristotle, democracy gave power to those who 'though free, are not men of wealth and standing, [and] have no claim to goodness or excellence in anything' (*Politics* III.II). For him, who legitimately governs was the most important question in *Politics*. In Ranciere's reading, after the abolition of debt slavery in Athens, freedom had to be a universal attribute of every citizen. There was nothing to distinguish between the wealthy and the poor as both those categories were subsumed within the social order of a free community. This enabled the poor to deny their prior identification of being a part of the whole and instead they asserted that they indeed were the *people* (Ranciere 1999). For him, it is in those moments of confrontation when the part which earlier had no legitimate part in the social order comes to identify themselves as the social order is what politics is.

This understanding of politics has important implications for the way we conceptualize 'equality'. Because politics happens when those who have been excluded by the existing police order reject their parthood and assert their equality to the whole. Politics is not outside the 'political community'. It is within the same community that inequalities of various forms exist as well as the potential to emancipate oneself from it. Ranciere does not subscribe to the logic of 'arithmetic equality' wherein each person can be exchanged with the other because of their equivalent value. Neither does he agree with Aristotle's idea of equality where the value of each person is measured as per their value or contribution to the community. Ranciere's argument for rejecting these frameworks is because they are based on the logic of arithmetic, enumeration and counting since these logics are always accompanied by the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Ranciere wants to reject this notion of equality in order to rehabilitate an alternative notion of equality that is not encumbered by hierarchies of value. He wants to conceptualise equality 'that suspends simple arithmetic without setting up any kind of geometry. This equality is simply the equality of anyone at all with anyone else.' (Ranciere 1999).

Ranciere's understanding of equality is deeply embedded in a relational dynamic wherein our ability to understand one another is presupposed in all

human interactions through the 'power of reasoned speech'. Even between a master and a slave, which involves a relationship of dominance, this presupposition exists without which the slave will be unable to understand the master's commands. He writes,

"There is order in society because some people command and others obey, but in order to obey an order at least two things are required: you must understand the order and you must understand that that you must obey it. And to do that, you must already be the equal of the person who is ordering you. It is this equality that gnaws away at any natural order." (Ranciere 1999: 16)

The contingency of this police order arises from the fact that the 'natural' relationship between human beings in the state of nature is a war of all against all, a situation of equality where anyone can dominate or kill anyone else. This was the justification Hobbes gave for his conception of the sovereign wherein people will give up this ideal of equality for the sake of security (Hobbes 1971). The prior existing ideal of equality is replaced by the political inequality of the police order which legitimizes the authority of some over the others. The sovereign is always anxious that this police order is a fragile arrangement because anyone at any point of time can assert its natural equality thereby challenging the existing order. "Politics occurs because, or when, the natural order of the shepherd kings, the warlords, or property

owners is interrupted by a freedom that crops up and makes real the ultimate equality on which any social order rests" (Ranciere 1999). In his opinion, this equality can neither be something that is granted by a government or enshrined in a constitution because it exists prior to both. It is precisely because it existed before that made the possibility of mutual understanding and speech, thereby creating the conditions of governance.

Any political event, for Ranciere, begins with a disagreement and within that disagreement natural equality is asserted. Politics happens rarely because the police order prevails. But when it does occur, its unsettling, and disruptive; it disrupts a consensus and unravels the 'community of sense experience' (Ranciere 1999). That sense experience is disturbed because some part of the whole feels uncomfortable with the existing social order and hence asserts its voice of dissensus. It refuses to comply with the assigned identity and prefers to refashion their existence by asserting their equality. "The essence of equality is ...not so much to unify as to declassify' (Ranciere 1995:32). It is the affirmation of a common capacity for understanding between different beings and who refuse to be constrained by an identification that slots them in silos of religion, race and class.

The dissensus of the Koodankulam activists needs to be seen in this context wherein the villagers revolted against the existing order and made demands on the basis of equality. They wanted to disidentify themselves from a social order that had divisions of experts and laypersons in order to claim to a newer identity which will not just be a part of the whole. As Ranciere writes, "politics is both argument and opening up the world where argument can be received and have an impact" (Ranciere 1999) which brings about a different way of *seeing* things:

"Political invention operates in acts that are at once argumentative and poetic, shows of strength that open again and again, as often as necessary, worlds in which such acts of community are acts of community. That is why the "poetic" is not opposed here to the argument." (Ranciere 1999)

Even though Ranciere's enables us to understand politics as disruption, his theorization remains incomplete as far as its ability gauge impact is concerned and the standards by which we should judge these disruptions. His own theory would be inimical to any such standards of impact because he believes that any such attempt will be subsumed within the order of the police. Ranciere objects to the idea of cultivating ethos, a way of being that can serve as the exemplar by which to account for the impact of these disruptions. Politics and its practices should not be regulated by "ethics

conceived as the instance pronouncing values or principles of action in general" (2011).

However, political subjectivity cannot just remain imprisoned within the confines of dissensus. It should also be able to allow political actors to imagine what has not been imagined before and articulate unthought of possibilities. This subjectivity should also be attentive to the inevitable closures that any police order will bring upon a community. Lastly, this subjectivity should always be open to critical scrutiny and avoid a pure and unalloyed form of identity. Taken together these attitudes should cultivate a democratic ethos that refuses to be subjugated to a single location and involves a constant self-examination. We need to have standards or what Cavell calls as "exemplars" which can enable the constitution of the spectrum of possibilities wherein the democratic ethos cultivated can encompass a democratic subjectivity attuned to critical responsiveness which places the demands on our moral order. In the next section we look at Cavell's conception of exemplar as well as the conception of a democratic ethos that fashions a way of being in democratic life.

Cavell, Democratic Ethos and Imperfectionism

In its attempt to bring about a rupture in the common-sense of the citizen in the context where nuclear energy was deemed critical for its development, the Koodankulam protests account for the democratic subjectivity of the people in that community if we adhere to Ranciere's formulation. But this rupture cannot be a one-off moment of uprising but also needs to be accompanied by an ethic of responsibility. This responsibility is not only towards members of the groups that were participants in the protest but also towards the larger part who saw their act as irritant and inconvenience. A democratic theory cannot rest at mere disagreement but also has to engage with the fact that the world we inhabit is a shared one. When we invoke our claims as part of a community, Cavell argues, our individual responsibility is also at stake. Within a shared form of life, individuals bear the responsibility for their actions and judgments too. "You cannot use words to do what we do with them until you are the initiate of the forms of life which give those words the point and shape they have in our lives." (Cavell 1979:184). For Cavell, beyond the disruption comes responsibility. The anti-nuclear activists can reignite their democratic subjectivity through a variety of means but they also bear responsibility for their actions. They cannot escape responsibility saying that because the rules of engagement are stacked in favour of the opposition, i.e. the state, their actions should be beyond reproach. Being a member of a polis also implies:

"I recognize others to have consented with me, and hence that I consent to political equality. Second, that I recognize the society and its government, so constituted as mine; which means that I am answerable not merely to it, but for it. So far, then, as I recognize myself to be exercising my responsibility for it, my obedience to it is obedience to my own laws...the polis is the field within which I work out my political identity and it is the creation of (political) freedom." (Cavell 1979: 23)

For Cavell, more important than the voice of legislation with its demands for rights, is the conversational voice through which community is invoked. In the former, an already constituted community demands inclusion of their voices within the framework of rational argumentation. However, Cavell, wants to take a step back and focus our attention to that founding moment of community, and the voice in which the claims of the community is invoked. He develops this understanding of community through his engagement with perfectionism. Cavell defines perfectionism not as a theory but an outlook, a dimension of the moral life inhabited by individuals. The central tenet of this worldview is an 'aversion' to conformism.

Politically, conformism leads to an elision of the need to define oneself. As Hammer writes about Cavell: "the conformist, by failing to estrange himself

from prevailing opinion [as well as from himself], lets the community speak for him, yet without interrogating its right to do so." (Hammer 2002:132). Cavell goes on to argue, "...the mission of Perfectionism, generally in a world of false [and false calls for] democracy, is the discovery of the possibility of democracy, which to exist has recurrently to be [re]discovered." Democracy is not just about reaching a consensus, rather the emphasis should be on disagreements, difference of positions and ongoing conversations. It is oppositional, critical thinking which withstands the pressures of conformism that enables democratic institutions to flourish. The striving for the better, to not be satisfied with the current state of affairs and inculcating an 'aversive' attitude keeps democracies alive. The dissatisfied self always desires something better than the state it is currently inhabiting.

For Cavell, there is no singular self, neither there is a singular conception of the good. The self is divided, not isolated and dependent on other human beings. It is both within us and also attempting to go beyond us. One's identity can only be worked out in relation to recognition of the other. Drawing on Emerson, Cavell writes,

"Emerson's turn is to make my partiality the sign and incentive of my siding with the next or further self, which means siding against my attained

perfection [or conformity], sidings which require the recognition of an other – the acknowledgement of a relationship- in which this sign is manifest." (Cavell 1990:31). Cavell's Perfectionism is not of the aristocratic or elitist kind, but it is critical to democratic subjectivity in constitutional democracies. Perfectionism enables us to withstand disappointments and failures by keeping the hope alive. There are a number of ways in which democracy might fail its own stated goals of equity and justice. It may also fail to live up to the promises and vision itself enshrined at the moment of the social contract. Cavell wants all of us to be aware that each one of us who is part of the contract is implicated in the injustices committed by the state because the state undertakes its programs and workings on our behalf. And that's the reason why he emphasizes on the voice.

This emphasis on voice is further augmented by Cavell's invocation of 'exemplars'. Inherent in his vision of democracy is the pursuit of demonstrating to others the partiality of the society's arrangements. The nuclear energy plants were supposedly beneficial to the nation and for welfare of the people. But there were also numerous consequences for people who lived near the plants which were far removed from their interest and welfare. The arrangement was partial towards one group at the detriment of another. The agitations, which in the earlier section we discussed in the context of

Ranciere's theory of politics, also demanded an exemplar in Cavell's theory of democracy. "To be an exemplar... is to be someone whose way of life...places a demand on others to emulate his example in a non-imitative fashion." (Conant 2001:193). It is no wonder that the protestors harked on the Gandhian mode of protest and hunger-strike. If Gandhian method was seen as an exemplar of struggle against British occupation, imitating those ideals were at the heart of the anti-nuclear protests to rally against the injustices of the Indian state. The protests not only signify a dislocation but also had to embellished with a futurity by identifying with an exemplar from the past.

Exemplars even in their singularity enables us to glimpse a vision of another universal, even another way of doing things. Cavell discusses his notion of the 'exemplar' in greater detail in his discussion of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* which brings to the fore the obstacles in expressing senses of injustice which are felt but which are beyond the scope of contemporary moral and political discourse. He pithily puts it, "What if there is a cry of justice that expresses a sense not of having lost out in an unequal yet fair struggle, but of having from the start been left out." (Cavell 1990). In the play Nora is unable to express her sense of felt injustice to her husband Torvald. When he challenges her as to why she borrowed money and then used the money meant for household expenses to repay the interest on it, Nora agrees that

normal convention will see rationale in the questions Torvald was posing infront of her, she would like to think for herself, something that had been denied to her for so long. Torvald accuses her of "talking like a child" who does not understand the ways of the world. Consider the stark similarity between how the experts of nuclear technology try to reason with laypeople protesting against it do not understand the intricacies of the contemporary world of nuclear renaissance.

At the end of the story when Torvald tells Nora that she is forgiven, instead of him asking her to forgive her for not being able to understand her, Nora leaves Torvald. In this act of leaving her husband Nora was invoking change. She refused to be part of a social order that denies her voice and simultaneously she identified herself at that very moment with all those others whose voices have been denied. Modern democracies often self-attest themselves as the best form of government as people are ruled by their consent. However, Cavell wants us to think deeper into situations when the prevailing moral and political discourse cannot allow for the expression of injustices but where, as he puts it, misery is unmistakable (1990).

In contemporary India where the prevailing political discourse has been in favour of the nuclear establishment, whether in terms of weapons or energy, the

protests of Koodankulam and various other anti-nuclear activists and organizations raising their voice is an integral aspect of its democracy. These activists may have different rationales for opposing the nuclear programme but together they constitute a moment where they are making sure they cannot be taken for granted. Matters cannot go on as usual after the moment of reckoning. It is true that in the Koodankulam case, the Supreme Court of India finally gave a judgement in favour of proceeding with the power plants. However, it would be a mistake to consider the struggle that lasted for more than 5 years as a failure. Since its inception, for the first-time claims were made on the nuclear authorities and reasons were sought for the denial of those claims. The sedition charges and violent assault on peaceful protestors did manage to take the shine out of the halo of Indian democracy. The events brought to sharp relief how gap was between its cherished ideals of equality and its practice on the ground.

To conclude this chapter started with the empirical case study of a massive anti-nuclear movement that took place in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu in Koodankulam. The protests were interpreted in relation to democratic subjectivity and its cultivation. What do these protests signify and why are they important for democratic life, that was the central question this chapter wanted to address. It did so by first arguing that these protests need to be

seen as a harbinger of Wittgenstein's idea of 'aspect change' and its implication for democratic subjectivity. This subjectivity finds its expression in what Ranciere terms 'dissenssus' as it is in those moments of disruption politics takes place. For him politics is not a given, but it emerges in moments of dislocation of the police or social order. Finally, to complement this dislocation, one also requires an ethic of responsibility towards the other since political life always occurs in a shared community. In Cavell's writings, the self is both splintered as well as recognizable only in relation to the other. The democratic self should always fashion an aversive predisposition to the exiting order within which it is embedded but also simultaneously imagine the horizon of possibilities in the future that it wants to strive towards. Between the extremes of Ranciere's anarchic disruption and a sedimented subjectivity conforming to the existing social order is a fine spectrum where a realistic democratic utopia should be envisaged.

In lieu of Conclusion...

This dissertation started with a singular concern about the mental fortifications we have built around the idea of equality and reflect on the factors that immobilise our demands of an egalitarian society in the context of India. The mode of inquiry was not just empirical but normative in nature. Even though the normative assertions made here were reached after reflecting about the postcolonial condition of the Indian state, the concepts of relational egalitarianism and the importance of cultivating civil passions into our democratic discourse is germane for all democracies which believe in the autonomy and dignity of the individual. This was not meant to be a dissertation where specific research questions were to be derived from gaps in the empirical literature. The questions were arrived at through the experience of growing up in the world's largest democracy, undergoing massive transformation, where at every juncture the gulf between the ideals of a democratic society and the reality of lived life seemed too huge to be bridged. It was difficult to reconcile the validity of the discourse about the rise of India as a global power with the abject material inequalities one saw around oneself.

Relational inequality does not just have a material dimension but a social one as well that involves identities. The logic of numbers and the dynamics of majority-minority divide has plagued most representative mass democracies and India is no different. The Indian version of secularism has come under massive assault in recent times with the ascendancy of a pro- Right wing government winning two elections consecutively. The success of Indian democracy, irrespective of its myriad issues, as a polity marked by tolerance and pluralism is no more taken for granted.

The story of the advent of Indian democracy is that of an audacious experiment in human history since most of the pre-requisites for the establishment of democracy was absent at the time when India became independent from colonial rule. It was neither an industrialized, developed country nor an ethnically homogeneous society. Given its huge land mass and population, its politics was not fully controlled by the propertied business class nor it had a substantial middle class of its own which can be the repository of "civic culture". More importantly, the central dilemma for Indians under colonial rule was how to establish a representative political order through a unified idea of India in a context where everyone had a specific identity of their own. Any imagination of self-rule had to accommodate these two competing aspirations – to be Indian as part of a

polity and simultaneously maintain the pluralism inherent in such a diverse society. This dilemma was compounded by the fact that unlike the West, there was a paucity of founding text and written intellectual sources which could be mined to sustain the idea of Indian democracy. With the exception of Gandhi's Hind Swaraj, written in 1919, most discussions about politics in India took place either through exchange of letters or in autobiographies. Hegel's idea that societies like India did not have a sense of history and hence they were pre-political, often formed the justification for colonial rulers to rule over the land mass called India. When Churchill (1931) said, "India is a geographical term. It is no more an united nation than the equator", he was alluding to this very absence of the sense of what it means to be Indian. However, what those letters and autobiographies reveal is a sense that the domain of the political was being expanded to the personal self as well.

The Hindu reform movements were an outcome of the realization that the society has fallen into hard times and colonialism sustained itself because of the fragility of social relations which the colonial masters exploited. In order to recuperate the ethical and moral tenor of the civilization, radical social reform was required, and this reform would not have been possible without a radical transformation of the self. Gandhi's philosophy was replete with such ideals of perfecting the self. The external world was deformed because

the inner self was not in harmony and inequality was a reflection of our personal desires and greed. The connection between materialism and greed which propelled the self's desire to dominate over the other at the heart of this philosophical outlook and hence the prescription was that if only we could transform our selves, the outer world will also be devoid of all the malice that desire, materialism and greed entail. What was absent from such a conception was an idea of equality which would be relational in nature and tied the normative goals of an individual with the exalted status of renunciation. The flip side of such a renunciative ideal is that it may often lead to glorification of poverty and the tragedy of a newly independent nation, beleaguered by abject poverty and material want, was that the ruse of equality was often used to hamper its productive potential through excessive state control specially in the domain of economy.

The nationalist movement, which led to India's independence, was led mostly by educated elites and did not have the formal legitimacy of a representative political system. It was the same elites who came to power when the reins of governance were transferred from British Rule. At the centre of this new political arrangement, the central state was to be the most important player and it would be deriving its legitimacy through a conception of social justice. Bernard Williams claims that once a state has

adequately solved the Hobbesian problem of providing security to its citizen, a state is deemed legitimate only if it can satisfy the Basic Legitimation Demand. What he means here is that the legitimacy of a state is not just guaranteed if it provides security to its citizens but those subject to the powers of the state have to accept the reasons provided by the state. The legitimacy of the new Indian state was secured through the establishment of institutions that embodies the spirit of progress and modernity.

One of those sites which embodied national power and progress was the nuclear establishment. A technocratic approach to development in those initial years which continues till contemporary times has led to depoliticization of some of the most important issues confronting the citizens of the country. Universal suffrage for a newly independent nation which was poor, mired in superstitions and customs, and largely illiterate electorate was deemed as one of the most radical experiments in modern democracy. But 70 years since then, it is clear that the idea of democracy may not have been that radical enough as this arrangement not only avoided a violent revolution but also enabled the elites to co-opt the state to their own benefit.

The Indian state formally enshrined political equality however, simultaneously envisioning a top-down technocratic image of progress and

development defanged the radical potential for demands of equality. As shown in the chapter on development, with the empirical case study of the debates regarding the Indo-US nuclear deal, the framing of the debate and the discourse around it occluded more deeper political questions which could have been both institutional and normative. The enormous support the deal received among the elites and the middle classes also signals a wider crisis in the debate on inequality. Since the liberalization of the Indian economy, which has without doubt helped to enhance the material well-being of a vast number of people living in abject poverty, the material inequality too has seen significant increase. The benefits of growth which a liberalised economy unleashed has percolated very slowly and a small number has grabbed a larger share of the pie in this new rising India story. Because the political economy of the polity is such that economic power and political power is aligned, even though India is a de jure democracy, it does often betray the functioning of a plutocracy.

Since development, science and instrumental rationality formed the legitimizing instruments for the new state, every government that comes to power through democratic means ensures that the institutions embodying these values are not subject to scrutiny. The technical experts who work in these institutions exercise enormous discretionary power over the decisions

that are made with respect to these institutions, in this the nuclear establishment, and as demonstrated in the dissertation often justify their utility under the garb of development.

The intention here is not to collapse the distinction between expert and non-expert knowledge because for reasons of social co-ordination and division of labour, such demarcations are necessary in order for free societies to flourish. The proposition here is not to discount the virtues of science and technology in our lives. The objective here is to reflect on the notions of accountability and the standards of justification a state should have for its decisions to be considered legitimate. Moreover, if the state itself is seen as an institution which benefits the few but keeps the many permanently disenfranchised in a substantive sense, the legitimacy that the state possesses is deemed fragile. In the history of independent India, that normative burden of justification has been breached when it comes to allaying the concerns of non-experts or lay persons when it comes to science and technology. The resultant effect is that Indian democracy remains chaotic, vibrant and successful from the outside but the phenomenological experience of the citizen within this democratic set-up is one of powerlessness.

It is precisely this sense of powerlessness which should force us to think about the romance of democracy in a more realistic light. If the normative aspirations that life in a democracy promises are always going to be throttled by disadvantages of education, inherited wealth and social capital, we need to think about our political life where the most advantaged are regulated and forced to take upon extra responsibilities on account of the whole society. This regulative burden is not equivalent to what might be construed as Marxist 'class struggle' towards a deterministic normative ideal. My conception of regulating the most advantaged borrows its ideas from the practices of Roman republic where the plebs used various institutional measures to hold those in power into account. The obvious charge that might be thrown, specially by theorists of libertarian persuasion is that this idea of devising norms and institutions itself goes against the principles of equality. But as I mentioned, political theory as conceived in this framework is more concerned with practical wisdom, phronesis, than just mere ideal theorisation of the analytical variant. Moreover, this distinction between the few advantaged and the many disadvantaged is justified on the grounds that the political contestation itself is taking place on an uneven plane. In modern times, theorists like Schumpeter and Schattschneider have alluded to this specific feature of modern political life where all democracies are normatively ruled by sovereign citizens but in reality democracy is just an elite

competition for power, a game in which the citizens have minimal impact to drastically overhaul the arrangement in their own favour.

As argued in the introduction, this mode of theorizing politics is transhistorical in nature. A philosophical or theoretical enterprise that discounts the impact of historical complexities cannot account for behaviour that may seem going against the rational train of thought. The independence of the subcontinent came at the huge cost of partition which continue to scar today's politics in the region. The logics of majority-minority dynamics vis- à-vis Hindus and Muslims in a representative democracy with its electoral consequences produces its own pathologies. Ethnic politics also aligns with notions of fear, security, pride and resentment, none of which can be adequately explained through rational formal methods. If nuclear energy was to be used as a rationalization for development purposes, nuclear weapons too can be employed to furnish arguments in favour of enhancing security against foreign enemies.

In Chapter 16 of *Considerations on Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill writes, "Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities, each fears more injury to itself from the other nationalities than from the common arbiter, the state. Their mutual

antipathies are generally much stronger than jealousy of the government." This prescient insight of Mill has bedevilled Hindu-Muslim relations in India since independence. Even though the country entered into a social contract based on the principle of equality, the political dynamics of representative politics where strength in numbers matter has often lead to conflict and violence. It does not help matters that there are unresolved issues, specially the question of India's only Muslim majority state Kashmir, with neighbouring Pakistan that has made South Asia one of the most volatile regions in the world. The sense of insecurity vis-à-vis each other forced the two countries to acquire nuclear weapons but since the acquisition of those weapons, we have seen an escalation of low intensity conflict in the subcontinent.

The antagonistic relationship between India and Pakistan does not restrict itself to a conflict between two sovereign states but leads to a deepening of the Hindu-Muslim divide socially within India as the patriotism of the Muslim community is always suspect in the eyes of the radical Hindu right. Often a politics of frenzy is whipped up and explained by analysts as an outcome of electoral strategy of polarising voting electorates. There is a huge literature as discussed in the previous chapters connecting the occurrence of riots between Hindus and Muslims with elections. A country with social

relations perennially on the edge has debilitating consequences with respect to furthering the ethos of relational egalitarianism. However, the structure of modern representative politics is such that these dynamics are inherent in the system.

Much of the research on communal relationships in India has been discussed through the prism of secularism. Though the practice of secularism in the history of independent India has been patchy, the scholarly literature has produced a huge numbers of debates defining the Indian version of secularism where the relationship between the state and religion has been that of "principled distance" or "equal respect" or an amalgamation of religious freedom coupled with celebration of neutrality and a reformist justiciable disposition. Much of these assertions are made by deductions from the laws and practice of politics and norms of the Indian state when it comes to its engagement with religion. However, this literature has not produced a normative account of how social relations should be where liberal values of individual rights do not come into conflict with the religiosity of communities. What I have argued is to normatively enrich relational egalitarianism in conditions of deep plurality, what is required is a cultivation of our passions and a renewed focus on our moral sentiments that guide us. The logic of the nation-state and its attending apparatus has made us to

consider our fears and insecurities rational to such an extent that even irrational sentiments are often couched in a vocabulary of rational politics. The exaltation of reason over feelings, affects and emotions that we have been accustomed to has had a delirious effect on how we intersubjectively construct one another.

With the help of emerging literature on the subject, I have argued that to think that reason is bereft of passions is a misunderstanding since in our practical judgments, both the intertwined. This is not a call for bringing in more passions into politics or to participate in politics more passionately sacrificing our reasoning faculties, even though there are some critical scholars who do argue for the preponderance of affect in politics. The rationality that possession of nuclear weapons can transcend all our insecurities and fears is a fallacy as practical reason can never be completely exhausted by reason alone.

Our intersubjective political lives require passions of the right kinds. The obvious retort to such an assertion would be what would be the standards to judge the right passions from the wrong one. However, the question here is not of setting standards of deciphering the right and the wrong but to habilitate those passions which enable us to make reflective and impartial

judgments. Hence the decisive concept of significance is not the Manichean divide between wrong and right, but of impartiality and a sense of reflection in the social world. As the famous Humean dictum goes, "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions.", we are motivated to do certain things only when we care about them. The overwhelming emphasis on reason and rationality can itself produce its own form of illusions and to avoid that we need to be aware that our reasons are always imbued with our sentiments and passions. Our practical judgment should be able to incorporate both our cognitive and affective faculties when deliberating our public lives.

This normative framework provides us to rethink our concepts about secularism and ethnic politics in a more egalitarian fashion. While the rationalisation of means to enhance security is an important attribute, our moral concerns should also be affected by how the very same measures may end up distorting our faculties of judgment. When citizens are given justifications about the possession of nuclear weapons through numerous rational logics, those rationalizations should not eclipse our ability to affectively feel what the same weapons might do if one is at the receiving end of the tragedy of a nuclear war. More importantly, the ingroup-outgroup sentiments which forms the basis of much polarisation and ethnic conflict

rests on the logics of numbers and demographics related to electoral politics. While there may be normative justifications for representative democracy and the arrangements of electoral politics, it is important to emphasise that those justification which do not lead to impartial deliberations about politics will be deemed unjust. Most of the rationalist accounts studying communal politics in India has focussed on the outcomes of such a politics whether in terms of violence, riots or establishing rabidly communal politicians in power. These have provided various electoral logics to understand these dynamics. This dissertation wanted to reflect on the question of engaging the hearts through passions in a counterintuitive way. It is aware that the way passion of the crowds in democracies are reflected through arson, riots and violence which has led many to conclude that passions are detrimental to political life and hence should be done away with. However, that is a luxury we do not have considering the fact that it is only through passions that political life could be engaged as it provides us with the motivational surplus critical for politics. Instead of thinking about political life only through reason, we will be better off if we filter our reasons through affective and impartial judgments by putting ourselves in the other's position as Hume would have counselled.

Finally, apart from asserting that we need to rethink the workings of democracy from an elite perspective and recognize the cultivation of passions in our deliberation, my dissertation also puts forward a normative understanding of democratic subjectivity which should be one of aversion to conformism. While the first two emphasized on the re-imagining of the institutional arrangements of a liberal democracy and the intersubjective basis of social relations involving both cognition and affect, we also need to have a normative understanding of the values that a democratic citizen should possess.

In one of his most influential books, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Resistance,* James Scott argues that oppression and resistance are always in a flux and our disciplinary orientation which forces us to focus only on "historic events" fails to capture the multiple invisible ways in which the praxis of resistance is carried out. He calls this 'everyday resistance' which is a response to domination and servitude finding expression through forms of cultural resistance and non-co-operation. While Scott's work could account for the tactics one could employ to resist domination, it fails to normatively state what such modes of resistance mean normatively for a democratic citizen. Gilles Deleuze, echoes similar sentiments to Scott's when he writes, "There is no need to ask which is the toughest or most tolerable regime, for

it's within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one other... There is no need to fear or hope but only to look for new weapons.". (Deleuze 1992 :4)

Even though there is much to agree about with both Scott and Deleuze, I would make differ from them in the following respect. This dissertation does make value judgments and I still believe that there are both normative and substantive differences between different types of regime. It will be improper to equate the workings of a representative liberal constitutional democracy with an authoritarian monarchy or a totalitarian regime. Certain modes in which power gets exercised might have similarities but the resemblances often end there. As far as Scott is concerned, one can always be sympathetic to these daily forms of resistance but that should not discount the impact of events we have on our democratic subjectivity.

As I have shown using Wittgenstein, the project of identification of a subject as a democratic citizen is an important but momentary one. This process of identification does not happen on a day to day basis but requires a spark to enlighten our dormant modes of consciousness. It is in this aspect when a citizen realizes that she can be more than what she is, is that crucial moment for democratic flourishing. The empirical study where large number of

people in Koodankulam, many of whom had not previously introspected their own selves in a democracy that guarantees them formal equality but has always behaved in a patronizing fashion, is that moment of identification when as Wittgeinstein argues, things are no longer as the same before.

To align with this moment of identification, I have engaged with Ranciere's idea of 'radical equality' to think about politics where these events of resistance is simultaneously the moment of rupture wherein new demands are placed on the state. These new demands on the state are possible because the citizen refuses to identify with the identity that the state has inscribed on them. They refuse to be identified as lay people, non-experts, lacking judgment in what constitutes the greater good. This refusal to comply with the identity the state has inscribed, opens up new possibilities and imaginations. The state may have tarnished the anti-nuclear protestors as illiterate, anti-national or seditious, but the refusal of the protestors to stand up to the state's diktat thereby negating the established norms of division between the rich and the poor, the experts and the lay person, the urban-suave and the rural-boorish are obliterated as they demand their voices to be heard.

But Ranciere's radical politics suffers from a lack of affirmation. A politics of negation always comes up short in building lasting solidarities and that is the reason why many protests and resistance movements which start with much fanfare often fizzle out. A democratic subjectivity that can enforce the norms of relational egalitarianism also requires a transformation of our selves too. This is the very transformation which requires an aversive posture to existing arrangements informs Cavell's vision of democracy. His focus on the individual instead of the community, as is the case in Ranciere should not detract us from the normative import Cavell's thought has for our democratic life.

One of the aims of Cavell's philosophy is to take back the enterprise of philosophy from ivory tower theorisation and believe that philosophy is an activity that everyone can engage in. This is precisely the reason when he talks about politics, his focus is on conversation as through the act of speaking together we stake our claims on the existing order of things. For Cavell, the individual and the community are not disparate entities, but both intertwined with one another. In fact, the division is not between the one and the many, but within our own selves. This divided subject is what becomes part of a community and the identity of the self thus constructed is always in relation to the other. This relational aspect is what constitutes the democratic

morality for Cavell. The self gets constituted and reconstituted within oneself as well as by its encounter with the outside world. Neither the self nor the external world is static or immune to transformation.

This focus on the transformation of the self, that Cavell alludes to, has important consequences for democratic flourishing. As I write these words, the Government of India has brought in a discriminatory legislation which potentially paves the way for the country to become an ethno-democracy. Even though the law has been passed by the Parliament of India, there are protestors who have assembled in an open space under biting cold conditions to register their disagreement with a new citizenship amendment law. A substantial number of protestors include Muslim women, a figure which has been regularly stereotyped as one without any agency forced to live under patriarchal religious laws. The crowd also includes elderly women who may not have had the luxury to attend fancy schools or immersed in the social capital that a convent educated woman may possess. But in their refusal to identify with a law they deem unjust, they are inscribing newer notions of egalitarianism. These women who may not have been part of any such protest in the past are for the first time coming out to register their disavowal with the extant order. In that transformation of the self that affirms impartiality in judgment lies the promise of democratic politics.

Glossary

Aspect-change: This concept is derived from Wittgenstein's idea of aspect-seeing which means the ability to see something in multiple ways. This ability is crucial for democratic subjectivity as it alludes to the phenomenon of change as it is only through a change of perspective, the existing state of affairs can be questioned and altered.

Co-production: The concept is derived from Sheila Jasanoff's work where she defines co-production as "the simultaneous processes through which modern societies form their epistemic and normative understandings of the world." In her book, *States of Knowledge*, she goes on to show "how scientific ideas and beliefs, and associated technological artifacts evolve together with the representations, identities, discourses and institutions that give practical effect and meaning to ideas and objects."

Dissensus: Ranciere's concept of dissensus is a process by which the ordinary citizen disrupts the logic through which the state exercises its power over the citizen. For him the common-sensical familiar rules of government through which politics is conducted is fake politics while dissensus is the "real" politics.

Egalitarianism: A school of thought in normative political philosophy that seeks to delineate the contours of distributive justice, that is, regarding the distribution of benefits and responsibilities in a society. The theories from this school are markedly different from those that emanate from the libertarian or conservative tradition.

Moral Psychology: The concept is borrowed from Akeel Bilgrami who defines it as "the psychology of agents by which their choices and actions are explained, and in particular explained normatively in the sense that the explanation does not merely say why they chose or did what they did, but also sees it as essential to explanation to assess whether what they did was rational by the lights of their own desires and values."

Moral Sentimentalism: Born in the crucible of Scottish enlightenment through thinkers such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and David Hume, it argues that our ability to make moral distinctions depends on our feelings and sentiments. The emphasis here is that we do not always rely on our rational faculties when making moral judgments.

Perfectionism: Stanley Cavell emphasises on the importance of self-knowledge, and moral perfectionism is the method through which one can know oneself through moral reasoning. Contrary to scientific contexts, where the dynamics of giving and asking reasons is of paramount importance, in the domain of morality it is imperative to make oneself intelligible to the other in terms of the values and commitments to which one subscribes.

Phronesis: This word is borrowed from ancient Greece, where phronesis meant practical wisdom. Unlike techne or episteme, the focus here is on judgment, as to what needs to be done now in the present context. It emphasises on the concrete instead of the abstract, allows more significance to the personal and situated decision-making based on experiences.

Problem-space: David Scott defines it as an "ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs. That is to say, what defines this discursive context are not only the particular problems that get posed as problems as such (the problem of "race" say), but the particular questions that seem worth asking and the kind of answers that seem worth having." Scott advocates this re-orientation in thinking as in many decolonized nations, after the second world war, "anticolonial utopias have gradually withered into postcolonial nightmares.".

Realism: A school of thought in political theory that seeks to establish the autonomy of the political and believes that it is a mistake to derive norms for the political sphere from individual morality. This is in contrast to most ideal and normative political philosophy which seeks to establish principles as to how a well-ordered society should be designed. Realism rejects this ethics-first approach and believes that politics cannot be equated with applied ethics.

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