Goa´s Democratic Becoming and the Absence of Mass Political Violence

Political change, it is presumed, especially in transitional or emerging nations of Asia and Africa, is likely to be prefaced by massive political violence. This phenomena, it is believed, not only threatens viability of these nation states, and their capacity to function effectively, but also forces the discipline of comparative politics to evolve new conceptualization in order to understand this crisis (Sloan 1971 : 12). This emasculation occurs as a result of transition « from empire to nation », a price for « liberation » from coloniality. Violence, therefore, becomes one more rationalization for American and Eurocentric formulations of the failure of emerging Asian-Indian nation-states as integrating forces. Clearly, therefore, the post colonial challenge subsists in the entrenchment of new state formations in a colonial past and their potential to redefine society to create a space for the varied culture world of its people, asserting diverse identities.

In the case of Goa, a lusotopic space, its historical fashioning, its multicultural ethos, despite its ethnological diversity, and more importantly its democratic political institutions, more specifically its bi-party system have managed political change without the aberration of large scale mass political violence, vindicating the cause of democracy and the fact that orderly change is possible in transitional societies. Ironically the phenomenology of the « new imperialism » of the 21st Century, betrayed by deleterious violence against nations and peoples, seems to suggest that democratic political institutions have met their annihilation in the « land of their birth ».

Violence in politics

The role of violence as a medium of political discourse has increased strikingly in South Asia, Far East, Africa and South America in the post colonial era. But regrettably this malignancy is surreptitiously projected as a « southern phenomena », oblivious of either the major wars of Europe, or the massacre of indigenous peoples by colonizing powers. Instantiation and counter instantiation of violence therefore, would be a tautologous starting

point. The contextuality of violence would work toward a deeper comprehensibility.

In India, though a violent revolution was not the cause of independence or founding of democracy, in contrast to the French or American typologies, Hindu–Muslims riots on a vast scale preceded, accompanied and followed the transfer of power in August 1947… Bloody confrontation has almost become the rule today in the process of mediation between the various constituents of the highly plural Indian polity (Roy 1996 : 321). Secessionist violence, caste violence, communal violence[1] in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, and electoral violence are other shades of this dangerous trend in political discourse. Violence in caste politics, agrarian violence, generalized violence and violence by the state itself, being yet other forms of it.

Communal riots became an instrument of politics way back in the 1940s when major riots were part of the movement for partition of India and the scale of violence was enormous. Since then 1141 communal incidents between 1950 and 1963, 2115 in 1964 and 1025 between 1964 and 1970 have been recorded (Krishna 1985 : 62). With the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party on the Indian political scene in the 1980s, and its rise to power in the late 1990s, the entire political atmosphere in India stands vitiated, with its flagrant and open provocations to Muslims and minorities, and its provincial state government´s complicity in the Gujarat riots.

Preceding accounts of all forms of violence are neither comprehensive nor complete in the description of their intensity or the horror they evoked. Undoubtedly, however, « they are all expressions of political interaction between the diverse ethnic communities in India » (Roy 1996 : 337), and the failure of the state and the democratic apparatus to meet their aspirations. This contextuality gives a certain phenomenology to violence aiding its comprehensibility, without in any way justifying it.

While considering political violence, it must be remembered that in the historiography of modern India, it has been seen as an aberration and as an absence. Aberration in the sense that violence is seen as something removed from the general run of Indian history : a distorted form, an exceptional moment, not the « real » history of India at all. Violence as an absence because the « history » of violence is about context, because contours and characters are presumed, and its forms are not investigated in sufficient detail (Pandey 1998 : 1).

Violence and sectarian strife are located in a context where the rhetoric of nationalism is of central importance. The highly centralized Indian nation state, similar to western idealization of models of social homogeneity and cultural hegemony (Das Gupta 2003 : 25), speaks on behalf of get-rich-quick, consumerist middle class and its rural, rich peasant allies. It furthers sectional interests and an opposition is seen as anti-national, especially if it comes from the « fragments » of Indian society, such as the smaller religious and caste communities, tribal groups, industrial workers or activist women´s

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1. Political violence has taken the form of secessionist movements and terrorism in Punjab and now in Jammu and Kashmir ; insurgent and extremist activities in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Naxalite ; violence in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar ; Caste violence and self immolation against reservation of admission seats and jobs to professional colleges for the other backward classes (OBCs) in the anti-mandal agitation of early 1990s ; communal violence with political overtones in most parts of the country, especially the North. The worst cases in recent memory are the Bhagalpur riots of 1989, the Bombay Riots of 1992 and the Gujarat riots of 2002.

groups, which represent minority cultures. The Brahmanical Hindu, consumerist « mainstream », which in fact represents a small section, is flaunted as the national culture (Pandey 1998 : 2-3). This mainstream therefore produces violent reactions from the « fragment ».

Violence is such a dominant part of discourse that political observers heaved a sigh of relief when the 2002 elections in Jammu and Kashmir were completed with less than anticipated violence, after being staggered over four weeks, to avoid disruption by various Kashmiri separatist or Kashmiri independence movements (Burki 2002 : 7). But hardly had the new People Democratic Party (PDP) government been put in place and a « soft policy » announced towards the separatists, that killing and assassinations resumed. At the time of writing, the massacre of 24 Kashmiri pundits (all Hindus) in March 2003 was the latest. Contrary to the failure of the state or even orderly change presumptions, this brings to the fore the problematic of ethnic movements which have been denied accessibility to power and marginalized by an unaccommodating leadership, a consequence of the authoritarian disregard for differences. The failure has not been one of the incapacity of democratic institutions, but of their institutionalization and accommodation. However, Goa´s case is a telling testimony of how political differences and conflict can be managed without mass violence. I intend to explicitate how the hallowed sacred invention of democracy and its institutions of the North American and European cultural space can be reinvented in the Asian imagination as well, to manage and fulfil the needs of this Lusotopic society.

Goa´s ethnological profile

Goa, the 25th Indian state, was liberated from Portuguese colonial rule, in 1961, fourteen years after India´s engagement with democratic institutions and electoral politics. It has its fair share of multireligious and multicaste complexities much like the rest of India. Majority of the population comprises Hindus, Christians and Muslim, but Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Jains and Jews form a small number. There are 30 to 35 castes and subcastes among Goan Hindus[2], 17 castes among Catholics and 20 among Muslims (Pereira : 343). Goa has most of the castes found in the neighbouring state of Maharashtra, some castes from Karnataka and also the now volatile state of Gujarat. It has migrants from almost all states of India including the trouble spots of India - Kashmir, Assam, Gujarat.

The 1,3 million population of Goa, is more than the Sultanate of Bahrain (0,652 million), Malta (0,392 million) and Mauritius (1,2 million). Geographically, its 3 702 sq kilometers land area is larger than Bahrain (669 sq kms), Malta (316 sq kms) and Mauritius (2,040 sq kms). Despite this

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2. These include Brahmans (Chitpavan, Karade, Padhe Joshi and Goud Saraswats). Other castes include Marathas (warrior race), Vaishyas (the business caste), Gurav (priests who are not treated as Brahmins), Sonar (goldsmiths), Kansar (occupation in brass and metal works), Sutar, Lohar (blacksmith), Olar or Kankankar or Bogar (bangle merchants), Shimpi (tailor), Kharvi (fishermen) or Gabit, Gosavi, Zogui, Piddukkar, Bhandari, Komarpaico, Kumbhar (potter), Agri, Gaude, Parit, Mahale or Hajam of Nhavi, Teli, Dhangar, Gauli, Lingayat, Gujir, Mhalshi, Perni, Bhavani and Deuli, Forgent or Chedde or Bande, Mahar (basket makers) and Chamar (shoemakers) - the latter two being considered as scheduled castes or untouchables traditionally.

diverse ethnography, comparable to other states in India, why does the citizenry eschew violence as a dominant means of political discourse ? The answers probably rest in the three broad dimensions of the political context - (i) the extent of democratic institutionalization in Goa, (ii) the willingness of the leadership and ruling groups to share power and resources with the mobilized groups (Kohli 1998 : 7-8), and conversely, the unwillingness on the part of the leadership of those groups to take the movements into large scale violence, in instances where their demands had not been fulfilled, (iii) and, to a lesser extent, the size of the state is also signposted as a factor. The historical trajectory and people´s response to colonial regimen may be other causal factors.

Goa´s Democratic Becoming

The institutionalization of democracy and its accommodative or inclusive capability is to my mind the major factor for the non-operationalization of violence as a means of political discourse. At the onset of 41 years of Goa´s liberation, two perceptions of democratic Goa are apparent. The first one, the « dire straits of democracy » perception, underlines the dissipation of political institutions. This political process is mirrored in defections and corruption and in the many pressures of uncontrolled development and immigration, such as the steady increase in crime, the degeneration of traditional values with the subtle assault of consumerism, and a global pop culture with its package deal of ills. The other one, the « democratic complexity » perception – the more plausible of the two - strains to comprehend the new Goa, struggling to be born out of the vestiges of colonialism and its democratic initiation. A Goa that is groping to adjust to the alienness of democratic institutions in their European form. A Goa that paradoxically asked for the postponement of the 1999 polls, for the extension of president´s rule and even for the boycott of elections, and yet prides in democratic values and institutions. This is a Goa « that is more complex and both multi-layered and multifaceted, not amenable to neat and confident portrayals perhaps » (Kothari 1993 : 24).

How do we conceptualise this Goa ? Goa, in my approximation, needs to be perceived in the context of a post colonial society, which emerged after the collapse of the last vestiges of European colonialism, enabling just 41 years of interplay of modern democratic institutions and familiarity with its working and practices. What time frames enable a space to evolve from a colonial regime to a « well functioning » democracy is really a quixotic question for democratic theory. Each society´s composite uniqueness and its variegated time variant socio-cultural mosaic, presents much complexity to engage with an answer. Goa was and is presently engaged in an ever-growing complexity in its attempt to construct a cohesive political community. Consider the pre-opinion poll controversy of 1967, over whether there should be any political identity called « Goa » at all, or it had to be merged with the neighbouring province of Maharashtra[3] ; or whether

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3. Just two years after the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule, from 1963 onwards, Goa was dogged by a serious controversy whether it should be an independent province within India or it should be merged with the neighbouring province of Maharashtra. The Indian

the official language of this political community should be Marathi or Konkani ; or more recently whether the Official Language Act had done injustice to Marathi by terming it as a « language for official use » rather than « official language ».

These processes may be at times potentially explosive and fragile. Take for instance the controversies regarding Official Language[4] and the Konkan Railway[5] which led to agitations, eventually ending in minor incidents of violence. However, these processes are not an aberration or a blot compared to a pure form of American or European democracies or western notions of community or polity. These processes cannot be « unusual » contrary to Rubinoff´s formulation (1998). The shallowness of such western scholars who seek to impose modular western formulations is flawed methodologically. New theory need to be constructed on how culturally differentiated societies operate, precisely because Goa is part of « new political orders in which the greater part of humanity lives » (Low 1991). These processes are unique and it calls for the refining of approaches and theorization.

Crucial to any historical narrative and understanding of integration of post colonial societies, is perhaps the problem of transition. Goa is actually caught in the web of a historic problematic - the coexistence of two conflictive political and administrative legal systems - the Portuguese and the British Indian. Peripheral as it may seem, Goa had to immediately change over from a dictatorial colonial regime, to a parliamentary democracy, within a period of two years, from December 1961 to December 1963 (Fernandes 2000). The interim period of six months of military rule and six months of civilian administration could hardly have been adequate to blur out the contradictions that arise from such a sudden political systemic change, even in the direction of democracy. Citizenship was effected into a new political system, a new administration, a new linguistic matrix - English. Crucial to this democratic « cataclysm » was the psychological and emotional integration of Goans. The integration of Goa (the territory) and Goans (the people) was tactfully structured, first by ensuring normality and creating an atmosphere for introduction of a civilian administration ; second, by the repealing of all repressive Portuguese laws and the operationalization of an informal Consultative committee (comprising prominent citizens), which assisted the Lieutenant Governor[6] of the newly independent territory, in enacting legislation that was of urgent public interest (Gune 1979).

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government decided to settle this issue by holding a Referendum in 1967, the first of the kind, which resulted in favour of Goa being retained as a separate province.

4.   This controversy pertained to the adoption of an official language for the state. The controversy took the shape of mass movements in 1986-87 and finally ended with the passing of the Official Language Act in 1987, making Konkani the official language and Marathi the associate official language. This left both Konkani and Marathi protagonists dissatisfied and hence the issue refuses to die even till recently.

5.   The central government decided to improve communications between North and South India by completing the New Delhi - South India rail link with a high speed Konkan railway project joining Mumbai to the Southern state of Kerala. The route passed through Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka. In Goa a movement under the banner of the Konkan Railway Realignment Committee (KRRAC) demanded that the railway avoid the coastal route and instead pass through the Eastern part of Goa. Serious issues of environmental damage and health hazards were raised. The project was completed by making some realignment of part of the route and is presently fully operational.

6.   Within the Indian federal framework, a state (province) has a Governor as head of state, whereas a union territory (a centrally administered territory) has a Lieutenant Governor.

Finally, to understand Goa, one has to perceive that socio-cultural structurations such as religion, caste, sub-caste and language, which operate within institutions of local governance, such as *panchayats* (local governments), and the State Assembly, ought to be viewed in the larger context of the « deepening of democracy » and of the end of the hegemonic hold of these institutions by a Brahmin and Catholic elite, which held sway during the colonial regime. These perceptions should form the benchmark of any understanding of Goa, especially of its political institutions and processes.

Democratising Goa or Goanising Democracy ?

Developing countries are seldom supposed to offer conducive settings for democratic political systems, because they do not fit the shopping list of « ideal conditions » for democracy straight jacketed by Western theory. India´s choice of democracy in a setting of poverty, ethnic diversity and immense complexity of developmental problems must utterly puzzle any theorists of democratic politics (Das Gupta 1993 : 53). The prospects of democracy in Goa were even more precarious than elsewhere. Unlike the rest of India, there were no political parties, no political leaders embedded in democratic traditions and no multiparty elections. To understand the institutionalization of democracy with a typically Goan variant, and to examine the nature of political development, which makes violence redundant as a political tool, it is pertinent to understand the effectiveness of periodic free and fair elections and the operationality of cabinet government in Goa.

Periodic Fair and Free Elections and Violence

Democracy, in Goa, introduced the principle of political equality to trump natural and societal inequalities, as elsewhere. Equality didn´t mean crude equalitarianism but equal rights to be consulted about matters that touch citizens closely (Entwistle 1971), including the participation of both Saraswat[7] or Bahujan[8], Hindu, Christian or Muslim, backward castes, rich or poor... Democracy would allow for redistribution of wealth and treat each and all citizens as equal before the law. It factored in a kind of consociationalism compatible with human dignity and justice and enabled participation in governance. In terms of political development, the first Assembly elections[9] catapulted the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) to power, an agglomeration of non Brahmin castes, while the Catholic Brahmin party - the United Goans Party formed a strong

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7. Saraswats or Saraswat Brahmins are the highest in the caste hierarchy in Goa. They are considered as outsiders in Goa by local Brahmins since they are presumed to have come down from the area in Gujarat adjacent to the river Saraswati.
8. The *Bahujan* is a political mobilization created by the group around the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) around the time of Goa´s liberation, to merge Goa with Maharashtra. They projected the Saraswat Brahmins and Catholics as the « they ». *Bahujan* unlike in Maharahstra consists of Goan Brahmins, and all the castes including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
9. The first democratic elections were held in Liberated Goa on 9 December 1963, after four and a half centuries of autocratic rule. The MGP, which emerged as the single largest party with 14 seats, was led by Dayanand Bandodkar, who became the first Chief Minister.

opposition. Since then, 10 Assembly elections have been held up to May 2002, and approximately 26 political parties have contested for political power, a few of these being just splinter groups with no party organisation or mass base.

To understand the logistics of an election, examining the June 2002 elections would be indicative. A total Goan electorate of 937,670 was expected to vote for a unicameral House. Two hundred and twelve candidates were contesting through 1135 polling booths for 40 seats. The Election Commission of India used about 8 000 government employees, 5 000 police personnel and, for the second time, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). Twelve Assembly constituencies, declared « hyper sensitive », attracted additional police personnel. Thirty persons were placed under preventive detention, in addition to 99 from whom good behaviour bonds were taken by the police, from the time elections were announced. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code of 1973, which prohibits the meeting of five or more persons, was imposed around sensitive booths as a preventive measure. On 30th May 2002, 67.48 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote. Voting was by and large peaceful (Sinha 2002). Stray incidents of election related offences were registered by police in some parts of Goa. Thirty five persons were detained on election day, for minor offences. Six incidents of minor assault were reported[10]. There were no major incidents of mass violence, serious injury or deaths, which are common place, especially in the Northern states of India.

These elections occurred against the backdrop of the serious communal carnage in Gujarat and a strident speech by the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in Goa, which singled out Muslims with questions such as « Who started the fire ? Who spread it?... »[11] (Barbosa 2002 : 11). The chief minister of Goa, himself a Bharatiya Janata Party member, staunchly defended it and compared it to President George Bush´s speech following the September 11th attack on the World Trade Centre, saying that « elections in Goa were not about water taps and electricity connections, but about international terrorism » (Barbosa 2002 : 11). The opposition Congress capitalized on the Gujarat riots, the partial burning of a Mosque in North Goa and a Chapel door in South Goa, as issues indicative of the communalism of the BJP. That this posturing did not end in any large scale violence perhaps evidenced the institutionalization of democratic institutions and their inclusiveness of the political periphery[12].

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10 . Minor instances included those pertaining to threatening, canvassing beyond the last date, moving around with crude weapons, unlawful assembly and wrongful restraint. Minor assault was reported in Canacona taluka and Benaulim Constituencies of South Goa and the Curchorem Constituency in eastern Goa.

11. The Godhra incident which sparked off the communal carnage in Gujarat in 2002 reportedly began with arsonists who happened to be Muslims, setting a train compartment on fire due to some misunderstanding between a Muslim boy and Hindu activists who had gone to Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram, on the beckoning of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, both rightist Hindu organizations. For further reading, see for instance ENGINEER 2003 : 280-282.

12. Four months earlier, in the January 2002 local government (*panchayat*) elections, which involved 6 million voters, 4659 candidates contesting for 185 local government bodies, 30 sensitive areas were identified. Even with a 70 per cent turnout, only one person was arrested for what the police called « creating problems » during the poll process, and two cognizable offences were registered against two groups for intercepting and threatening workers of rival panels. Both incidents occurred in South Goa. The lack of violence in these elections is indicative of the faith people repose in democratic institutions and processes of electing their representatives.

Operationality of Cabinet System of Government

Since 1963, the Union Territory (UT) of Goa has had a stable bi-party system (which the Indian polity aspires to), wherein two major parties obtained a major chunk of the popular vote, as seen in table I.

Tab. I. — THE OPERATIONALITY OF A STABLE BI-PARTY SYSTEM UNDER UT STATUS (1963-1977)

Party		Number of seats won				Percentage of total vote secured		
Election Year	*1963*	*1967*	*1972*	*1977*	*1963*	*1967*	*1972*	*1977*
MGP	14	16	18	15	40,13	40,37	37,52	38,61
UGP	12	12	10	Defunct	29,68	37,98	31,97	NA
CONGRESS	1	DNC	1	10	16,72	NA	13,97	28,73
Others	3	02	1	5	13,47	21,65	16,54	32,66
Total seats	*30*	*30*	*30*	*30*	*100,00*	*100,00*	*100,00*	*100,00*

Source : compiled from FERNANDES 1997.

During the first 16 years, the non Brahmin castes dominated the Goan polity with a stable majority[13], between 40 per cent to almost 38 per cent of the vote. The United Goans Party (UGP), composed essentially of Christian Brahmins and middle castes, formed a strong opposition securing 30 to 38 per cent of the vote. The Congress, essentially of Hindu and Catholic Brahmins, drew a blank at the elections. For 16 years, castes camouflaged as political forms operated in this triangular equation. The MGP (Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party) rule finally ended due to its failure to abandon narrow primordial caste-language agenda and corruption, and to fulfill the aspirations of the minority marginalized castes within its fold. These groups therefore diserted it in favour of the Congress, thus crumbling the agglomeration called *bahujan*. The bi-party system continued through the 1980s, with the emergence of a new player, the Indian National Congress, at the expense of the UGP as seen in Table II.

Tab. II. — THE OPERATIONALITY OF A BI-PARTY SYSTEM UNDER UT STATUS (1980-89)

Party	Seats won	% vote	Seats won	% vote
Election Year		*1980*		*1984*
MGP	7	34,31	8	21,11
CONGRESS (U)	20	35,56	Dissolved in Goa	
Congress (I)	0	3,56	18	39,40
Others	03	26,57	4	39,49
Total seats/ %	*30*	*100,00*	*30*	*100,00*

Source : compiled from FERNANDES 1997.

The national party, the Congress[14], became the rallying point of the middle castes, both Hindu and Christian, but with a Brahmin leadership. It promised to fulfill regional aspirations such as conferring Official Language status for Konkani, the local language marginalized under the MGP, and assured to work for full-fledged Statehood for Goa, in contrast to MGP´s attempt at dissipating Goa by merging it with Maharashtra. Internal factionalism split the Congress in 1983, even prompting the Central government, also of the Congress, to threaten imposition of President´s rule

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13. The MGP assumed power after the first elections of 1963 and ruled up to 1977.
14. The Congress (U) merged into the Congress (Indira) which it had opposed in the elections due to the victory of Indira Gandhi at the Centre.

saying « We are fed up with these bickering from Goa Politicians » (Fernandes 1997 : 91). The Congress, voted back for another term of office, became the only ministry in the Goa´s political history not to encounter any defection. It conferred Official Language status on Konkani in 1986 and Statehood[15] on Goa in 1987, through the instrumentality of the Congress central government under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Post Statehood Performance

Statehood triggered an intractable cabinet instability and a deluge of intermittent defections. Besides aspirations of new castes to enter the political arena and secure the reigns of power, this had causality in the electorate unwilling to give clear majorities to any single political party, reflecting in turn its desire to support candidates of sub-castes and to attempt political assertion. Voting percentages have declined from 75 percent in the 1963 election, to 67.48 per cent in the May 2002 State Assembly election, touching a low of 55 percent in the 1996 parliamentary elections, perhaps due to voter fatigue over recurring elections. This intense political competition is symptomatic of the no less intense competition for resources and power, now filtering to an even wider base of politically empowered classes. The increasing political socialization of the masses due to a high literacy rate has intensified political conflicts. This is a positive sign, since this dynamic still operates within the paradigm of democratic institutions and not through violence.

The series of defections, by leaders representative of particular regions, caste groups, sub-castes and, to some extent, communities has its cause in the intensification of political conflict. Under India´s Anti-Defection Law[16], the first disqualifications have occurred in Goa. The defection and disqualification of Goa´s Speaker-turned-Chief Minister in the 1990s, was the first ever such case in India. Political conflicts has resulted in widespread instability in the durability of cabinets. This mirrors in many ways the « Goanising » of Democracy - an assertion of the sub-castes after their dissipation from the *bahujan* agglomeration and their attempt to find an assertion within and outside the Congress party. The durability of cabinets in the last four State Assembly elections is represented in tables III to VI :

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15. Within the Indian Federal structure there are States and Union Territories. Goa was a Union Territory from 1961 until 29 May 1987. It became a full-fledged state on 30 May 1987. Statehood basically bestows more financial and administrative autonomy to the States. However they are still dependent on the Central Indian Government for most of the needs, including finance.
16. The Anti-Defection Law mandates that a « split » from a political party should constitute a minimum of one third of its members. Otherwise the members are eligible for disqualification of the membership of the Legislature.

Tab. III. — DURABILITY OF CABINETS
(GOA STATE ASSEMBLY TERM 1989-1994)

S.No	Chief Minister	Ministry	Assumed Office	Resigned/ Ousted	Duration	Reason
1.	Pratapsingh Rane	Congress	11 Jan 90	25 Mar 90	75 days	Defections
2.	Churchill Alemao	PDF Coalition	27 Mar 90	13 Apr 90	17 days	Agreement[17]
3.	Luis P. Barbosa	PDF Coalition	14 Apr 90	13 Dec 90	9 months	Break up of Coalition
4.	Ravi Naik	CDF/Congress	25 Jan 91	20 May 93	2,4 years	Disqualified by High Court
5.	Wilfred De Souza	Congress	21 May 93	1 April 94	11 months	Dismissed by Governor in connivance with Ravi Naik.
6.	Ravi Naik	Congress	2 Apr 94	4 Apr 94	48 hours	Asked to step down by High Command
7.	Wilfred De Souza	Congress	5 Apr 94	20 Nov 94	Nearly 7 months	End of term

Source : FERNANDES 2003 : 191.

TABLE IV. — DURABILITY OF CABINETS (VIII LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1994-1998)

S.No	Chief Minister	Ministry	Assumed Office	Resigned/ Ousted	Duration	Reason
1.	Pratapsingh Rane	Congress	Dec 94	July 98	3,7 years	Defections
2.	Wilfred De Souza	Goa Rajiv Congress	July 98	Nov 98	Little over 3 months	Defections
3.	Luizinho Faleiro	Congress	Nov 98	Jan 99	Less than 3 months	Defections
	President's Rule imposed		10 Feb 99	10 June 99	4 months	No party mustered majority

Source : Ibid.

TABLE V. — DURABILITY OF CABINETS (IX LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 1999-2002)

S.No	Chief Minister	Ministry	Assumed Office	Resigned/ Ousted	Duration	Reason
1.	Luizinho Faleiro	Congress	9 June 99	23 Nov 99	5 months 14 days	Defections
2.	Francisco Sardinha	Goan People's Congress Party	24 Nov 99	23 Oct 2000	Almost 11 months	Withdrawal of support
3.	Manohar Parrikar	BJP	24 Oct 2000	28 Feb 2002	4 months 4 days	Assembly dissolved due to threat of defections

Source : compiled from various issues of the daily local newspapers.

After the 1999 Assembly elections, Goa has seen three governments in three years – Luizinho Faliero Congress government, Francisco Sardinha Goan Peoples´ Congress Party Government and Manohar Parrikar BJP Government. The emergence of the rightist BJP in Goa with a substantial Catholic support has surprised many overseas. The BJP had a minority government engineered to power by defections[18].

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17. Alemao resigned due to an agreement with Barbosa that the former would be Chief Minister till Barbosa resigned as Speaker and took over as Chief Minister. Under the Anti-Defection law, a Speaker cannot defect from his party.
18. The BJP cobbled up the required strength with its 18 MLAs, four defectors from Congress who styled themselves as the Shaikh Hassan Group, four MLAs of the Ravi Naik group, a section defection from the Congress and 2 MGP MLAs.

Tab. VI. — Durability of Cabinets (X Legislative Assembly 2002- ?)

S.No	Chief Minister	Ministry	Assumed Office	Resigned/ Ousted	Duration	Reason
1.	Manohar Parrikar	BJP (Incumbent Ministry)	6 June 2002	--	?	--

Source : ibid.

Goan polity has come full circle, from its initial fear of the high caste, to giving the « largest party » mandate for the high caste BJP government, led by a Brahmin Chief Minister and another Brahmin in n°2 position[19], which is unprecedented in the history of Goa. Presently, while the previous BJP ministry was dissolved due to the threat of defections, acute uncertainty prevails over the new coalition of BJP. The rise of the BJP in the 1990s is indicated in table 7 below.

Tab. VII. — The Rise of the BJP in Goa (Assembly Elections 1989-2002)

Party	Number of seats won				Percentage of the total vote secured			
Election year	1989	1994	1999	2002	1989	1994	1999	2002
Congress	20	18	21	16	40,50	36,91	38,76	38,41
MGP	18	12	4	2	39,57	21,86	14,23	7,60
BJP	0	4	10	17	0,47	8,89	26,30	34,86
Others	2	6	5	5	19,46	32,34	20,71	19,13
Total	40	40	40	40	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00

Source : Government of Goa (GoG) 2002 : 86.

The two party system now includes the ruling BJP and the Congress, with marginalization of the MGP. The BJP has gradually consolidated its position from 0,47 per cent of the vote in 1989 to 26,30 percent of the vote in 1999 elections. Making its debut with four seats in the Goa Assembly in 1994, the BJP has now gone on to capture the vote bank of the MGP and replace it in many of its former strongholds.

Mass Movements and the Absence of Mass Political Violence

On the development front, despite political instability, Goa has performed rather adequately. Goa has been adjudged the ninth best state (of then 25 states) to invest in, in India. Its per capita income of Rs 45,105 is the highest in the country, as also the standard of living. Corporate perception of quality of government, law and order and most importantly political stability, have improved. Total investment in Goa is up[20]. Goa´s social development index is impressive. Literacy is pegged at 82,32 percent[21], while

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19. Manohar Parrikar is the Chief Minister and Digambar Kamat, a chief ministerial aspirant, is at the n°2 position. The BJP with 17 MLAs has the support of 3 UGDP Catholic MLAs, two of whom have accepted ministership, 2 MGP MLAs of whom 1 is a minister and 1 Independent Catholic MLA, who has also accepted ministership. The Congress forms the Opposition with 16 MLAs. One Nationalist Congress Party MLA also sits in the opposition.

20. *Business Today*, as cited on mailing list Goa-research-net@goacom.com, Jan. 1998. Total investment amounts to Rs 6,377 with 24.4 per cent private sector and 0.2 per cent FDI participation. Over the period 1995-97 Goa´s position vis-à-vis flexibility of government policy has risen from 12th to 9th position (among 25 states) ; in terms of law and order it has moved from 9th to 5th position, and in political stability from 17th to 9th position, according to the magazine.

21. Literacy figures are of 2003 as cited in *Manorama Year Book,* Kottyam, Malayala Manorama, 2003 : 659 and GOG 2003.

health care coverage is commendable. A preliminary glance at the infrastructural statistics suggests decent communication networks, which of course require comprehensive long term planning. The economy, though dominated by the tertiary sector, has grown at a compound growth rate of over 6 percent per annum during the 1970s and 1980s and at 6,5 percent per annum in 1990s, at 1980-81 prices (Chalam et al, forthcoming). According to the government´s economic survey the gross domestic product at constant prices (1993-94) at compounded growth rate stands at 10 per cent. According to the Planning Commission, Government of India, the population below the poverty line (with income less than Rs 11,000 per annum) in Goa is 14,92 percent which is much less that the national average of 35,97 percent (GoG 2003 : 3).

This development has been largely equitable across all sections of society and regions. However, it does not efface socio-political or economic protest movements or agitations. The « fragment » or the marginalized sections of society such as toddy tappers, fishermen, rural non elites, and the minorities have been mobilized in protest against the mainstream or the political elites. Introduction of a democratic polity in a developing country nearly always exacerbates political conflict. It provides newer incentives for political actors to organize and mobilize (Kohli 1998 : 9), but, in Goa, and to the credit of the « fragment », these protestations have not turned into protracted mass violence as noted below. This has resulted from the willingness of the leadership and ruling groups to share power and resources with the mobilized groups, and conversely, the unwillingness on the part of the leadership of the mobilized groups to steer the movements into large scale violence, even if their demands were unfulfilled.

The leaders of these marginalized groups or losing agglomerations have precluded movements, prolonged conflict and sustained mass violence. In the merger-non-merger campaign, which incidentally went against the ruling MGP´s desire of merger of Goa, the chief minister, and to some extent his party, reconciled to Goa´s separate political identity. Although serious caste and communal apprehensions motivated merger, they respected the verdict of the opinion poll (referendum) conducted by the central government and from then on, only paid lip service to the issue of merger. In the 1973 environment movement, although the government initially used the police force to quell the agitation, it subsequently compromised and asked the ZACL to change the production process and adopt a cleaner technology, thus vindicating the protestors' position. Likewise even as the traditional fishermen´s agitation resulted in attainment of their demands, the mechanized fishing vessel owners did not launch a counter agitation even as the government legislated a 5 kilometres fishing ban on them. In the marks scandal, though the students went into the sanctorum of democracy, the Legislative Assembly building, the government was unwilling to pursue criminal action against the protestors. As an accommodation of the demands of the protesting students and the opposition parties, the minister for Education was asked to resign. In all these instances therefore the government has been willing to compromise, without stubbornly holding on to its position although its power equation certainly enabled it to do so.

Tab. VIII. — MASS MOVEMENTS AND ABSENCE OF MASS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Year	Name of the Movement	Nature of the movement	Extent of the Conflict
1963-1967	Merger – non merger campaign	« Mergerists » strategized to merge Goa with neighbouring state of Maharashtra; « Anti-Mergerists » wanted to keep Goa as an Independent political identity.	Communal propaganda, tension, minor violence despite extreme sensitivity of the issue.
1973	Environment movement against Zuari Agro Chemicals (ZACL)	ZACL. A private sector fertilizer corporate was pumping effluents into the ground water, with tacit support from the state Government.	Prolonged agitation, some arson. Finally the state Government closed down the plant and asked ZACL to revamp the production process.
1975	Fifty per cent Bus Concessions agitation	Three month agitation by undergraduate students in major towns of Goa demanding 50 % concessions while traveling by privately owned public buses.	Violence included stone throwing and damaging of buses managed by private operators. The agitation continued for a month till the government declared 50 per cent travel concessions
1979	Traditional Fishermen´s agitation	Traditional fishermen (*ramponkars*) launched a chain hunger strike for failure of the government to enact a law to prevent mechanized fishing vessels (trawlers) from fishing within 5 kms from the shore.	The agitation was largely peaceful through its one year duration. Violence consisted in burning of fishing nets, some stone throwing during a *morcha* (protest march) to the Government Secretariat and the arrest of about 85 *ramponkars*.
1980	Marks scandal	Students protested against the alteration of marks of the niece of Congress Education Minister Francisco Sardinha, to ensure her passing the Class X Public examinations.	Students backed by Congress legislators organized protest marches. Minor violent incidents were reported, the most daring among these being the storming of the Government Secretariat and Legislature and locking themselves in for three hours and defying the police.
1986	Official language and Statehood agitation	Konkani language protagonists demanded that the Congress government introduce an Official Language Bill making Konkani the Official Language of Goa.	The agitation began with meetings, huge protest marches by Konkani protagonists and courting arrest by defying orders. The Marathi language protagonists organized counter meetings and marches. Destruction of police property worth Rs 1.5 lakhs, stoppage of all traffic for a week in December 1986 and violence followed. A youth was accidentally killed in police firing and 7 language activists were killed in a communally related incident. Crowds also partially burnt the houses of two Congress Ministers from South Goa, who refused to support the cause of Konkani.
1990	Medium of instruction agitation	Government legislated that private schools which used mother tongue (regional languages) as a medium of instruction in primary schools, would be given financial assistance.	Protest meetings, violence and stoning of government vehicles and buildings followed. Roads especially to major towns were blocked by agitators.
1992-1997	Anti nylon 6,6 agitation	This Thapar Dupont Plant, Dupont being the US multinational, was opposed for its projected polluting production process.	Setting fire to the a small site office of Thapar-Dupont at the proposed factory premises. A youth was killed in police firing during the agitation making him India´s first direct environmental martyr. …/..

…/..

			Protest meetings, press articles were written to clarify the position and oppose the alignment of the railway. Marches were held, including a novel protest of holding hands from North to South Goa through a human chain. Minor violence reported.
1996-1997	Konkan railway realignment agitation	The railway route joining Mumbai to South India via West coast was opposed in Goa by a section of citizens since it had serious ecological implications. They demanded realignment of the route.	
1999-2000	Anti meta strips agitation	This corporate venture of the Zindal group (India) was opposed for its possible polluting production process.	Minor violence, blockage of highways, arson at the factory premises, torching of state owned buses, police firing, *lathi* (cane) charge by police and arrests of activists occurred.

Source : compiled from various issues of the daily local newspapers.

The official language agitation probably witnessed the worst violence in Goa´s post colonial history. However, comparative to other language agitations in Indian states in the 1950s and 1960s, the one death, injuries and arrests witnessed in Goa were negligible. The seven other deaths which occurred were, in my perception, related to an old communal village feud and not directly related to the language agitation. The violence was causal to the Chief Minister´s defiant non concessive position towards the official language status for Konkani. The Konkani activists´ posturing too was non negotiable. Though both Konkani and Marathi groups detested[22] the central government´s compromise language formula which quelled contrariety and violence, they did not execute their threats to prolong the agitation.

In the contextuality of the medium of instruction agitation, though the government withdrew financial assistance to primary schools using English as a medium of instruction, the agitators retracted the agitation citing misunderstanding of the government´s *status quo* position even as it didn´t mean *status quo ante* or restoration of the its earlier policy of funding English primary schools. Further agitation and violence was astutely preempted. The Konkan railway realignment agitation was resolved by the government through a novel form of conflict resolution mechanism in Goan political life - the Public Hearing Commission. The government backtracked on its coastal alignment of the railway, due to objections from citizen groups and, through the commission, it allowed opponents to voice their grievances and made realignments to the railway route in some areas.

Another facet of cabinet government and politics in Goa has been the accommodation of movement leaders into the power loop. The leaders of the language and fishermen´s movements have been drawn into mainstream politics[23]. Two ascended to Chief Minister´s position, while two others became Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), after being

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22. The Konkani activists detested equal status for Marathi and considered it a betrayal of the Konkani cause by the government. Marathi protagonists regretted the « second class » status for Marathi, since they argued that Marathi was the mother tongue of all Goans and that Konkani was a dialect of Marathi.

23. These include leaders of the language movement such as Churchill Alemao, and Ravi Naik ; leaders of the medium of instruction agitation such as Radharao Gracias, and of late leaders of the traditional fishermen´s movement such as Mathany Saldanha. Churchill Alemao and Ravi Naik became Chief Ministers while Radharao Gracias and Mathany were elected as MLAs after being nominated by the United Goans Democratic Party (UGDP). Although earlier UGDP could be called a fringe party, today it forms part of the ruling coalition government.

nominated by minor political parties. One MLA who led the traditional fishermen´s movement in the 1970s is presently part of the ruling coalition but has not raised any issue pertaining to social security and life insurance cover for fishermen even as this occupation involves risk. The gravitation of these leaders towards the core of political power has in effect deprived these movements of founder leaders, thus leading to their neutralization or absorption into the mainstream.

Explaining the Lack of Mass Political Violence in Goa

Goa´s achievements and comparison with other Indian states is often juxtaposed with its territoriality and demography. Earlier, Goa´s demographic and territorial ascendancy over nation states such as Bahrain, Malta and Mauritius was cited. However Goa´s miniaturedness compared to all the districts of Maharashtra state, except Greater Mumbai (formerly Bombay), is cited to miniaturize its achievements. Hence it is sought to be argued that big states with big concentrations of populations and scarce resources evoke violence[24]. The state which allocates these scarce resources would also be the target of violence. This formulation would be invalidated by the fact that states with smaller or similar population sizes have also witnessed serious mass violence and secessionist movements. These include Tripura (population of 3,191,168), Nagaland (population of 1,980,638) and Sikkim (population of 0,540,493). Hence smaller demography and territoriality does not necessarily ensure a non violent polity.

Perhaps it has to do with historical engagement of Goa´s predecessors (freedom fighters and activists) with colonial rule. In Guha´s phraseology (1998 : xi), it is pertinent to consider « how are the unbearable difficulties of our current condition compatible with and explained by what happened during colonial rule and our predecessors´ engagement with the politics and culture of that period? ». In India´s case the answers to these questions led to disillusionment and deductively political violence, both while responding to excesses of British imperialism and the failure of the Indian state to deliver materially or otherwise, even two decades after independence. In the case of Goa, colonial brutality, instantiated in the mindless massacre of thousands of Muslims under Afonso de Albuquerque, and periodic police excesses and racial discrimination under dictatorial Salazar regime, especially in the last phase of the freedom struggle, also raised much expectations for post liberation. The crucial difference was that these expectations were not so severely shattered but were either realised or perceived to be so within the matrix of cabinet system of government.

The socially « oppressed castes » whose frustrations arose from the « colonizer – High caste (Hindu Brahmin) – Christian » axis, during the colonial period, in fact assumed the reigns of power in the post colonial phase and ruled, ironically, with a Brahmin think tank. The landlord, tenant

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24. States such as Andhra Pradesh, which had violent language agitation, has a huge population of 75,727,541 ; Bihar which has had serious electoral violence has a population of 82,878,796, or Uttar Pradesh which has politically related caste violence has a population of 166,052,859 (which is equal to the combined population of France and Germany). Violence would be linked to the huge concentrations of population gladiating for scarce resources which then become vital for survival.

relations were largely cordial and far from the exploitative nature of land relations in North India. Lastly, under colonial tutelage, the Brahmin castes indulged in and controlled major business activities[25], otherwise reserved for the third caste, the Vaishyas. Today, this Brahmanical capitalism takes primacy over communal and divisive issues and precludes the inclination towards violence apprehending loss to industry. This is significant since through India´s tumultuous decades of the 1990s, which saw politico-religious violence over the Ram Janambhoomi - Babri Masjid issue of 1992 and the Gujarat´s Godhra train burning incident[26] of 2001, violence eluded Goa despite severe provocation by politicians and coverage by visual and print media.

A sample survey[27] to elucidate the causes and the nature of electoral violence in the people´s perception was carried out in three state Assembly constituencies. A sort of Gandhian syncretism was evident from the survey. Even as people are perceptibly religious, this religion does not take fanatical proportions. It is accommodating of the other. Regarding the relative subordination of violence in Goa comparative to other Indian states, an overwhelming 85 per cent said that people did not want violence ; about 7 per cent said political leaders did not preach violence ; while 8 per cent did not know why. To a further elucidating question (what was the reason for leaders´ reluctance to use violence as a political means ?), 51 per cent of the respondents opined that violence would not coerce any person to vote for a candidate using it, and according to 41 per cent, leaders feared electoral defeats if violence was factored in, while 8 per cent couldn´t say why. In the opinion of the sample of citizens covered under the survey, a majority of 72 per cent underlined education as crucial to people´s reluctance to engage in violence. As a matter of fact, 82.32 per cent of the total population of Goa is literate. Education militates against political parties misleading voters, respondents said. Twelve per cent said Goa was a face to face community and hence it was difficult to indulge in violence, whereas 8 per cent said people were « well to do » (*i.e.* adequately provided for) and hence it did not make a difference in their fortunes who won the elections.

Regarding violence in the June 2002 elections, citizens were nearly equally divided on the flaccid occurrence of violence. While 52 per cent of the respondents said there was violence in their constituency, 48 per cent said there was no incident of violence. Disaggregating the nature of violence, of the 39 per cent who replied in the affirmative, 46 per cent said this violence caused minor injury, and nearly 36 per cent said it comprised just threats. Only 8 percent said violence was of a serious nature, and another

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25. The Saraswat Brahmin caste controls industries such as mining, shipping, heavy machinery, print media and real estate and construction of late.
26. In 1992 Hindu fanatics destroyed the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, according to them, because it was built by destroying a temple, supposedly erected at the birth place of the Hindu God Ram. Widespread riots followed in the major cities of India with counter riots in Bangladesh and Pakistan, where Hindus were the victims. Again in 2001 a train carrying pilgrims, mobilized by the BJP and its family of right wing organisations, who were returning from the disputed Ayodhya site after offering worship, were attacked at Godhra in Gujarat by supposed Muslim elements. This sparked riots in Gujarat with horrifying acts of rape and murder against the Muslim community.
27. The survey was conducted by the Department of Political Science, Goa University, in three sensitive (violence prone) constituencies of Benaulim (South Goa), Mormugao (Western Goa) and Bicholim (North Eastern Goa) in January 2003, through a random sampling method and a structured questionnaire. 150 respondents were surveyed in all, 50 in each of the above mentioned constituencies.

8 per cent said there was damage to property. The rest said none of the above were applicable. The provenance of the minor violence is invariably traced to the politicians. Nearly 59 per cent of those interviewed said the incumbent Member of the Legislative Assembly were responsible for the violence. Five per cent said a Cabinet Minister was responsible. Twenty one per cent said other candidates were responsible, while 15 per cent were not sure who was responsible for the violence. Violence as an electoral instrument seems unfructuous since 93 per cent of the respondents returned an emphatic « no », when asked if they would vote for a candidate using force or violence to influence voting. Only 7 per cent replied in the affirmative.

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The political instability resultant from frequent defections, fall of governments and elections has little to do with the fecundity of democracy in the post colonial phase. Occasionally, individual reminiscence strays about coloniality, almost appraising it over what they see as the democratic « farce » they see enacted today. This syllogism is problematic since it predicates on the materiality of the loaves and fishes of the empire. Democracy appears to be a tumultuous, chaotic interplay of institutions of legislature, cabinet, party and civil society.

However a deeper analysis of the polity, issues and events, reveals a constructive rivalry among various cultural and ethnic groups which are now moving from the fringes of social and economic arenas to the political core. The inclusion of the « fragment » seeks to redefine and reconstruct the nature of democratic politics. To Goa´s credit this is sought to be done without the instrumentality of violence, despite a violent colonial past, where the state transgressed individual rights and used force as a tool of politics. There is an attempt to fashion a polity albeit messy and unstable, where the cancer of mass violence has not been metastasised in the post colonial era, as a political instrument.

Defections and instability, corruption and misrule which form part of the package deal of cabinet government in Goa is symptomatic of the conflict which persists, and of the conciliative healing that is taking place at a deeper level, in a culturally differentiated society, harbouring more complexity than the West. This is part of the democratic churning which subsumes marginalized sections to the core of institutions and co-opts them into the democratic process. This is the defining moment of democracy, not its decay. More so, in Goa this phenomena of unstable governments has preempted the emergence of violence as an aspiration attaining political mechanism.

Goa, a lusotopic space, is an adequate though less cited and less researched vindication that democratic political institutions though born in a particular cultural milieu can transcend these boundaries and translate into transitional or developing societies and yet function more satisfactorily than expected by American or Orientalist Eurocentric formulations. It also indicates the challenge of the viability of the Indian nation-state, besides other indications beyond the scope of this paper, which is evidenced in the

polity of the Goan political space. Therefore, the post colonial challenge clearly subsists in the entrenchment of new state formations in a colonial past and their potential to redefine society in order to create a space for the varied cultures of its people, asserting diverse identities. It has been largely, if not completely, fulfilled in a Lusotopic space, even as continental Catholic colonizing powers historically have had little success with parliamentary democracy compared to the Anglo American brands.

In this contextuality, at least temporarily, Goa, a lusotopic space, defies the political eschatology of doom. Political change has been tumultuously unstable due to emerging politicization of caste identities. Though propaedeutic, this study serves to underline how political change can be effected without the aberration of large scale mass political violence, if democracies and leadership is accommodative of the « fragment ». Quite contrary to Sloan´s thesis (1971 : 5) that there is need for new conceptualizations in comparative politics to study the outbreak of massive political violence in transitional territories, it vindicates the cause of democracy and the fact that orderly change is possible in transitional societies.

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Aureliano FERNANDES
Dept of Political Science, University of Goa, India.
<auby@rediffmail.com>

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