ABSTRACT

China, being the common denominator in elections and in the domestic politics of its region, has always endeavoured to legitimize its policy in Tibet by illustrating the darkest picture of traditional Tibetan Society. With respect to India, narratives of populism through foreign policy discourse were emphasizing on the perception of that Kashmir was the centre of early and frequent antagonism, and that sub-national democratization manifested in free and fair elections and in liberal constitutionalism in the context of full civil liberties merely occurred in the late 1970’s. However by the early 1980’s, this successful democratic opening had been shifted into a traumatic failure and to a sharp decline, then Kashmir had entered in a violent and internationalized insurgency period. In this paper, critical approaches to the study of populism will be discussed by a conceptual and analytical framework. Four main strategic processes will be evaluated; dealing with isolating incidence including a period of mobilization of social classes, newly-emerging identity politics, and global contestation, which has been particularly emerged after the Cold War. Stream of exclusion embodying internal minorities, external enemies, discriminatory policies, and moreover instrumentalisation of history to legitimize colonial narratives is to be reflected on within this framework.

Key Words: Imperialism, China, Tibet, India, Kashmir, Nationalism, Postcolonial

INTRODUCTION

The stock of American unilateral empire, which rose briefly during the earlier years of the so-called war, exploded by the aim of finishing terror and starting the democratisation process in Iraq and Afghanistan, has come to end and turned into a severe quagmire for the Unites States (US) military forces. America’s prestige took a considerable battering and its capacity to achieve decisive victory was deteriorated as hollow. The result has been a great disappointment and the operation has been one of the greatest mistaken foreign policy in the American history. Furthermore, with Obama administration’s foreign policy failure in “AfPak”, the US policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, the revolutions in the Arab World, that revealed America hypocrisy, and the everyday talk of unprecedented Western capitalism, carried away the US from his position of being a main decision maker in the
international relations. The new emerging global crisis of terrorism necessitated a widest cooperation from around the world. Meantime, in this context, the rise of the “rest”, especially of India and China is now evaluated as a defining trend in global politics. Indeed, the primary focus here is on the rise of China as a global economic and political power. How can one make sense of these emerging powers in order to better envisage the changing global order? What do the centre-periphery relations designated from the Marxist perspective; tell us about the nature of politics conducted in these large, multi-ethnic states? This paper accentuates that the specific configurations of relations between post-colonial, imperial and national impulses, exclusionary sometimes inclusionary populist nationalisms as they play out in their borderlands, offer a new understanding about Chinese and Indian States, which appeared as the main actors being a part of the BRIC Countries, which are all deemed to be at a similar stage of newly advanced economic development. In this article, only India and China will be put emphasis as they confront with serious rebellions in their borderlands.

The similarity in Chinese and Indian political behaviour in their attitudes towards their peripheries during the 1950s and also the 2000s, despite the very different relations between the economic and political systems in each country, reminds us of the predominant role of nationalism and populism behind the nationalist impulses, which cannot be reduced nor explained away as a side history, to the mere affirmations of the material conditions of the societies. India has witnessed considerable changes in living conditions, the relations between economic and political domains, and the rhetorical and social basis of power of bourgeois nationalism between 1950s and today. The transformation in China has been even more drastic. The China of the 1950s, during the emergence and consolidation of the People’s Republic, was quite different from China during the upheaval of Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, and its opening up under Deng Xiaoping, and the peaceful rise under his successors have dramatically changed the country’s economic, political and social structure. However, the mere sphere, which remained unchanged, was the asymmetrical use of power between the political centre and the periphery and the proliferation of indigenous nationalism that allowed recognition of ethno-national
minorities on the borderlands but only according to the rules set by the political centre. As India and China emerge as global powers mostly on the basis of economic growth, it becomes necessary to pay closer attention to the nationalist political sphere and to how the economic interests remained subservient to that political sphere in the borderlands.

Mimmi, has argued that “the Marxist treatment of nationalism has as its basis theories of universal evolution of the forces of production and of economic reductionism, as well as Eurocentric bias in concrete discussions of the universal process of change (1991: 185). Actually a historical materialist approach may help to understand specific structure of bourgeois nationalism in India and party nationalism in China yet remains insufficient in apprehending both Chinese and Indian behaviour toward the periphery inhabited by distinct ethno-nationalist peoples, political behaviour which can only be explained by the autonomy of political and the structuring role of the idea of national sovereignty.

The proposed concept of Postcolonial Informal Empire (PIE) by Dibyesh Anand, therefore performs two functions;

First, it seeks to identify the key dynamics of politics in multiethnic states of China and India by problematizing simplistic understandings of imperialism and postcoloniality. Imperial ethos and actions are not exclusive privileges of the Western World. It is the nation-state that shapes the architecture of coercive control in the borderlands of India and China. The globalizing bourgeoisie of these countries remains subservient to the political power of the securitized state.

Second, it provides a framework with which to understand a non-Western polity where there is a tension between politics of ethno-nationalism of distinct peoples inhabiting territorially contiguous areas in the borderlands of the state, on the one hand, and, on the other, the efforts of the state to minoritise these people within an overarching nation-statism and discipline them through various coercive and cooptive strategies.

Therefore, the PIE offers a framework, in which the centre-periphery relations occur in a destructive way, and the populist discourses utilised by the centre to legitimise its actions towards the periphery.

I. THE EMPIRE INHERITENCE

China and India, at different stages of their development since the 1950s, have remained the same: allegation of absolute political sovereignty over ethno-nationalist communities, which have to some extent problems with the majoritarian nationalism. To be able to better understand how they legitimise their rule over ethno-nationalist peoples subsumed within their boundaries, it’s necessary to focus on how different ethno-nationalist groups in the non-West may appropriate democracy as an instrument of
resistance to the everyday terror operations they undergo from their states. It’s important to go beyond all types of reductionism, precisely the economic one. The challenges are mostly about the politico-economic-cultural dominance. Giovanni Arrighi (2007) argues that “though from a very different perspective, that there is an undeniable decline of the American imperial hegemony and the rise of China/East Asia. He sees this as a positive shift away from the ‘destructive capitalism’ of the West to the industrious capitalism of China that is based on Confucian principles of social harmony and balance.”

Even though this doctrine should officially determine the political culture of China, rural and urban contention, also the territorial occupation, brutalisation of people based on their collective identity related to ethno-nationalism, and militarised borders defined the main character of centre-periphery relations. As for the principles of social harmony and balance, they were quite neglected by the State.

The term post-colonial in this article has been used in the sense of that both China and India have been victims of foreign imperialism in the past and now they apply a politics of mirror-behaviour towards the ethno-nationalist colonies as they are increasingly rising economic and geopolitical players, however cannot be yet the agenda-setter in the West-dominated international system. Thus, they should keep their power as a nation-state and avoid any act of secession. Formal empires are marked by a distinction between the metropolis and the colonies within the polities. Nevertheless, India and China, both accentuate on the equality of all citizens and on the equal distance to all groups in their community in theory; however in practice that’s not the case. The centre-periphery relations are based on subjugation of the groups of people with a distinct sense of ethno-nationalism defined in opposition to the majoritarian nationalism, and of appropriation of their history, identity and life, on the use of asymmetrical use of power maintained through coercion and consent. They are called as informal empire because the whole political structure is officially established on the basis of equality between all citizens.
II. COLONIAL IMPERATIVES OF THE CHINESE STATE IN TIBET AND XINJIANG

REGION

China vehemently rejects the accusation of colonising Tibetan and Uighur areas, and in facts continues to deploy the term “peaceful liberation” and “democratic reforms” for its assertion and consolidation of control over these territories. The policy of populist nationalism had been developed against these two ethno-national groups since they constitute the two more crowded minority groups between the other fifty-three ones.

II.a. Main Reasons Behind the Uighur Unrest in their Territory

XinJiang Uighur Autonomous Region is the largest political unit and administrative division of People’s Republic of China (PRC), constituting one-sixth of the nation’s total area. The region has very important national resources such as petroleum, coal, iron, tungsten, molybdenum, copper, lead, zinc, silver gold, jade, timber and furs are also found in quantity. Therefore, the region borders Tibet Autonomous Region and the most well-known historical Silk-Road ran through the territory from the east to its north-western border. In recent decades, abundant oil and mineral reserves have been found in XinJiang and it’s currently China’s largest natural gas-producing oil. Systematic exploitation of these potential resources by PRC began on a large scale only after 1949, when it has been part of the PRC following the Chinese Civil War because of the strategic importance of the region. During China’s economic boom, XinJiang has received considerable state investment in industrial and energy projects that have in theory benefited the whole region. Moreover the region includes many ethnic groups such as Han, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Hui, Uyghur, Kyrgyz, Mongols and Russians. Even though this region has witnessed ever increasing sharply rise of the Han Chinese population through induced migration transformed dramatically the demographical structure of the region, even as the Uighur Muslims’ share of the population came down consistently (Toops, 2004), the Chinese operations towards the region continued. Activists assert that Uighur commercial and cultural activities have been gradually curtailed by the Chinese state. There are complaints of severe restrictions on Islam with fewer mosques and strict control over religious school.
Human Rights group Amnesty International, which protects human rights worldwide, in a report published in 2013 declared that authorities had criminalised what they labelled as illegal religious and separatist activities and clamped down on any peaceful expressions of cultural identity.

In July 2014, some XinJiang government departments banned Muslim civil servants from fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.

Moreover, China has been accused of intensifying restraints on the Uighurs particularly after street protests in the 1990s. However, violence really escalated in 2009, because of the large-scale ethnic rioting occurred in the regional capital, Urumqi. Almost 200 people were assassinated in the unrest, most of them Han Chinese according to the officials. Thus, security was increased to a large extent and many Uighurs were detained as suspects.

Many such incidents took place in the region, as a result of which, the authorities put the blame on Uighur separatists. High-profile Uighur academic, Ilham Tohti was detained and later charged in September 2014, on charges of separatism, bringing about international criticism towards the Chinese anti-democratic policies towards the region.

China has often blamed the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), or people inspired by ETIM for violent incidents both in XinJiang and beyond the region’s borders. ETIM is alleged to endeavour to establish an independent East Turkestan in China, however the Movement’s activities remained unclear with some questioning the group’s capacity to organise such acts of extremism, indeed they didn’t undertake the responsibility of the attacks.

A prominent role in this process has been played by the quasi-militarised Bingtuan, that is, the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (Bhattacharji, 2009) that since 1954 has assumed “the duties of cultivating and guarding the frontier area entrusted to it by the state.” (Information Office, 2003)

From the PRC’s perspective, there are several reasons behind these operations of which the main factors can be enumerated as the vast distance and inadequate transportations facilities between XinJiang and core China, the greater accessibility from Russia, which in the modern period had allowed Russia to
actively intervene both politically and economically in regional internal affairs, to acquire a virtual monopoly over trade and to obtain exclusive right to exploit many natural resources, China’s lack of capital, equipment and technical expertise, and virtually uninterrupted Islamic rebellion within the region, which led to Sheng Shicai’s pro-Soviet regime establishing its rule over the whole territory of XinJiang province threatening the nation-state and civil war in China proper, which led to the establishment of the PRC in mainland China.

At the time of liberation, over 90 percent of the population of XinJiang was ethnically non-Han. Some three-fourths of the people were Muslim and the vast majority spoke Turkic languages and used the Arabic script. The twelve non-Han ethnic groups include Uighurs, Kazakhs, Hui, Mongols, and Daur, Khalkas, Manchus and Xibos, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Russians and Tatars. Obviously, it is significant that many of them are ethnically akin to the peoples of Soviet Central Asia. The main reason of Han resettlement which rapidly increased the Han component of the population to approximately 11 million people was the Chinese perception of threat of Russian invasion through the ethnic groups which may led to take strict precautions to keep the region under control. Since the Russian influence remained effective until after the fall of Qing Dynasty in 1912, and the Soviet Union supported an Uighur-led separatist East Turkestan Republic in the north of the Region in 1944-1949, however, helped to extinguish it when the communists took over in China proper. However the exaggerated perception of threat had often been used to justify repression within the region.

II.b. The Main Reasons Behind the Chinese Unrest towards the Uighur Autonomous Region

In the emerging PIEs, the modern nationalist elites have had different approaches towards the last pre-modern empires. More generally, the Imperial dynasties have often been accused for the decay of nationalist and civilisational spirit, for failing to unify the country against the European colonialists, for corruption of society. Especially in China, the Manchus, the rulers during the Qing Dynasty, which lasted until 1911, have been accused for weakening the country and failing to ward off the evil Europeans.
the same time, the nationalists have fewer problems making claims over the far-flung territories that had been ruled by the last pre-modern empires.

From the perspective of Uighurs, their violence has two justifications; ethnic separatism and religious rhetoric. The Uighurs, who reside throughout the immediate region, are the largest Turkic ethnic group living in XinJiang and are overwhelmingly Muslim. This combination of ethnicity and religion also involves the movement of religious and political ideologies, weapons and people. However, there are some cleavages between the Uighurs themselves. Groups that use violence want a separate state, others want to maintain the cultural distinction within an autonomous relationship with China and others are integrating into the Chinese system. The state always strives to give publicity to loyalist ethnic Uighurs.

Behind the current long-deceased conflict, lies a long struggle for self-determination by Uighur people, to keep their cultural identity, to have a voice in the political decisions. The Uighur people could not be unified under an institutional organisation, now they challenge to change this situation, nevertheless this challenge would not be tolerated by the PRC, who put great emphasis to the territorial integrity. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and the Muslim Central Asian states gained their independence, the dormant Eastern Turkestan independence movement in XinJiang was stirred into a revival process, thus the PRC being afraid of a cessation and of a potential lost in the Chinese territory, led it to apply very strict oppression towards the XinJiang Region, where the largest ethnic groups were still Uighurs and Han Chinese.

Behind the Chinese paranoia of losing the XinJiang autonomous region to the foreign powers, lays the belief that sustained and rapid economic growth and nationalism are the main mechanisms through which the political legitimacy is maintained. An unimpeded economic development requires a stable international environment and an open access to resources abroad. The foreign policy of China is thus fuelled by this specific need for an international environment which allows for uninterrupted economic growth to keep the domestic situation stable. Moreover, “China is an integrist nation-state, cast in an
imperial mould, if with a much longer past and on a much larger scale.” (P. Anderson, 2010) However the official narratives in China focus increasingly on civilisational continuity.

II.c. The Main Reasons Behind the Tibetan Unrest in their Territory

“Tibet has always been an inalienable part of the motherland China. For example, during Tang-Tubo times, the treaty clearly demarcated boundaries between China and Tibet, hence saw them as separate entities” (Norbu, 2001). “Tibetan Lamas had politico-religious relations only with the Mongo and Manchu Empires.” (Sperling, 2008) The religious and symbolic content of mchod-yon (patron-priest) relations between the Qing emperors, who were in favour of Tibetan Buddhism and were often seen in terms of Buddhist iconography, and the Tibetan Lamas who were respected as priests for the rulers, is entirely transformed into relations of power and political control. However, China ignores the fact that the representatives of the central government of Lhasa before 1908 were always Manchus and Mongols, who were always Buddhists and never Han. While these religious connections are rejected or ignored, the modern Chinese state is only content to make territorial claims based on that relation, that’s to say that the state utilises the relations which can be traced back to the very past history, as convenient to itself.

The case of Tibet also demonstrates the neurotic state characteristics of the relationship of PIEs to borderlands. There is absolutely no space for the Tibetans to express their dissatisfaction with any policy without being accused of separatism and of working for the “Dalai clique.” “The Chinese government has not only prohibited the possession of the Dalai Lama’s picture, but accelerated the “patriotic education campaign” that requires Tibetan monks and nuns to denounce the figure they venerate as sacred.” (Hilsum, 2008) There is a primacy of unity and territorial integrity over everything else. Stability is privileged over humanity, yet stability very narrowly defined.
II.d. The Main Reasons Behind Chinese Unrest Towards the Tibetan Autonomy

Beijing rejects accusation of oppression of Tibetans, saying its rule has greatly improved living standards for the Tibetan people. It accuses the Dalai Lama of being a “wolf in monk’s clothing” who seeks to destroy the country’s sovereignty by pushing for independence. In turn, the Dalai Lama maintains that he does not advocate independence but does prefer genuine autonomy that would allow Tibetans to maintain their cultural, language and religion under China’s rule.

Tibetans and their sense of deep resentment and despair over the prevailing conditions will continue as long as the Chinese government Tibet policy remains the same. Autonomy in the Tibetan case, proved to be incompatible with the prerogatives of the modern centralised state. Chinese political culture tended to justify the expansion of China’s borders and the assimilation of non-Chinese frontier peoples as a natural expansion of culture. Traditional Chinese frontier policy aimed to achieve frontier security through the advance of Chinese civilisation.

Behind the Chinese unrest towards the Tibetan autonomy, lies the 1951 17 points’ agreement. The logical mindset of this agreement was mainly about allowed extensive autonomy of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) including the preservation of Tibetan government with the Dalai Lama at its head and of virtually all other Tibetan institutions including the monastic system. However, the ultimate goal of the Chinese communists was the implementation of national regional autonomy in Tibet, yet which did not include the preservation of Tibetan political, religious and social institutions as guaranteed by the 17 point agreement. Thus, the autonomy promised to Tibet in the 17 point agreement, was therefore never intended to be anything more than a transitional and temporary arrangement that would last only until the PRC system of national regional autonomy could be implemented. Currently, Chinese leaders have apparently concluded that Tibetan autonomy is intolerable, since almost all aspects of Tibetan culture have nationalist and separatist implications. China’s belief that Tibetan autonomy is inevitably associated with the threat of Tibetan independence indicates that China could never be comfortable with any real Tibetan autonomy, an autonomy that inevitably perpetuates a separate Tibetan culture and national
identity and which therefore poses a threat to China’s national unity and territorial integrity. (Smith, 2004: 38)

III. THE ROLE OF POPULIST NATIONALISM IN CHINA LEGITIMIZING COLONIAL IMPERATIVES OF THE STATE IN TIBET AND XINJIANG REGION

A primary political mechanism through which the Post-colonial Informal Empires (PIE) assert their influence outside the core is through militarised or tightly controlled development. “The centre-periphery relations in PIEs regarding underdevelopment are similar to as well as different from the core-periphery international relations articulated by dependency theory. Underdevelopment is not a state of backwardness or isolation, but neither is it necessarily a product of a particular pattern of specialisation and isolation in the periphery.”(Brewer, 1990: 18) To legitimise the nationalist and strategic narratives dictating whether a geographically peripheral region will be kept economically underdeveloped or not, China for instance issued the Western Development Program deemed to regulate the huge imbalance between the well-developed and rich coastal east and the sparsely populated and backward West, merely serves to keep the border people domesticated and at the same time, acts as a symbol of strength for those living across the borders in neighbouring countries. Thus, so-called development is subservient to the strategic plans of the state. While the situation is complex, many say that ethnic tensions caused by economic and cultural factors derived to a large extent from the compelled demographical change in the region, are the root cause of recent violence. Many other development projects have brought prosperity to XinJiang’s big cities, attracting young and technically qualified Han Chinese from eastern provinces. The Han Chinese are said to be given the best jobs and the majority do well economically, something that has fuelled resentment among Uighurs. Thus the economic development of the region under Communist rule has been accompanied by large scale immigration of Han Chinese, and Uighur allegations of discrimination and marginalisation have been behind more visible and anti-Han and separatist sentiment since the 1990s. This has been converted into violence in every occasion, which can be accounted for by the theory of relative deprivation. Populism comes into effect in the sense that the state legitimises its
exploitation by disguising the principles of dependency theory pretending to develop projects in behalf of the population and to keep unified the nation-state’s integrity. As a matter of fact, the fundamental aim of the given projects was maintaining the autonomous regions economically backward.

As for the nationalist context, its xenophobia and political parochialism triggered the actions of the authoritarian government; as a result it had been subjugated to the serious criticism of its poor record of human rights, seen as a threat not only to party-state authority in China, but also more fundamentally to the Chinese way of life. Therefore, its cultural particularism opens the door for the official ideology to paint this threat as coming from not only from western imperialism, foreign governments and political forces, but also from Western values, cultural heritage, mode of knowledge, visions of history...etc, from in other words an absolutely incompatible, unchangeable and alien “West”. Finally, its complete refutation of the modern political values of freedom, democracy and human rights as inappropriate for China because of their Western origins helps the state to vindicate its suppression of demands for democracy in Chinese society as a heroic form of third-world resistance to the first world. (Xu, 2001: 122)

The justification for populist nationalism is based on the argument that Chinese nationalism has become the incarnation of the democratic process that allows the common people to join with others in forming the ideals of equality and dignity in the national environment. This populist rhetoric radicalises the emotional element in nationalist discourse and constructs nationalist politics as a fulfilment of the nation’s otherwise unavailable democratic public life. Thus, the conscious use of rhetoric of multi-ethnic nationalism and cultural difference to extend influence in the minority-inhabited peripheral regions, together with a wilful ignorance and suppression of political aspirations characterises China as a PIE. Any expression of political difference has no place. In China, the minority nationalities already have been given autonomy, and hence no further demands are possible. A recent White Paper on Ethnic Minorities in China makes clear the role it sees for media representations: “The state also pays great attention to relevant training for those working in press and publishing, gives guidance, and
encouragement to them to correctly comprehend and actively publicize ethnic policies, laws and regulations and basic knowledge in this regard.” (People’s Republic of China, 2009) Therefore, dissident narratives of history are papered over as the only valid narrative is one that confirms Tibet to have always been an “inalienable” part of the Great Motherland of China. The facts that question the dominant story are ignored.

Populist nationalist representations also function to give a sense of coherence to the identity of polity by mixing the politics of hope and fear. Citizens and subjects of PIEs hope for a better future where they will reacquire their past glory. At the same time, they are mobilised around a fear of possible enemies within the society such as dissidents, critics, fifth columns minorities, separatist ethno-nationalist groups in the periphery, and in the international arena, the old arrogant West, or a jealous neighbour.

The Western Development Project of China, which would affect XinJiang and Tibet, and other provinces and autonomous regions, is more than a program for a rapid economic development; it is meant to bring stability to the periphery (Goodman 2004; Lai 2002). It is self-explanatory that this Go West project is applied in ethnic minority areas, and the migration of better-skilled Han is seen as an inevitable and even an essential component of this project.

Not only does China deny practicing colonial occupation in Tibet and XinJiang or swamping them with Han Chinese migration (Jing Wei, 1989), but it has recently created a new annual holiday on 28 March in Tibet called Serfs Emancipation Day to remind the younger generation of how the Old Tibet under the Dalai Lama was feudal and oppressive. Chinese propaganda and diplomacy spend millions of yuans making a solution that control over Tibet is the best one for the Tibetans. Significant emphasis is put on blaming foreign imperialists, especially British, and hostile foreign powers, led by the United States, for creating most of the troubles in Tibet through their support to the archseparatist, the Dalai Lama. The Tibetans wanting a different fate for themselves are often seen as supporters of imperialists while those who are working for the status-quo inside China, are celebrated as patriotic anti-imperialists. Because Tibet and XinJiang have the status of “autonomous regions”, which is supposed to protect certain
privileges for the local Tibetans and Uighurs (for instance, only they can be the nominal head in their respective regions or the one-child policy is relaxed for them, China represents itself as non-imperial.

While modern Chinese nationalism has minoritised Mongols and Manchus as part of the Chinese Nation since the days of Sun-Yat-Sen, historically the Mongol and Manchu emperors retained a distinct entity even while presiding over an empire in China.

Finally, it is not helpful to use contemporary concepts such as sovereignty or independence to re-interpret the Chinese-Tibetan relations (Anand, 2006). These examples point to the selectiveness of memory in the dominant historical discourse of the civilisational nation-state.

IV. COLONIAL IMPERATIVES OF INDIAN STATE IN KASHMIR

In the case of India, the emphasis is on self-representation as a responsible democracy. While the Indian foreign policy in recent years has shifted to work closely with Western countries as strategic partners, there is a strong sense of being unique when it comes to combining plurality, traditional civilisation, and modern democracy. In India, the self-serving notion of being a moral post-imperial country with values of Gandhian non-violence and Nehruvian non-alignment, therefore avoiding crude power politics remains strengthened. Even as the Indian state brutalises populations in its peripheries and deteriorates democracy by allowing the military and paramilitary a free hand, it sustains the myth of post-colonial democratic nation.

IV.a. Main Reasons Behind the Kashmir Autonomous Region Unrest in their Territory

Dissenting voices on Kashmir are either ignored or misrepresented as extremist or separatist. In the peaceful times, the people in Kashmir have been pacified or through the use of force and propaganda, and the cultures of the region were celebrated as a colourful addition to the primary story of mainstream nationalism.

The state willingly put emphasis on the role of the media by using it as an instrument of presenting views of the state correctly but never to represent the view of the people in the periphery. Thus, in India, the
corporatized media agents act as a defender of the securitised state when it comes to representing the views of the periphery.

India acquired Kashmir in October 1947 on the pretext of restoring law and order. The systematic cruelty towards the Muslims in Kashmir, by the autocratic Dogra Mahajara had led to a widespread revolts and rebellions in the area. The civilian population in Kashmir is exposed to high level of violence, as demonstrated by the high frequency of deliberate events such as detention, hostage and torture. The reported violence may result in substantial health problems, including mental health disorders as well.

From the historical point of view, the seeds of the violence were sown soon after the termination of the British rule in 1947. According to the official site of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, during partition, the Kashmiri population, the majority of whom is Muslim, was promised a choice of joining either India or Pakistan through a popular vote but this plebiscite never took place. Instead, partition was the start of a long history of conflict affecting the roughly 8 million inhabitants of Kashmir. Both India and Pakistan have made control of a unified Kashmir keeping their dominance as an essential cornerstone of their national identities and have involved in several wars between 1947 and 2002 on the issue. The ceasefire line between India and Pakistan, called “the Line of Control” in 1972, still exists today separating this territory of around 2.2 million square kilometers into three parts. India controls the largest parts, with the rest governed by Pakistan and China.

As a consequence, the Kasmir Valley is today one of the most militarized zone in the world. According to a report published by the “Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, a movement against enforced disappearances, with about 700.000 armed and paramilitary forces stationed there, the ration of civilian to security personnel is about 1:7. In this highly militarized area, the life and liberty of people is governed by draconian legislations awarding arbitrary and excessive powers of preventive detention, arrest, search, seizure, and power to shoot to assassinate on suspicion use lethal force, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act, and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Therefore, immunity is a prevailing notion in this so-called “legal” architecture, and this has
established a culture of impunity. In other words, while human rights violations by security forces have been escalated over the last two decades, there has been any attempt of accountability. Despite investigations, and judicial enquiries, no one has been punished for crude crimes such as extra-judicial executions, custodial torture, rape and enforced disappearances, which constitutes a serious threat to the right to life and violates fundamental human rights. Although the number of disappearances has reduced in the recent past, the struggle for justice in existing cases still continues. The people in Kashmir requests the right to liberty and personnel security, the right to be recognized as a person before law, the right to legal defense, and the right not to be subjected to torture. Nevertheless, they are still tenants and military are owners, and how can a state claiming to be a democracy can allow military to be above law?

**IV.b The Main Reasons Behind the Strict Policies Applied Towards Kashmir**

From the Indian perspective, Kashmir is a serious threat to the stability of a region of great strategic importance to pose a nuclear threat for the entire world.

The valley of Kashmir is a perfect agricultural area. The main products are brass, wheat, corn, barley and tobacco. Orcharding and sericulture constitute a great party of the valley’s economy. Husbandry has been developed by the time. The Kashmir goad is very famous around the world. Additionally, the region possesses rich natural resources such as copper, iron, bauxite, zinc, marble, and hard-coal. However, the main source of income of people is tourism. Also, it's impossible to mention about the medicinal plants of Kashmir.

The fundamental goal of India is to reduce its existential anxiety by mitigating the India-Pakistan contestation in the region and the origins of the political forces that for a time threatened to evict India from the part of the state it controls. “The crisis in Kashmir”, provides an incisive account of the post-independence collision between new social forces and flawed institutions that underpinned the explosion of violence from 1990 (Ganguly, 1999). The main argument in the book is that the insurgency can be explained by political mobilization and institutional decay. In an attempt to woo the Muslims, the government dramatically expanded literacy, mass media and higher education. Meanwhile, being afraid
of a potential cessation, it suppressed the development of political institutions. Thus, being unable to express their dissent in an institutional context, the Kashmiris resorted to violence. Most scholars have argued that the conflicts of ethnicity and regional identity in Jammu and Kashmir, and the rise in the culture of Jihad were strengthened by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, nourished by the extremists’ views and money coming from Osama Bin Laden and reached to its peak in the acts of the Taliban. Thus, in a world configured by the tragic events of September, 11, 2001, and shaped by ever increasing Islamophobia, thus the Indian federal government attempted to avoid the jeopardizing effects of a culture of Islamic Jihad in its main borderland and tended to apply strict policies against the inhabited Muslims. Any reminder of special status of Kashmir, which had acceded to India with the promise of autonomy and under specific treaty conditions, most of which have been eroded, generated a paranoia in Delhi regarding anti-nationalist separatism. He 2010 Kashmir protests have been evaluated not as struggle for development and livelihood, but for “azaadi” freedom, and it’s about protection of particular people, the Kashmiris. The Indian State responded to the protests by suppressing and ignoring dissenters in the periphery. Because democracy for Kashmiris has meant for the state a corrupt and compliant local elites propped up by the centre through fraudulent elections; exposed to everyday humiliations and reminders that India does not trust them.

V. THE ROLE OF POPULIST NATIONALISM IN INDIA LEGITIMIZING COLONIAL IMPERATIVES OF THE STATE IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

As Anand stated “the Imperial Indian State manages to legitimize its suppression of a specific people in the name of fighting terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.”(Anand, 2011: 82) Thus, the state actions in Kashmir and the draconian laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act that allows the security forces to act in impunity, and the free-media’s complicity with state propaganda, were accepted publicly. The Indian nationalist bourgeoisie did not see Kashmir as economically indispensable whether as a source of resources or labor or as a market. To legitimize the level of violence deployed by the Indian state in its periphery and the mundane and quotidian nature of the state violence and the asymmetry of power
between centre and periphery, the nationalists utilize the argument of inheritance from the British and convinced the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir to accede to India. Thus, these two regions became integral to India as a validation of Indian secularism and any compromise with the aspirations of the people in the North-East was seen as a slide down the slippery slope of Balkanization. The nationalist instincts of centralist governments towards the international calls of human rights is always to install this issue as a great threat to the national unity calling it as a national security problem and to continue the policies by intensifying the rigor acts under a false “anti-imperial” and “anti-big power” rhetoric.

VI. CONCLUSION

Obviously, PIEs are powerful entities. Rhetoric of empire is equal to the rhetoric of strength. Empires, by their very nature proliferates power and prestige. However, the PIEs have certain paranoia of existence, of which the origins can be traced back to the colonial periods. Their main focus is preserving their territorial integrity without any cessation thus according to them, a compromise over political control in the periphery is a slippery slope which may with a breakup of the empire. Hence, compromises and protests can be tolerable from the perspective of certain political entities; nevertheless they are branded as dangers to national unity and stability in the periphery from the perspective of the empires. As a consequence, the elite and the rest of people in the centre will accept normal the state’s use of overwhelming violence, coercion and undemocratic deceits. Exceptional violence in the core can be normal in the periphery as the PIEs remain neurotic about their vulnerability.

China and India, though being very different political systems; the former being a bourgeois multi-party democracy, and the latter being a Communist party state, display similar political attitude towards their periphery. The commonality in their attitudes arises from the role played by the ideas of sovereign nationalism. The main problem in the asymmetric use of violence in their periphery is related not to the relations of production but to the idea of political nationalism. Following Althusser, relations are before the subject, but the foundation of these relations is less economic than asserted by Marxian thinking. The
economic factor remains subjugated to the political one. For instances, in the border regions economic principles well accepted in the core, remain firmly confined to the political considerations.

Finally, what we see with the resurgence of India and China is a conscious affirmation of their multi-ethnic statehood that tries to keep under control the multiplicity and differences. A desire to minoritize distinct ethno-nationalist communities inhabiting the borderlands led to the use of large-scale nationalism, militarized development and securitized state. This far-reaching process of acknowledging cultural differences but extinguish political identities transform the multi-ethnic states to postcolonial informal empires while insisting on the constant anxiety about the precariousness of the imperial project.