Decentring the Indian Nation

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JOHN ZAVOS

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Decentring the Indian Nation

ANDREW WYATT, JOHN ZAVOS and VERNON HEWITT

Issues of culture and identity have continually been a feature of Indian politics since 1947. This has been demonstrated by chronic problems, such as the status of regional languages and religious and ethnic identities, to which the Indian political system has had to respond. During the last two decades of the twentieth century India witnessed a sustained intensification of politics based around such issues. Dramatic, violent images such as those related to communal conflict in Gujarat and the insurgency in Kashmir have attracted international attention, but throughout the country politics has become progressively preoccupied with what it means to be Indian, Hindu, Marathi-speaking and so on: a multiplicity of identities which have been asserted increasingly when contesting the spaces of Indian politics. The old certainties of planned development, secularism and stable centrist government upon which the Nehruvian idea of the composite Indian nation rested have increasingly been called into question.

Most of the writers in this volume (Adeney, Bhargava, Mawdsley and Corbridge) reflect on the founding values of the Indian nation. They remind us that the Congress elite led by Nehru put in place highly centralised state institutions which ensured that a strong centre could provide leadership as the country experienced an accelerated process of modernisation. The way the idea of the Indian nation was articulated did attempt to accommodate diversity, but this accommodation was always in tension with the underlying compulsion to maintain a strong, centred state. Corbridge, for example, discusses how tribal minorities were integrated in a paternalist fashion. Adeney shows how the Constitution included few robust institutional measures to ensure the accommodation of ethnic and religious groups. The centre's commitment to diversity was very much on its own terms. It is thus unsurprising that when the Congress Party, the informal mechanism for reconciling social and cultural differences, followed its organisational decline with an electoral slump from 1989 onwards, an opening was provided for those seeking to redefine the character of the nation. It is these processes of redefinition that we characterise

Andrew Wyatt and Vernon Hewitt, University of Bristol; John Zavos, University of Manchester

as the 'decentring' of the Indian nation, and which form the focus of this special issue.

The prominence of identity-based ideologies in Indian politics over the past 20 years is not the only indication of the decentring of the nation. Over a similar period, national politics in India has been marked by the rise of coalition politics and the decline of single parties able to sustain stable majorities. The political system has made a transition from Congress one-party dominance to a system marked by party fragmentation and coalition governments. Since 1989 no party has won an overall majority and five general elections have taken place because only one government has completed a full term in office. Electoral alliances and coalitions have now become a central factor shaping politics in India.

This development has important consequences. In such circumstances no one party is able to gain a national mandate to rule. Government is more plural, uncertain and complex, as consensus does not emerge automatically among the coalition partners.[1] The BJP, for example, has formed a series of alliances with various smaller parties in order to take power at the centre; the tenor of government policy subsequently has opened up a vigorous debate as to the motivations behind the tempering of the BJP's ideological objectives.

The formation of Hindu nationalist-dominated governments at the centre tends to obscure the equally important, though diffuse, development of regional political movements. It is this amorphous third group that holds the balance of power in the Lok Sabha and is able to make or break ruling coalitions at the centre. The BJP is currently in power at the centre because, unlike the Congress Party, it allied with a large number of these parties before the 1999 general elections to the Lok Sabha.

Two trends related to the concept of 'decentring', then, may be identified. Firstly there is the trend towards mobilisation on the basis of culture and identity, and second there is the trend towards fragmentation and regionalisation of political power. There is a temptation to link such trends quite explicitly to processes of globalisation in the late twentieth century. This is particularly so since the period corresponds with a period of economic liberalisation, to varying degrees, of national economies throughout South Asia. It needs to be emphasised that the process of economic reform in India has been complex, remains incomplete and has been directed by political considerations throughout. The Indian state retains considerable autonomy while the economy is still not fully integrated with the emerging global economy.[2] Many of the decentring trends we allude to, such as the rise of Hindu nationalism or the increasing assertiveness of the Dalits, were well under way before 1991. This is not to say that international factors are irrelevant, but we do insist that links between domestic politics and the global economy have to be traced carefully. We would also join with Mawdsley, who argues in this volume that the character of the Indian political economy has changed in important ways since 1991 and that the growing importance of the states has an economic as well as a political component. Furthermore, while acknowledging the significance of economic factors, it is

necessary also to take into account the historical processes of the region. India is a postcolonial paradigm, and the dynamics of political change always need to be placed within this context.

This emphasis on local and cultural mobilisation is not intended to denigrate the importance of national political institutions and formal politics. By 'bringing in culture' and taking proper account of regional developments there is even more need to retain a clear understanding of the national level of politics, and the dynamics within the state itself. Emphasising region and culture as explanatory factors is to risk losing sight of the influence structures such as political institutions and electoral systems have on the socio-cultural landscape itself. We do, then, need to offer a cautionary note, without wishing to take the position that culture and politics do not mix. In order to avoid reintroducing the dangers of reductionism or determinism, the links between the formal political process and local activity described by its protagonists as cultural (or even religious) need to be sensitively drawn.

In line with this cautionary note, the first article in this volume focuses on the state's attempts to accommodate centrifugal forces from the time of Independence. In 'Constitutional Centring: Nation Formation and Consociational Federalism in India and Pakistan', Katharine Adeney employs a comparative approach to investigate the design of constitutional mechanisms to manage difference and integrate diverse populations in the postcolonial context. Adeney begins her analysis with the significant constitutional proposals put forward by the Congress, the Muslim League and the British before Independence. She is specifically interested in the extent to which constitutional planners were prepared to use consociational devices in their federal plans to incorporate linguistic, ethnic and religious identities. The analysis concludes with Pakistan's first constitution and India's 1950 Constitution. The article is significant because it throws light on the process of centring the nation in both India and Pakistan. In the case of India, limited concessions were made to minority groups in the federal institutions. The devolution of power was foregone in favour of a strong centralised state capable of promoting India's modernisation. Here Adeney demonstrates the incompleteness of Lijphart's characterisation of India as a consociational democracy.[3] Ironically, because its founding identity was linked to the religion of the majority of its population, Pakistan made more concessions, though, as Adeney demonstrates, these were insufficient to reconcile significant dissenting groups to the Punjabi-dominated state institutions. Though Adeney's analysis of the Indian state stops with the linguistic reorganisation of the states, we are given clear indications as to why the Indian state would later struggle to accommodate groups demanding recognition of cultural and ethnic identities.

The anomalies in the organisation of the Indian states provide the starting point for Emma Mawdsley's article, 'Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India'. She provides us with a review of attitudes towards the creation of new states at the centre before focusing in on the processes through which the three states of Uttaranchal,

Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh were brought into being in 2000. Mawdsley situates her analysis within the framework of an identified 'third era' of post-Independence politics (after the Nehruvian and Indira/decline of Congress eras) marked by regionalisation and cultural mobilisation, along the lines suggested by this introduction, as well as the post-1991 liberalisation of the economy. The new dynamism of politics in this era has, she says, provided the opportunity for the creation of these new states, as political parties seek to open up new avenues to electoral success. The implication here is, of course, that fragmentation can itself be the catalyst for further fragmentation, not just in terms of the strength and resonance of political rhetoric, but also in terms of the actual relations of power implicit in the democratic process. This is an interesting observation in terms of the implications of the processes of decentring identified in this special issue.

Stuart Corbridge's contribution, The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Names and Numbers', provides us with a most interesting study in the context of Mawdsley's argument. Corbridge reflects on the changing fortunes of the Jharkhand movement since Independence. Once again we are reminded of the centralised character of the Indian nation-state. At the time of Independence, representatives of the adivasi (tribal) population of Jharkhand struggled to gain political recognition. Colonial perceptions of the 'special' and vulnerable character of the tribal population continued to inform a condescending attitude on the part of the centre towards Jharkhand. The failure to devolve power assured the marginal status of the region within the larger state of Bihar and skewed its development. The devolution of power and the decentring of the Indian nation embodied in the creation of Jharkhand state in 2000 could be interpreted as another success story in the narrative of India's pluralist democracy. Corbridge argues that an examination of the story after the granting of statehood serves as an awkward reminder of the ambiguous legacy of Indian democracy. While regional demands have finally been accommodated and Jharkhand is no longer shackled to the fiscal and economic needs of Bihar it is far from clear that the needs of the poorest are being addressed by the new devolved government. This case draws our attention to another facet of decentring: local mobilisations often reflect local patterns of domination.

Rajeev Bhargava's article, 'Liberal, Secular Democracy and Explanations of Hindu Nationalism', reviews some of the literature on Hindu nationalism with the objective of complementing existing explanations of the rise of the Hindu right with a close examination of the discursive context in which such politics has to operate. Bhargava insists that Indian politics is marked by a strong attachment to a liberal-democratic discourse. While political practice suggests that liberal democracy in India is in crisis, the discourse is still very evident. Thus Hindu nationalists are not in a position to dispense with the language of liberal democracy and must ensure that their political tactics can be justified according to a loose interpretation of secular, liberal democracy. The article suggests ways in which local actions can be situated in the broader discursive

context. This is consistent with the concern expressed above that the national aspect of Indian politics should not be overlooked. Rather we should look more closely at the links between the national, regional and local. Bhargava reflects on the transforming agenda of the Hindu nationalist movement, a movement that is active on a number of levels. In his assessment of the transformatory project he concentrates on the attempted re-description of Indian political culture and the 'micro-level mechanisms by which Hindu nationalists are able or are disenabled from implementing and advancing their agenda'. Thus, Bhargava demonstrates how the Indian Constitution continues to shape political action and processes of mobilisation.

The centralised vision of the Indian nation, favoured by Congress, which informed the Indian Constitution was also contested in southern India at the time of Independence. The Dravidian Movement fashioned a particularly vivid form of nationalism that was used to contest the electoral dominance of the Congress Party in the state of Madras. This early attempt to decentre the Indian nation proved to be very successful. Within two decades the cultural mobilisation led by the DMK came to fruition. In 1967 the DMK was able to translate its broad mobilisation into an emphatic victory in the state assembly elections. Once in power, the DMK, and its offshoot the AIADMK, translated the ideological legacy of the Dravidian Movement into very persuasive forms of political populism ensuring that the Congress Party never returned to power in the state. John Harriss addresses the weakening power of the varieties of populism favoured by the two leading Dravidian parties in his article 'Whatever Happened to Cultural Nationalism in Tamil Nadu?' He argues that the reversion to caste-based politics and the rise of Hindu nationalism are indicative of 'the inability of Dravidian politics to address contemporary anxieties'. Harriss suggests that the Dravidian parties are threatened from above and below. He sees the upper castes and the upper and middle classes as a source of support for the cause of Hindu nationalism while the Dalits and lower castes are increasingly likely to support caste-based parties of their own. In the process of assembling this analysis, Harriss reflects critically on the arguments contained in Narendra Subramanian's recently published and important book *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization.*[4]

The article by Harriss is followed by a short response from the independent scholars S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha. While they are generally sympathetic to Harriss' interpretation of recent events, they argue that there is a danger that some of the possibilities for progressive politics in Tamil Nadu may be overlooked. They note that the sociological conditions behind the current trend towards identity politics in the state need closer examination. Thus, for example, social contradictions and ambiguities are built into the aggregated caste identities which are being used to mobilise support. This implies, to us at least, that some of the new caste-based parties which threaten to fragment the broad Dravidian coalitions may not fulfil their founder's ambitions. Rajadurai and Geetha also present a qualified assessment of the extent of Hindu nationalist mobilisation in

the state and contend that such organisations are still struggling to attract a popular following.

In the final contribution to the volume, 'Identity Politics and Social Pluralism: Political Sociology and Political Change in Tamil Nadu', Narendra Subramanian comes to a similar conclusion (though by a different route) when he argues that Hindu nationalism is hemmed in by the Dravidian political subcultures of the state. The article includes a reply to John Harriss in which Subramanian amplifies and extends the arguments outlined in his original book. In contrast to other writers, including Harriss, Subramanian insists that the Dravidian movement was less a radical social movement than a counter-hegemonic project designed to advance the interests of the elite members of the leading Non-Brahman castes frustrated at the Brahman political and economic dominance of the Tamil-speaking areas of the Madras presidency. Thus Subramanian argues that many commentators have been mistakenly disappointed by the apparent ideological demise of the Dravidian parties because they have misunderstood the character of the Dravidian Movement from which the parties originated. Subramanian argues that the achievements of the Dravidian parties should be seen as their contribution to the deepening of the associational life, and hence the relative civil harmony, of the state of Tamil Nadu. He explains the recent trend towards caste-based mobilisation largely in terms of the declining ability of the Dravidian parties to sustain their subcultures and mobilise a broad coalition.

The debate exemplified in the final three articles gives some indication of the variety of understandings of political developments in India over the past 20 years or so. By emphasising 'decentring' processes in the polity, particularly through the twin notions of cultural mobilisation and political fragmentation, our aim is to work towards the formulation of an analytical context that helps us to understand the changing meanings of nation and state in this most dynamic of postcolonial environments.

NOTES

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1. A.Wyatt, 'Political Parties and the Development of Indian Democracy', in J.Haynes (ed.), *Democracy in the Third World* (London: Routledge, 2001).
2. A.Wyatt, 'South Asia', in A.Payne (ed.), *The Regional Politics of Development* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming). See also A.Wyatt, 'Reconsidering India's Economic Nationalism', Paper presented British Association of South Asian Studies Annual Conference, Lancaster, 16 April 2002.
3. A.Lijphart, The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation', *American Political Science Review,* 90/2 (1996), 258–68.

4. N.Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Constitutional Centring: Nation Formation and Consociational Federalism in India and Pakistan

KATHARINE ADENEY

States, as political and territorial entities, can be more or less centralised through adopting differing governing structures. Nations are more fluid. Since the French Revolution regimes have explicitly sought to legitimise their rule by articulating a national identity. This national identity defines the membership of the state's community and in what capacity the 'private' characteristics of an individual, whether based around religion, language or culture are recognised politically in the institutions of that state. In most states of the world, national and political borders do not coincide and the national identity is therefore contestable. It is logical to speak of centring the nation around a core group, for example the Punjabis in Pakistan, Hindus in India, or a territory that holds particular significance for the nation (Kosovo for the Serbs, or Kashmir in the case of Pakistan and India). However, all these cases are good examples of contested status, not least because the articulation of who 'belongs' is linked to the distribution of political power and economic resources. Even non-culturally defined nations, based around territorial 'civicness', can be contested, as seen by the BJP's rejection of the secular identity of India.

My starting point is that the articulation of the national identity of the states of India and Pakistan profoundly influenced the type of institutions that were created to give expression to this identity. Before independence, the Congress and League's conceptions of the Indian nation(s) were given expression through a mixture of consociational and federal formulae, structures of government designed to *manage* ethnic and national diversity within states.[1] Both federalism and consociationalism operate according to the principle of devolution of powers and are therefore important institutions to determine the extent of the centring or decentring of a state's national identity. Whilst federations do not have to be organised according to ethnicity, as in the case of Austria, federations can be a mechanism to manage ethnic identities, when they either (a) devolve power to territorially concentrated communities or (b) deliberately cross-cut these communities in an effort to reduce the significance of these communities. When federations accommodate ethnic identities it comprises a political form of

Katharine Adeney, Balliol College, University of Oxford

recognition as it recognises these identities in decision-making institutions. Unlike federalism, consociationalism is always related to the devolution of power to *ethnic* groups. Consociationalism as a concept was initially developed by Lijphart in 1969 to explain the maintenance of stable democracy in ethnically divided societies. It was predicated upon elite inclusion in governing structures and segmental autonomy for the relevant group, whether linguistically or religiously defined. It had four features, a grand coalition of all the significant segments of the society, proportionality in government appointments, segmental autonomy and a decision-making veto.[2] Federalism and consociationalism also differ in the unit they devolve power to. Federalism devolves power to territorial spaces of government, whilst consociationalism devolves power to group leaders, whether these groups are spatially concentrated or not. Federation and consociation can coincide if federalism's territorially defined provinces are structured around territorially concentrated ethnic groups. Both can be mechanisms of decentring a state and its national identity by permitting self-government for some (or all) of the different communities within the state. In permitting this autonomy, they provide the conditions under which security for the differing ethnic groups within the state is promoted, thereby reducing the potential for conflict between these groups and the state.[3]

Before the creation of India and Pakistan the British Raj's territory contained an ethnically heterogeneous population. After independence both countries remained so. Each had approximately 15 per cent of its population constituted by religious minorities and substantial numbers of linguistic communities. Whilst the two states had very different national identities and rationales behind their creation (India was defined as a secular inclusive nation state and Pakistan was demanded and created as a separate state for a religiously defined nation), their constitutions were more similar after Independence than the plans they respectively articulated before Independence. Although this could have been expected on one level, as both were products of the British Raj and British institutional structures, their constitutional preferences before independence were very different. The League was consociational, the Congress more majoritarian. This majoritarianism was ultimately what led the Congress to question the Cabinet Mission Plan. Coupled with the fact that Congress and the League articulated very different nation-building strategies, both before and after independence, this relative similarity poses a problem that requires explanation.

DECENTRING UNDER IMPERIAL CONTROL

By the twentieth century, federal forms of government to rule the Indian subcontinent were well established. These were not the rigid codified constitutional federal forms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries analysed by constitutional federal theorists such as Wheare.[4] Yet, under the Mughals, devices corresponding to territorial methods of autonomy were adopted to consolidate territory, which the British adapted to their requirements. These in turn

influenced the formally federal institutions set up under the 1919 Government of India Act.

The British concession of autonomy at the provincial level was an essential part of their strategy to increase Indian self-government whilst maintaining 'real' power at the centre. As a British constitutional historian put it: the Act of 1919 'effectively negatived any real test of the capacity of Indian ministers to work responsible government'.[5] It was viewed as such by many of the Indian political parties. Nevertheless, although Congress rejected the 1919 and 1935 acts, it is important to stress that the Congress did not reject the 1919 Act because of its concession of provincial autonomy, rather because of the system of *dyarchy,* under which only a few select powers were transferred to the Indian ministers at the provincial level.[6] The main opposition to the Act came from the perception that it conceded 'too little too late', rather than opposition to the federal provisions themselves. The Nehru Report of 1928[7] also advocated a federal form of government, and Congress accepted a federation in the 1931 Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Whilst Congress vehemently opposed the 1935 Act, its opposition was directed against certain undemocratic *aspects* of the federation—notably the inclusion of the princes within the federal chamber at the centre—rather than federation as a structure of government. As the Congress Working Committee Resolution of 4 February 1938 makes clear:

> The Congress is not opposed to the idea of federation, but a real federation must, even apart from the question of responsibility, consist of free units enjoying more or less the same measure of freedom and civil liberty and representation by democratic process of election. Indian States participating in the Federation should approximate to the Provinces in the establishment of representative institutions.[8]

Whilst the Muslim League generally welcomed federal structures of government, as the League's main basis of support was in the United Provinces, Muslims in these Hindu-dominated areas were primarily concerned with *consociational* methods of protection through separate electorates and legislative weightage. Provincial autonomy could not benefit a spatially dispersed minority. In the late 1920s the Muslim majority provinces' interests became more important to the League's strategy, and federal forms of government were articulated. In common with the Congress, the League vociferously rejected the 1935 Act, firstly for its inclusion of the princes, on the grounds that this would bring an undemocratic force into a constitution that was supposed to be moving in a more democratic and inclusive direction; later for its benefiting the Congress agenda (despite Congress' denunciation of the Act in even more virulent tones than the League).

Both Congress and the League therefore favoured federal structures before Independence, an important similarity that was carried over after Independence. The perception in the literature that Congress was in favour of a unitary state is

false. Federations are diverse creatures and a centralised federation should not be confused with a unitary state. Yet in terms of defining the Indian nation, Congress and League differed substantially before Independence—Congress seeking to centre the 'nation' around territorial 'civicness' and the League seeking to decentre it through the articulation of the two-nation theory. This is why the League promoted consociational features within the federation, whilst the Congress demanded a more majoritarian and centralised one. While federations may decentralise power, they do not necessarily protect minority rights. The protection of minority (and sometimes majority) communities within the national identity promoted by the state varies according to the level of consociationalism within these structures—as well as the extent to which the provincial units of the federation coincide with the boundaries of the communities within it, if such communities are territorially concentrated.

To assess the institutional differences between the Congress and League on the issues of minority accommodation in federal structures, I have scored the constitutional plans between 1916–46 on federal and consociational criteria. Whilst the Congress and the League differed over the federal form, primarily over the issue of the location of residual powers, the significant differences between them occurred over levels of minority protection and accommodation within these constitutional forms. As argued, these different priorities were indicative of different national identities, and attitudes to (de)centring the nation. The political recognition of alternative identities amounts to a decentring of the nation even if there is little decentralisation of powers within the state. In assessing these constitutional plans, I have ignored the differences between the proposed plans that were not pertinent to a discussion of federalism, or were not sufficiently detailed to permit meaningful analysis. Conversely, I have included elements that are not normally considered relevant to a federal system. This is for two reasons. Firstly, to be an effective mechanism of regulating ethnic conflict, federalism often requires the inclusion of additional elements. While methods of securing proportionality in decision-making organs, security or a grand executive coalition are more commonly associated with theories of consociationalism expounded by Lijphart, they have also been associated with federal organisation, especially in multiethnic/multinational societies, such as Belgium and Switzerland. Not only do consociational federal structures facilitate the accommodation of territorially dispersed communities, something which majoritarian federal structures cannot do, they address the concerns of territorially concentrated groups which are a minority in the state as a whole, for which federal structures give no guarantees of minority veto or protection outside their province, especially at the centre. Although consociational elements are distinct from those specifically associated with federalism, there can be overlaps, as Lijphart demonstrates.[9] The demand for the inclusion of these consociational elements must therefore be seen as an integral part of the acceptance of the federal system of government in united India, and should not—indeed, cannot—be dissociated from the plans proposed and accepted. Secondly,

TABLE 1

THE ELEMENTS AND VARIABLES TO TEST FEDERAL LEVELS OF CONSOCIATIONALISM

e1. Grand Coalition	
	x1. Executive Weightage
e2. Proportionality	
	x2. Separate Electorates
	x3. Reserved Seats
	x4. Legislative Weightage
	x5. Bicameral Representation
e3. Segmental Autonomy	
	x6. Religious Reorganisation
	x7. Linguistic Reorganisation
	x8. Residual Powers
e4. Mutual Veto	
	x9. Community Veto Rights

an analysis that takes into account consociational as well as formal federal features is better placed to posit the distinction between the attitudes towards minority accommodation proposed by the Congress and the League before and after Independence than a simple focus on formal elements of federal structures does.

have identified nine variables with which to categorise the differences in the plans, as set out in Table 1. I have grouped the nine variables under Lijphart's classification of four elements of consociational government -grand coalition, proportionality, segmental autonomy and mutual veto. All nine fit into the criteria specified above, either being elements of federations, or consociational elements that complement them. All nine were integral to the type of federation proposed, and facilitate comparison of the plans according to *testable criteria.* As discussed below, Lijphart in 1996 attempted to argue that India was a consociation under Nehru and therefore was not a deviant case for his theory.[10] Whilst he analysed India using his four elements of consociationalism, grand coalition, proportionality, segmental autonomy and mutual veto, this author concurs with Lustick that Lijphart's treatment of these elements reveal, 'an impressionistic methodological posture, flexible rules for coding data'.[11] I intend to be more specific in analysing pre- and post-constitution formation through the subdivision of Lijphart's elements as set out in the Table 1.[12]

Grand Coalition

Lijphart incorporates a grand coalition as one of the elements of consociational democracy because of its inclusion of all the political leaders of the significant

segments in a society.[13] In so doing he precludes the existence of political groups that transcend ethnic lines.[14] The first variable *(x1)* I look for in the plans is that of weightage (which may or may not be in proportion to population) for one or more community in the executive in the provinces (before central representation was conceded) and later the centre. It is important to note that weightage or reserved seats within an executive does not guarantee that this community's interests will be protected—unless parity is achieved between two groups the minority group can always be outvoted—merely that they possess a substantial voice at the level at which decisions are taken. This element of consociationalism is eminently compatible with federal executives, as is the case in Switzerland.[15]

Proportionality

For Lijphart, proportionality primarily refers to the 'method of allocating civil service appointments and scarce resources' and the 'removal of a large number of potentially divisive issues from the decision making process'.[16] Lijphart only secondarily includes the issue of representation in proportion to community strength in 'decision-making organs' because representation does not guarantee the security of group interests, as noted above.[17] However, it is with the representation of the group in the legislature in proportion to or in excess of population that I am concerned, as the issue recurred throughout the period. As there are many different ways in which proportionality can be achieved, this element has four possible variables within it.

The second variable *(x2)* is that of separate electorates. These are part of the proportionality element of consociationalism because they can be used to guarantee proportionality of representation in accordance with population strength—vital if groups are not territorially concentrated and will lose out under the simple plurality electoral system. They can also be used to over-represent minority communities. Separate electorates increase the control of the leaders of the community. With no need to mobilise and appeal to other communities, incentives for extremism are increased rather than decreased.[18] There is a case for including this variable under the segmental autonomy element. However, separate electorates were not *only* used as a mechanism of segmentation but to ensure a certain number of representatives. Additionally, whilst separate electorates *were* a mechanism to segment the communities, they did not provide *autonomy.* Separate electorates were applied equally to Muslim populations in Muslim majority provinces as they were to Muslims in Hindu majority provinces.

The third variable *(x3),* related to separate electorates, but distinct from them, is that of *reserved* seats for certain communities in the provinces or at the centre. There are various mechanisms by which reserved seats are allocated to minorities. They can be allocated without any regard for the population within a particular province or state (a system that allocated seats equally would fall into this category). Alternatively they can be allocated either in proportion to population or in excess of population. These latter two are more common and

can lead to the under-representation of a majority within that particular legislature —a source of discomfort to the Muslim majority in Bengal and Punjab. Whilst it could be argued that separate electorates can equally be a mechanism of providing reserved seats, the two are distinct. Seats can be reserved for a community with a general electoral role to elect them. Therefore, whilst separate electorates require reserved seats, the converse is not true.

The fourth variable *(x4),* according to which constitutional plans diverged, was that of legislative weightage. Conceded in the 1909 Act, legislative weightage fits more comfortably under proportionality than the grand coalition element of consociationalism, as guaranteed representation in a legislature is no guarantee of executive participation. Legislative weightage guarantees excess representation for minority communities. It differs from reserved seats which do not necessarily guarantee extra representation according to numerical strength. Weightage can be used to promote a community's representation at the national level commensurate either with its *political* importance (however defined) or with its national strength, which because of its territorial distribution it is unlikely to gain electorally.

The fifth variable *(x5)* is that of representation in the second chamber of a federal legislature. Whilst representation in the lower chamber of a federal legislature usually occurs according to the population strength of the units comprising the federation, representation in the upper house (a frequently occurring, though not necessary, element of a federal system) varies between equality of representation for all units regardless of size (as in the USA, and Pakistan after 1973), representation according to population size (Austria) and those in which units vary between the two, compensating marginally for population differences but with no attempt to achieve equality of representation between the units (India and Canada). If provinces are homogeneous or particularly incongruent in terms of size, the representation in the upper chamber becomes vital for issues of inclusion and exclusion.[19]

Segmental Autonomy

Lijphart includes segmental autonomy as one of his elements of consociationalism. 'It is the logical corollary to the grand coalition principle. On all matters of common interest, decisions should be made by all the segments together with roughly proportional degrees of influence.[20] On all other matters, however, the decisions and their execution can be left to their separate segments.'[21] The design of provincial units fits into Lijphart's segmental autonomy category through creating an institutional space for territorially concentrated groups. Within this territorial space the group's leaders control decisions relating to their community's well-being, such as education or the language of the state. Lijphart specifically associates federalism with segmental autonomy in his book 'Democracy in Plural Societies'. Segmental autonomy is designed to 'at least initially… make plural societies more thoroughly plural' and

to strengthen segmental organisations.[22] Because government at the provincial level is in practice always organised along territorial lines, federalism offers an especially attractive way of implementing segmental autonomy for territorially concentrated ethnic groups.

The sixth *(x6)* and seventh *(x7)* variables are therefore closely equated with federal design and issues of identity recognition in a state: the design and composition of the units of the federation according to religious and/or linguistic criteria. Whilst the extent of segmental autonomy conceded in practice varies according to the powers allocated to the provincial level of government (or to selected provinces under asymmetrical federal arrangements), the institutional recognition of the legitimacy of ethnic provincial units is significant *in itself*. It demonstrates that the state in question is committed to the maintenance of these identities.

The eighth *(x8)* variable is that of the location of residual powers. Whilst the location of these powers might more pertinently be used to measure the degree of centralisation of a federation in conjunction with the distribution of revenues, by themselves they are meaningless.[23] Residual powers assume more or less importance depending on other factors such as the exact enumeration of powers for each level of government, emergency powers of the centre and financial distribution of powers. The location of the residual powers of a federation in addition to the creation of ethnically defined provinces is, however, indicative of the importance of these units' autonomy and is symbolically important.

Mutual Veto

My ninth and final variable *(x9)* is that of the mutual veto, the sole variable in this category. Lijphart stresses its importance in constitutional design as a mechanism to ensure that a community represented in government will not have its vital interests outvoted at the centre—damaging the condition vital to make consociational democracy work—that of inter-segmental elite co-operation.[24] The mutual veto is a device by which a community can object in the legislature and/or executive to the passing of a decision which that community's representatives decide affects their vital interests. The mutual veto has also been used as a measure to prohibit *discussion* of a contentious issue. It is usually triggered through a formula—three-quarters or two-thirds of a community's representatives within the relevant legislative or executive body having to agree to use the veto. It also differs slightly according to whether the required percentage is calculated from those present and voting or from all those registered as representatives of that community whether present or not. A current example of this arrangement can be seen in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Scoring System

My formula for analysing the plans leading up to Independence operates through averaging the scores for the variables allocated to Lijphart's four elements of consociationalism and dividing by *n*. Each variable has been designed so that if it incorporated that variable it is scored with a 1, if not, it scores 0.[25] If the plan does not include a variable, *and* its exclusion is not related to a rejection of the legitimacy of a variable (for example linguistic reorganisation of provinces was not discussed in the 1919 Act but the discussion of it in the 1918 Montagu-Chelmsford Report, upon which the 1919 Act was based, means that it was a deliberate omission which is therefore scored 0), I have signified this with Ø. This formula has the merit of producing a score between 0 and 1, with a score nearer 0 signifying a more majoritarian constitution, and nearer 1 a more consociational one. The merit of using the *average* of the variables in the summation of the four elements is that it compensates for the fact that some of the elements have four variables within them (proportionality) whilst grand coalition and mutual veto only have one. Although the latter two elements are therefore overly dependent on the inclusion or exclusion of this variable—executive

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIONS OF MAJORITARIAN AND CONSOCIATIONAL FORMS IN SCORING SYSTEM

No.	Variable	1 – Consociational	0 - Majoritarian
x1	Executive Weightage	Weightage	No Weightage
x2	Separate Electorates	Separate Electorates	Joint Electorates
x3	Reserved Seats	Reserved Seats	No Reserved Seats
x4	Legislative Weightage	Weightage	No Weightage
x5	Representation in the Second Chamber	Equality	Proportional
x6	Religious Territorial Reorganisation	Religious Provinces	Administrative Provinces
x7	Linguistic Territorial Reorganisation	Linguistic Provinces	Administrative Provinces
x8	Residual Powers	To the Provinces	To the Centre
x9	Community Veto Rights	Veto Rights	No Veto Rights

weightage or community veto rights respectively—these elements are less multifaceted than those of proportionality and segmental autonomy, which can take many forms and of which the variables within them could be said to be measuring similar things.

Inevitably, in a period spanning four decades and with three diverse actors, any analysis runs the risk of being superficial. In criticising Madan's methodology for concentrating on texts and speeches, Manor has argued that '[p]olitical action has always been more important than political rhetoric in determining outcomes in India'.[26] In seeking to address this concern, I have concentrated upon the plans the relevant party agreed as expressions of an

institutional mentality, and have attributed less significance to conference speeches and press briefings. This is not to deny the role of individual agency—Azad (President of Congress between 1939 and 1946) places the blame for the failure of the Cabinet Mission squarely upon Nehru's shoulders.[27] However, it puts the role of individual agency into context—Jalal claims that Nehru's pronouncement in 1946 was no surprise in relation to the debates of the Congress at this time.[28] A final difficulty with my approach of analysing pre- and post-Independence preferences is that the differences *within* these parties were often more significant than those *between* them. Different institutional solutions recommended themselves to accommodate the *same* community—one a minority at the centre but with the security of being a local majority (Muslims in Sind), and one who was 'twice cursed', being a minority both at the provincial and the national level (Muslims in the United Provinces). These tensions emerge prominently after Independence, especially in Pakistan, as discussed in the latter part of this paper.

have only been able to score eight of the plans proposed by the British, League and Congress between 1916 and 1946. Many of the plans discussed in this period were nothing more than demands or one-issue presentations designed to influence the debate. The Lahore Declaration of 1940 is a prime example—it demanded independent and autonomous states, but did not explicitly call for any particular form of constitutional structure. I have a criterion by which a plan is excluded from my analysis if it cannot be scored on five of the nine variables *(x)*, although it does not have to be scored on *each* of the four *elements (e)*. In practice, however, all have been. Other influences on constitution formation such as the discussions of the three Round Table Conferences of 1930–32 are of course relevant to any analysis. However, they proved unworkable with the formulae set out here.

The scores in Table 3 demonstrate that British plans varied tremendously according to the level of consociationalism; the difference between their lowest and highest score being 0.79. Additionally, despite this wide range, their average score is situated at the lower end of the scale—even more majoritarian than that of the Congress—as illustrated in Table 4. This is significant because conventional wisdom is that the British favoured the Muslims in the twentieth century, seeking to use their political demands as a mechanism of divide and rule. Constitutional plans to cement these differences were a perfect mechanism to do so. Whilst I do *not* seek to contradict the divide and rule thesis, the scores indicate that there were limits to the encouragement of the Muslim League, and that it was primarily confined to the issue of separate electorates—maintaining the boundaries between the communities. The difference between the scores of the League and the British calls into question the ability to predict post-Independence constitution design in Pakistan and to account for the similarities after Independence through using the British institutional legacy.

Table 4 confirms that the League and Congress possessed significantly different average preferences. Whilst the use of averages is inherently

TABLE 3

CONSOCIATIONAL ANALYSIS OF FEDERAL PLANS IN INDIA, 1916–46

	1916 Lucknow Pact	1919 Govt. of India Act	1928 Nehru Report	1929 Jinnah's 14 pts	1930 Simon Comm.	1935 Govt. of India Act	1942 Cripps Mission	1946 Cabinet Mission
E1. Grand Coalition								
x1. Executive Weightage	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
E2. Proportionality								
x2. Separate Electorates	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
x3. Reserved Seats	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
x4. Legislative Weightage	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
x5. Bicameral Representation	Ø	0	0	Ø	1	0	Ø	Ø
E3. Segmental Autonomy								
x6. Religious Reorganisation	Ø	Ø	1	1	Ø	1	0	0
x7. Linguistic Reorganisation	Ø	0	1	Ø	1	1	Ø	Ø
x8. Residual Powers	0	0	0	1	0	0	Ø	1
E4. Mutual Veto								
x9. Community Veto Rights	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
$\frac{\Sigma e_i}{4}$	0.50	0.19	0.23	1.00	0.63	0.35	0.00	0.79

problematic, they do reflect changes over time in the constitutional preferences. The League's conception of national identity required that the Muslim 'nation' required constitutional consociational protection. Congress rejected this demand, seeing itself as the embodiment of the unified Indian 'nation', the enemy of which was the Raj. Interestingly, Congress' preferences were closer to those of the British, as it was concerned to assert its control in a similar fashion to that of the imperial state. The Congress version of national identity was consistent with this strategy, although it rejected the constitutional elements of divide and rule.

TABLE 4
THE AVERAGES OF THE SCORES OF THE ACCEPTED PLANS

Party	Muslim League	Congress Party	British Government
Average score	0.76	0.51	0.39

Table 4 confirms the analysis of authors such as Washbrook[29] and Low, who argue that 'Congress captured the Raj by supersession'.[30] Using these scores as a measure to assess continuity, it would be expected that the post-Independence constitution of India would be significantly *more* majoritarian than that of Pakistan, especially as an inverse relationship existed between the levels of consociationalism espoused and the range of scores; those who were more concerned to advocate consociational protection were less likely to compromise on this matter. The fact that these differences exist between the two parties is not a revelation for anyone with a basic knowledge of the history of the subcontinent, but given that the two constitutions became more similar after Independence, it poses an interesting problem.

What is more interesting is that, as Table 5 shows, the range of scores for both the League and the Congress was substantial—0.50 and 0.56 respectively. This poses problems for using this scoring method for analysing post-Independence continuity and discontinuity in constitution formation. However, a re-working of the data reveals much about national identity articulation. Revisionist historiography of the partition has questioned the traditional interpretation of the events surrounding the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Plan was accepted by Congress and the League in its minimal format.[31] Those espousing an orthodox version of the events leading to partition stress Jinnah's and the Muslim League's acceptance of the Cabinet Mission as a stepping stone towards partition and an independent Pakistan.[32] The Muslim League Council accepted the plan whilst reiterating that 'the attainment of the goal of complete sovereign Pakistan still remains the unalterable objective of the Muslims of India'.[33] This school sees acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan as a prelude to partition. In contrast, the revisionist historiography of Jalal,[34] and previously Moon,[35] have questioned the desire of Jinnah for an independent Pakistan. They portray the Pakistan demand as a strategy to secure rights for the Muslims within a decentralised,

TABLE 5

THE AVERAGE AND RANGE OF SCORES FROM THE PLANS ADOPTED BY CONGRESS AND LEAGUE *BEFORE* 1946 (SCORES INCLUDING 1946 IN BRACKETS)

Party	Muslim League	Congress Party
Average Score	0.75 (0.79)	0.37 (0.51)
Range	0.50 (0.50)	0.27 (0.56)

possibly confederal united India, as well as Jinnah's personal preferences for safeguarding Muslims in minority provinces in addition to those in majority ones, noting that the Cabinet Mission definitively *rejected* a sovereign Pakistan. Revisionists have placed the blame for partition onto the shoulders of the Congress generally[36] or Nehru in particular.[37]

Table 5 demonstrates that the League's average preference remained very similar whether or not the Cabinet Mission Plan is included. This supports the revisionist's arguments that the League's preference, headed by Jinnah, was to create consociational power-sharing arrangements within a united India and that the partition demand was a bargaining chip. This does not undermine the belief of Jinnah in the two-nation theory; indeed it underscores the fact that he sought to promote the interests of the minority 'nation' through institutional designs within a united India. The fact that Congress' average score falls dramatically, from 0.51 with the Mission included to 0.37 when the Cabinet Mission Plan is excluded, similarly supports the argument that Congress' agreement to the Mission's plan was not sustainable and was an aberration from its organisational and individual preferences. Jalal concludes that Nehru's rejection of the permanence of the plan should not have come as a surprise to those familiar with the internal dynamics of the Congress 'but his open repudiation of the plan gave a severe shock to… Muslims'.[38]

If the Cabinet Mission Plan is excluded from the preferences expressed by the Congress, their *range* of scores falls dramatically to 0.27 compared to 0.56 when it was included. This is significant. Firstly, partition suited the Congress' preference structure more than the League. The Congress espoused a more majoritarian federation, and, importantly, one that was centralised *before* independence. While Congress accepted consociationalism for its internal organisation, for example in the constitutional commitment to the mutual veto for religious communities, it did not promote such identities politically within the state structures, and especially not within decision-making institutions.[39] This rejection of politicised identities was not solely related to the desire for a centralised state, as a state can be centralised whilst still recognising alternative identities. Indeed, 'control' regimes are premised on this.[40] Therefore the

Congress' and especially Nehru's preferences have to be related to his conception of civic nationalism as a strategy to unify the state and the Indian nation. Secondly, because Congress preferences were relatively stable, we should expect continuity between pre- and post-Independence constitutional preferences. Conversely, according to the range of the League's preferences, it is more difficult to predict post-Independence constitution formation in Pakistan and to posit institutional linkages with the British, although we would predict a more consociational constitution. Therefore we would expect huge differences in the constitutions of India and Pakistan after Independence on the issue of minority accommodation.[41]

DISCONTINUITIES OF PARTITION

The post-Independence scores reveal that in the case of India the Congress preferences remained generally consistent (with the very notable exception of linguistic reorganisation). As can be seen in Table 6, India's post-Independence constitution was completely majoritarian—highly predictable given its constitutional preferences before Independence. Nehru had previously questioned the legitimacy of the Cabinet Mission formula precisely in order to create a centralised federal state.

In the case of Pakistan there was substantial discontinuity between pre-and post-Independence constitutional preferences. On one level this was predictable given the high *range* of scores before Independence. However, from espousing highly consociational federal provisions before Independence, the Pakistani Constitution, which took almost a decade after Independence to be enacted, was much more majoritarian, reflecting the newfound dominance of the Muslim community.[42] From seeking accommodation within governing structures they now sought to govern on their own. Although Pakistan's Constitution was more consociational than India's—consistent with the pre-Independence constitutional preferences articulated by the Muslim League—these consociational elements were of a specific type. While Austin reminds us that although India adopted the executive and judicial features of the 1935 Government of India Act, it started from scratch with the legislative provisions,[43] Pakistan's constitutional preferences *appear* to conform to many of the British preferences. Before Independence the Congress' constitutional preferences had been closer to the British. After Independence, the score of the 1956 Pakistani Constitution was 0. 33, perceptibly close to the Government of India Act of 1935, which scored 0.35. However, unlike the British, the reorganisation of provinces along linguistic lines was not included within the Pakistani Constitution. Linguistic groups had been sidelined in the struggle for Pakistan. Although there was not such a need for linguistic reorganisation as in the Indian case, linguistic identities were sidelined with the rejection of provincial languages. Additionally, although Pakistan possessed an exclusivist religious identity (but not a theocratic state), the Constitution permitted separate electorates and reserved seats for Hindus.[44]

TABLE 6

CONSOCIATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN

	1950 Indian Constitution	1956 Pakistani Constitution
E1. Grand Coalition		
x1. Executive Weightage	0	0
E2. Proportionality		
x2. Separate Electorates	0	1
x3. Reserved Seats	0	1
x4. Legislative Weightage	0	1
x5. Bicameral Representation	0	Ø
E3. Segmental Autonomy		
x6. Religious Reorganisation	0	0
x7. Linguistic Reorganisation	0	0
x8. Residual Powers	0	1
E4. Mutual Veto		
X9. Community Veto Rights	0	0
$\frac{\Sigma e_i}{4}$	0.00	0.33

The population of the Eastern Wing, both Hindu and Muslim, correctly perceived these separate electorates as a mechanism of divide and rule rather than an element of consociational protection. Similarly, although legislative weightage was permitted for the Western Wing of Pakistan (in an attempt to counter the demographic dominance of the Bengali Eastern Wing, the constitution allocated 150 seats to each wing), this was to secure the dominance of an already dominant elite. The legislative provisions were therefore less consociational than they appeared. Ironically, Pakistan, despite the exclusive rationale behind its formation was *politically* more inclusive than India. This was precisely because the elite accepted religion as the basis of identity, and did not seek to relegate it to the personal sphere. However, this outward inclusiveness existed only along religious lines and was perceived to be a mechanism of divide and rule.

The increased similarities between the two constitutions and the differences between pre- and post-Independence constitution formation have multiple explanations. Firstly, the elites were dealing with the realities of power and the need to create a unified (nation) state. As the only possible 'national' party, Congress elites had been dealing with the realities of power before Independence. Although the challenges of partition and economic development were new, Congress had been more orientated towards post-Independence than the League, and had a framework for state and constitution formation in place. This

majoritarian framework had accommodated ethnic identities in decision-making institutions before Independence, but tried to avoid doing so after Independence. Ultimately it conceded the political legitimacy of the personal laws of the Christian and Muslim religious groups (although not the Sikhs). It also conceded the legitimacy of provincial languages. In contrast with the Congress, before Independence the Muslim League were more concerned with securing their accommodation in the governing structures than governing on their own. Their constitutional preferences naturally differed when faced with the situation of controlling a state of their own. Whilst both regimes faced similar problems after Independence, as Jalal details, they also possessed very different resources.[45] India inherited the bulk of the civil service, financial resources and the armed forces after Independence and possessed organisational and administrative continuity as a result. Pakistan in contrast, came off the weaker partner from partition, and had to do more to establish institutions. These discontinuities compounded the difficulties. The mindset of constitution formation in pre-Independence India had a significant impact on post-Independence constitution formation—constitution formation took much longer in Pakistan than in India because of its contested nature. This contestation was partly a result of the very heterogeneous nature of the movement for Pakistan, but also the result of the dissolution of the Muslim League compared to the dominance of Congress in the state institutions of India.

Although the Muslim League had to work from scratch and reassess its calculations, a more important factor in explaining the discontinuities in constitutional preferences was the fact that the ethnic composition of India and Pakistan changed. The proportion of Muslims in India diminished significantly from a quarter to a tenth (although still comprising 40 million bodies). While this did not preclude institutional accommodation, it made federal solutions less applicable for religious communities (with the exception of the disputed territory of Kashmir). Whilst this arguably should have made consociational solutions more necessary, Austin argues that the changed ethnic balance made the Muslim community more dependent on the goodwill of the Congress, so much so that 'Ultimately [the Muslim community] would decide, along with other minorities… to forego even reservation in the Legislature, hoping by its sacrifice to ensure fair treatment from the Hindu majority'.[46] They were unwilling to push for political recognition in the decision-making institutions, as this would have been contrary to Congress's articulated national identity. Austin asserts that Nehru would have accepted reservation had the minorities demanded it, but he believed 'it was manifestly absurd to carry on with this reservation business'.[47] Wilkinson is less charitable, citing the fact that in the Constituent Assembly Nehru opposed reserved seats for all minorities, including Scheduled Castes and Tribes.[48] What cannot be denied is that the removal of reserved seats for religious groups fitted with Congress' general preferences.

Nehru's inclusive civic nationalism was designed to thwart demands for a Hindu state rather than to promote multicultural amalgamation and recognition

of identities in the public sphere: an important distinction. Nehru argued that India was an historic unity, based on traditions of toleration, incorporation and assimilation.[49] This conception required the protection of minority rights, although not through the mechanisms of consociational or federal power sharing that have been discussed so far. Elements of minority protection such as the exemption of the Muslim and Christian communities from the stipulations of a uniform civil code and the constitutionally guaranteed right to set up educational institutions for linguistic and religious groups, as well as the recognition of provincial languages before linguistic reorganisation, *did* comprise public recognition of linguistic and religious identities. Although Lijphart includes them as two important elements of segmental autonomy in his 1996 article, they did not impact on decision-making processes at the national or even the provincial level.[50] These provisions provided segmental autonomy in the personal sphere, although they were guaranteed in the public sphere. They can therefore be seen as a limited form of segmental autonomy.

The initial rejection of linguistic reorganisation after independence, despite Congress' previous commitment to it, was precisely because of the unwillingness to bring these identities into the decision-making process at the centre and politicise them (as they would be represented in the Lok and Rajya Sabhas). When Nehru reversed his position, he did so reluctantly and only after overwhelming pressure from within the Congress. Lijphart concedes 'that Nehru was not a fully convinced consociational thinker is shown by his initial opposition to the principle of linguistic federalism'.[51] However, he ignores the fact that Nehru's politically inclusivist identity deliberately ignored ethnicity as a means of legitimising the state, basing affiliation on a civic notion of territoriality. Talbot is nearer the mark when he argues that the reorganisation of states should not be held up as 'an example of Nehruvian accommodationist policies which stands in stark contrast to the handling of linguistic demands in neighbouring Pakistan [because] in reality, Nehru acceded to this process with extreme reluctance'.[52]

Lijphart claims that 'even on the issue of linguistic federalism, [Nehru] turned out in the end to be a consociational practitioner'.[53] However, as already argued, using the scoring system set out above, India was a perfectly majoritarian federation. Lijphart does not discuss the fact that despite the concession of linguistic reorganisation in 1955, India's bicameral legislature was constituted according to majoritarian principles, a 'demos enabling' rather than a 'demos constraining' format. In India, the demos enabling federation represented the states of the federation in close accordance to their population.[54] Whilst Lijphart has analysed the deviation from proportionality in federal chambers in other works, he does not address this point in his 1996 article.[55] This representation ensured the domination of the larger populated Hindi-speaking states of the north in both the lower and upper chambers of the central legislature, and demonstrates why federal structures on their own are not consociational, additional elements are necessary. Although Lustick and Wilkinson criticise Lijphart's description of

India as a consociational democracy, as they do not concentrate on federal design, they do not make this point.

In the case of Pakistan, the ethnic composition changed dramatically. Whilst Hindus remained a majority in partitioned India, albeit a much stronger one, in Pakistan Muslims became a majority for the first time. In pre-Independence India they had sought accommodation within the structures of government, now they controlled them. This affected national identity articulation in the following ways. After Independence, Jinnah stuck firm in his articulation of the two-nation theory, articulating a positive exclusivist notion of national identity. This identity sought to endow the state with legitimacy through its protection of the separate nation of the Muslims. The positive elements of this identity were celebrated, rather than emphasising the negative aspects of another group. Therefore, whilst Pakistan was created on the basis of two nations, this did not preclude minority protection—Jinnah extolled the virtues of a secular state. 'Minorities to whichever community they may belong will be safeguarded. Their religion or faith or belief will be secure…They will be, in all respects, the citizens of Pakistan without any distinction.'[56] Pakistan was not created as a theocratic state. Yet this minority protection was premised on the constitutional dominance of Islam. Separate electorates and reserved seats did not challenge the conception of Pakistan; they reinforced it. This is indicated by the fact that the Hindu community in the Eastern Wing where they comprised 22 per cent of the population rejected separate electorates—they were only introduced in the Western Wing. Rather than promoting security in a consociational framework, these provisions sought to diminish it.

The changed ethnic composition not only meant that Muslims had a majority in the new state; it changed the notion of who 'they' were who now controlled the state. This was just as significant as the differential resources possessed by the new state. Jinnah's positive exclusivism was compatible with equal treatment for all regions, but after the creation of Pakistan two changes occurred. Firstly the regions comprising the areas that made up Pakistan reasserted their linguistic and cultural nationalism. These identities had only temporarily been subsumed under the leadership of the Muslim League. As Talbot reminds us, the Muslim League was not a monolithic organisation, and only achieved success through accommodating other Muslim parties.[57] When one identity (Islam) was secure, other identities (language) came to the fore, seeking institutional recognition. Not only did the Pakistan state not reorganise its federal system to accommodate these regional linguistic movements at the time of constitution formation, it did not recognise provincial languages, only conceding the legitimacy of the majority Bengali language as a *quid pro quo* to get the One Unit Plan accepted by the Eastern Wing.[58] Secondly, in the area that became Pakistan, the former leaders of the Muslim League, formerly based in the United Provinces and Bihar (areas that now comprised India), lost authority. An alternative Punjabi-Pathan nexus gradually became predominant in the state, asserting its dominance over the Muhajirs (refugees). These groups also dominated undemocratic institutions

of the state such as the army, and took advantage of the democratic vacuum caused by the protracted constitution-making process. In addition to rejecting the legitimacy of linguistic identities (which could have been compatible with a strategy based on the primacy of Islam), the disparity in the treatment of the regions by this Punjabi-Pathan nexus proved fatal for Pakistan's territorial integrity. A *double exclusivism* came to penetrate the Constitution and national identity articulation. This was reflected in the 'Punjabisation' of Pakistan that has been discussed by Samad.[59] Ironically it had been the Punjabi Muslims before Independence who had promoted the most confederal formulae and demanded that residual powers were allocated to the provinces. Whilst residual powers were eventually allocated to the provinces, the centre possessed powers encroaching on this autonomy. Therefore although the League had to contend with more changes than the Congress in the creation of the new state, and the death of two prominent leaders within four years of Independence, it was the changed ethnic composition within the state that was the most significant feature in explaining constitution formation.

In both India and Pakistan, therefore, the nature of state-sponsored national identity and the ethnic composition of the states after partition dramatically affected the institutional framework around which these states sought to centre themselves. India was perfectly majoritarian at the time of constitution formation and remained almost perfectly so even after linguistic reorganisation (scoring only 0.08). It is only when the scoring formula is widened to include the laws permitting separate schools for linguistic and religious communities, as well as the autonomy of personal laws for the Christian and Muslim communities in the constitutional framework (as two extra variables under the segmental autonomy category), that the Indian Constitution loses its wholly majoritarian nature. Even with the inclusion of these two additional variables, the constitution scores only

TABLE 7
ALTERNATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL SCORES FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN AFTER INDEPENDENCE

	Original Constitution	Original constitution with two additional segmental autonomy provisions included	1956 (India)
India	0.00	0.10	0.15
Pakistan	0.33	0.40	

0.10—still incredibly majoritarian for such an ethnically diverse state. When the linguistic reorganisation of states is factored into this amended scoring system, the constitution scores only 0.15, as seen in Table 7. This undermines Lijphart's description of India as a consociational democracy. Whilst Lijphart points to the existence of a grand coalition within the cabinet by the Congress' proportional inclusion of members of minorities according to religious and linguistic criteria, what he does not acknowledge is that these representatives were Congressmen

and women, very different from an ethnically defined elite cartel with authority over and autonomy from the community they represent.[60] Secondly, as Lustick points out, this Grand Coalition has never managed to secure a majority of votes.[61] Thirdly, 'no Muslim was appointed to any of the four major cabinet positions in the federal government' during Nehru's tenure.[62]

The reason for these majoritarian scores can be accounted for by the fact that although Nehru's territorial conception of national identity and limited multiculturalism was compatible with segmental autonomy, it was not with representation in decision-making organs, which is why the other elements remain blank.[63] This was why linguistic reorganisation was more controversial than the other variables within segmental autonomy, despite Congress' pre-Independence commitment to it. Chatterjee sums up the constitutional conundrum well.

> In order to prevent the oppression of minorities by the majority, the state must enact legal measures to protect the rights and separate identities of the minorities. The difficulty is that the formal institutions of the state, based on an undifferentiated concept of citizenship cannot allow for the separate representation of minorities. Consequently the question of who represents minorities necessarily remains problematic, and constantly threatens the tenuous identity of nation and state.[64]

While representation in decision-making organs is not the be all and end all of consociational democracy, and segmental autonomy provisions are important, Lijphart has not made a convincing case for the existence of consociational democracy in India in areas other than segmental autonomy.

In the case of Pakistan, the inclusion of the variables of separate personal law and educational institutions created a constitution with a higher consociational score—scoring 0.40 on the revised scale. Pakistan both guaranteed the personal law of religious communities and their educational institutions. It is interesting that, in common with India, despite Pakistan's inclusiveness on the element of proportionality, whether as a mechanism of divide and rule or not, the inclusiveness did not extend to decision-making institutions or mutual veto. This was both for religious groups and for linguistic ones.

CONCLUSION

Whilst both India and Pakistan adopted federal structures—a definitive legacy of the Raj—these federal structures did not necessarily promote accommodation for ethnic groups. Before Independence, both the Congress and the Muslim League had included elements of consociationalism within their constitutional preferences, although the Muslim League had demanded these elements, whilst the Congress had reluctantly conceded many of them. With such a large religious minority—one-quarter of the population were Muslim with a high degree of

territorial concentration in many areas—it was necessary to do so. Nehru's rejection of the confederal form of the Cabinet Mission Plan is indicative of the fact that he was prepared to concede the two-nation theory in order to create a centralised state to carry out his aims of social and economic reconstruction.[65] After Independence, with a reduced Muslim minority to accommodate, religion diminished as a force for inclusion in the political institutions of both states. Both states created more majoritarian constitutions after Independence than they had articulated beforehand. India, with Nehru articulating a civic and territorially inclusivist national identity, accommodated religious minorities through the additional segmental autonomy provisions included within Table 7, but did not concede their legitimacy in decision-making institutions and rejected calls for religious reorganisation of states. Pakistan, created on the basis of the two-nation theory, did concede religious identities within the political institutions of the states through reserved seats and separate electorates. This ensured that Pakistan was more consociational on my scoring system, but the concession of separate representation without recognition in decision-making organs, such as through a grand coalition or the mutual veto, meant that this element of consociationalism was limited and was correctly perceived as a mechanism of divide and rule to reduce the weight of the Bengali demographic majority.

In terms of linguistic identities both states were very majoritarian at the time of Independence and constitution formation. Initially neither conceded the legitimacy of linguistic provinces. In the case of India this was an aberration, having organised Provincial Congress Committees around linguistic identities during the nationalist struggle. In the case of Pakistan, while the rejection of linguistic reorganisation was consistent with pre-Independence preferences of the Muslim League, it did not take into account the increased salience of these identities. Pakistan perceived linguistic identities, subsumed under the rubric of the Muslim League in the final days before partition, as being antithetical to a pan-Muslim identity. India eventually conceded the recognition of linguistic provinces, and reorganised its federal system along these lines in 1956. This only occurred after pressure from within the Congress Party and from outside. However, as discussed, India did not change the composition of the upper chamber to give equality of representation to all the linguistic provinces or create executive weightage along these lines. Whilst the 'Congress system' identified by Kothari was indeed inclusive, it cannot be viewed as directly consociational, as the representatives of the different communities were not leaders of their respective linguistic and religious communities.[66]

Pakistan, which did not face the same call for linguistic reorganisation as India, moved in the opposite direction with the One Unit Plan and by so doing removed the opportunity to create institutional security for these identities. The Plan subsumed all the linguistic groups within the Western Wing into one Punjabi-dominated unit. This ensured that 'their' articulation was ranged against the central state. The non-recognition of the provincial languages of western Pakistan contributed to this alienation. What the above analysis indicates is that

Pakistan's subsequent inability to successfully manage linguistic groups is due to the lack of linguistic consociationalism. In 1973 (after the secession of Bangladesh in 1971) Pakistan's rewritten constitution permitted provincial languages, although the continued Punjabi dominance of the state has hindered national integration. India has been a more successful federation in this regard because it has accommodated linguistic identities and the dominant linguistic group, Hindi speakers, are subdivided into different states. Issues of further provincial reorganisation in present-day India and Pakistan are a topic too wide to cover in this article and must be left for another day.

NOTES

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1. J.McGarry and B.O'Leary, 'Introduction: The Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic Conflict', in J.McGarry and B.O'Leary (eds.), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 1–40.
2. A.Lijphart, 'Consociational Democracy', *World Politics,* 21/2 (1969), 207–25.
3. K.Adeney, 'Between Federalism and Separatism: India and Pakistan', in U.Schneckener and S.Wolff (eds.), *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts: Comparative Perspectives from Africa, Asia, and Europe* (London: Hurst, forthcoming 2002).
4. K.Wheare, *Federal Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).
5. A.B.Keith, *Constitutional History of India 1600–1935* (London: Methuen, 1936), viii.
6. On the contrary, the 19th resolution at the 1915 Congress session had called for self-government 'by introduction of Provincial Autonomy'. P.Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress 1885–1935* (Madras: Working Committee of the Congress, 1935), 208.
7. M.Nehru, *The Nehru Report: The Committee Appointed by the All Parties Conference* (New Delhi: Mickiko and Panjathan, 1928).
8. Reproduced in S.Zaidi and A.Zaidi (eds.), *An Encyclopedia of the Indian National Congress 1936–1939: Combating an Unwanted Constitution. Vol 11* (New Delhi: S.Chand, 1980), 42–3.
9. A.Lijphart, 'Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links', *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* 12/3 (1979), 499–515.
10. A.Lijphart, 'The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation', *American Political Science Review,* 90/2 (1996), 258–68.
11. I.Lustick, 'Lijphart, Lakatos and Consociationalism', *World Politics,* 50/1 (1997), 117.
12. Whilst two of the elements only have one variable with them, this imbalance is addressed through the scoring system that averages the total score of the elements. Although it is arguable that the grand coalition element should be the major element

in assessing the consociational nature of a constitution and it should be weighted as such, increasing the weightage of the grand coalition in my scoring system does not produce substantively different results, and does not affect my overall argument. Inclusion in decision-making institutions is also not necessarily a measure of security in federal systems if this inclusion is only related to population strength. Therefore to give it extra weight is not necessarily justifiable.

13. A.Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 25.
14. The Congress Party argued that it transcended these cleavages (although it was not successful in doing so). This perception was responsible for many of the differences between Congress and League in their constitutional preferences.
15. J.Steiner, 'Power-Sharing: Another Swiss Export Product?' in J.Montville (ed.), *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), 107–14.
16. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies,* 51.
17. Ibid., 39.
18. Even though separate electorates are not the only electoral mechanism for ensuring this. In pre-Independence India, the possibility of having primaries under which only members of the community could choose who would be able to stand in the constituency was proposed by Attlee at the Round Table Conferences. This mechanism is compatible with joint electorates—and would ensure that only candidates acceptable to the community were elected. The fact that this proposal was not accepted demonstrates that the desire to segment the communities from one another was of paramount importance.
19. A.Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1984), 74.
20. To their population strength.
21. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies,* 41.
22. Ibid., 42.
23. I have not concentrated on the distribution of tax revenues in this discussion. Most of the plans proposed before Independence (already a very small sample) were not implemented, or did not involve a discussion of tax revenues, therefore it is impossible to conduct a comparative analysis of even hypothetical tax revenues. I have similarly excluded the powers of the Governor-General from this discussion. Before Independence, debate over the extent of his powers was primarily related to the power of the colonial regime rather than the nature of the federation (even the Muslim League did not regard the Governor-General as a means of minority protection, despite the constitutional provisions authorising him to intervene in the interests of minorities).
24. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies,* 36.
25. I considered using a more sophisticated mechanism to assess degrees of consociationalism within the variables (for example, levels of weightage). However this proved impossible to standardise.
26. J.Manor, 'Ethnicity and Politics in India', *International Affairs,* 72/1 (1996), 474.
27. M.K.Azad, *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1988), 166.
28. A.Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 209.

29. D.Washbrook, 'The Rhetoric of Democracy and Development in Late Colonial India', in S. Bose and A.Jalal (eds.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India* (Oxford, Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
30. D.A.Low, *Eclipse of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 74.
31. It was published separately from the imposed settlement over the communal composition of the interim government.
32. S.Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
33. 'Resolution of the Muslim League Council, 6 June 1946', in A.Banerjee and D.Bose (eds.), *The Cabinet Mission in India* (Calcutta: A.Mukherjee & Co., 1946), 191.
34. Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman.*
35. P.Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).
36. Jalal, *Sole Spokesman.*
37. Azad, *India Wins.*
38. Jalal, *Sole Spokesman,* 209.
39. It was the Congress Party at its 4th Congress in 1888 that decided that 'no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee to the introduction of which the Hindu or Muslim delegates as a body object unanimously or nearly so'. The proportion of objectors was fixed at three quarters and it was adopted in the Congress's constitution in 1908. Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress,* 87.
40. McGarry and O'Leary, 'Introduction', Ch. 1.
41. In the next section I analyse the original constitutions of India and Pakistan, enacted in 1950 and 1956 respectively. I do not look at subsequent developments, with the exception of the inclusion of linguistic reorganisation within the Indian constitutional framework in 1956. This subject deserves more extensive treatment than I can give it here.
42. Although the Pakistani Constitution, like its Indian counterpart, borrowed heavily from the 1935 Government of India Act.
43. G.Austin, *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 144.
44. However these were rejected by the population of East Pakistan—Hindus comprised 22 per cent of this group. In 1957 the western wing abandoned their use as well.
45. A.Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Ch.1.
46. Austin, *Indian Constitution,* 151. In so doing they were reversing the position taken by the Minorities Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly which recommended reserved seats for minorities for a ten-year period.
47. Austin, *Indian Constitution,* 154. I have scored the reservation of seats as majoritarian because it did not include reservation of seats for linguistic or religious communities, caste and tribal reservations do not fit into the consociational analysis set out above.
48. S.Wilkinson, 'India, Consociational Theory, and Ethnic Violence', *Asian Survey,* 40/5 (2000), 774.
49. J.Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London: Meridian Books, 1946), 79.

50. Lijphart, 'Puzzle of Indian Democracy', 260. Although Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists were included within the ambit of Hindu personal law in the constitution.
51. Lijphart, 'Puzzle of Indian Democracy', 262.
52. I.Talbot, *Inventing the Nation: India and Pakistan* (London: Arnold, 2000), and I.Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India 1937–7* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 172.
53. Lijphart, 'Puzzle of Indian Democracy', 262.
54. A.Stepan, 'Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the US Model', *Journal of Democracy*, 10/4 (1999), 23.
55. Lijphart, *Democracies,* 99.
56. Press Conference in Delhi 14 July 1947 in M.Afzal (ed.), *Selected Speeches and Statements of the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1911–34 and 1947–48)* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1966), 421.
57. Talbot, *Inventing the Nation,* 111.
58. The Constitution did not prohibit primary schools using a different mother tongue, although their numbers were reduced during the 1950s and 1960s especially in Sindh.
59. Y.Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabistan: Crisis of National Identity', *Indian Journal of Political Science,* 2/1 (1995), 23–2.
60. Lijphart, 'Puzzle of Indian Democracy', 261.
61. Lustick, 'Lijphart', 115.
62. Wilkinson, 'Consociational Theory', 779.
63. Although reserved seats existed for Scheduled Castes, they did not for members of religious or linguistic communities.
64. P.Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 12.
65. Although in Indian nationalist historiography, Jinnah is portrayed as the villain.
66. R.Kothari, *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970).

Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India

EMMA MAWDSLEY

The nature of India's federalism is central to any understanding of its political economy.[1] Analyses of federalism in India have tended to focus on its constitutional provisions; the changing political economy of centre-state relations; and the challenges to the state's federalist claims, evinced most clearly in the secessionist movements in Punjab, Kashmir and the north-east. This article addresses a subject that has taken a rather lower profile over the years—the creation of new federal states *within* the union of India. In 2000 the internal map of India was redrawn to create three new states—Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh (see map). The formation of these states is interesting because historically the major political parties have tended to oppose the formation of new states in India.[2] Unlike Nigeria, which has a history of strategically dividing and expanding the number of its federal units, changes to India's internal political-administrative boundaries over the last 50 years have usually been conceded only after considerable struggle.[3] Successive central governments have tended to view assertions of regional identity with suspicion, and to stigmatise them as parochial, chauvinist and even anti-national.[4] The reasons for this include the traumatic legacy of the Partition in 1947; the concern that India might disintegrate under the weight of its divided colonial history; and its sheer ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural plurality. Although alterations and additions to India's states have been made over the past 50 years, until recently New Delhi has tended to sanction these border changes only reluctantly, and neither did such movements and demands tend to receive national-level support from opposition parties. Thus the political map of India today remains dominated by populous, geographically vast, and culturally heterogeneous 'mega-states' like Uttar Pradesh, which, with over 160 million people, is demographically bigger than many large countries.

The creation of these new states marks a departure in political attitudes at the centre in two main ways. First, rather than resisting the demands for new states, many of the major political actors at the centre (recent governments, their coalition parties and opposition parties) supported some or all of the regional

Emma Mawdsley, Department of Geography, University of Durham

MAP 1

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movements. This support was often both fickle and flimsy—a change in the political equation in one of the areas under discussion would see a reversal of interest, foot-dragging or even an apparent change of heart on the issue. There were also discrepancies on the issue between different levels and units of particular parties.[5] But the degree and consistency of support is in some ways irrelevant. What is important here is the fact that territorial change has become a 'permissable' issue for party agendas—debates over territorial reorganisation re-entered 'mainstream' political discussion in the mid-1990s. The second point of

departure is that these new states were proposed on the grounds of administrative efficiency rather than on the language principle that has, ostensibly, guided state formation in the past.[6] This too marks a shift in India's federal ideology, as regional identity, culture and geographical difference would now appear to be recognised as a valid basis for administrative division and political representation. As we shall see below, this distinction between past and present is fuzzier than suggested here, but there has undoubtedly been a qualitative shift in the attitude towards new states amongst the large political parties at the centre.

This article does not look at individual regional mobilisations, or their outcomes in specific areas—although this line of inquiry does potentially offer important insights into a whole range of issues around governance, state and civil society.[7] Rather, this article is concerned with exploring the relationship between the shift in attitudes in New Delhi to the issue of new states, and the changing political economy of India. If a broad 'periodisation' of post-Independence India's political economy can be charted, then it would seem clear that a third 'era' is under way, following on from the Nehruvian years, and then the Indira/decline of Congress period.[8] This new period is broadly marked by the post-1991 liberalisation of the economy, the meteoric rise of the Hindu right, and a shift from one-party dominance of the centre to the emergence of a relatively stable *system* of coalition government (if much less so a stability of the coalitions themselves). Related to this is the 'regionalisation of politics', whereby smaller regional and state-specific parties have come to exert more power not just in the states themselves (in government, or as partners of 'national' parties), but also in the national parliament itself .[9] Recent national-level debates and decisions about territorial reorganisation provide a way of exploring these shifts.

The article starts with a short history of territorial reordering in independent India, and outlines some of the colonial legacies and postcolonial imperatives that guided this process. It then looks at the popular and political debates on the creation of new states, and sets the issue within broader trends within India's changing political economy, before drawing the arguments together.

THE MAP OF STATES: INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

In the months preceding Independence and the first formative years after it, India's leaders faced an enormously complex task in the construction of both state and nation. One decision about which there was little or no alternative was the political form India should take. Jalal argued that federalism was less of a choice than a necessity given the country's vast size and diversity and its history of repeated colonisation.[10] In theory federalism allows for both unity and diversity, although in practice it includes a wide range of possibilities in its ideology and arrangements.[11] India's Constitution is generally recognised to significantly favour an economically and politically strong union government vis-à-vis the states, a classic outcome in a postcolonial polity, and with particular reason for India (see below).[12] A second closely related decision that the

leadership faced in 1947 concerned the demarcation of the states—the size, shape and composition of its political-administrative units. The patchwork of political units left by the British was the result of 'a process of annexation, and on the basis of strategic and political considerations rather than on any rational basis… [T]he infra-structure of the polity that we inherited in 1947 was a confused mosaic created by a foreign imperial power unmindful of the valid basis for the territorial organisation of the sub-continent'.[13]

The issue of the 560-plus princely states further complicated the matter. These were made up of an extraordinary variety of political units that enjoyed quasi-autonomous status under colonial authority, and comprised about 45 per cent of pre-Partition Indian territory. They ranged from states like Hyderabad, with an area of 80,000 square miles and a population of 18 million, to 'states' like Varnoli Nana in Western India which had an area of one square mile and a population of 96 at Independence.[14] Moreover, many of the princely states were extremely fragmented. Baroda, one of the bigger states, was divided between four or five large non-contiguous areas and about 30 smaller parts. Spate *et al.* suggest that 'the boundaries of the old regime were often arbitrary, the old Princely States in particular for the most part having neither rhyme or reason but owing their fantastic assortment of sizes and shapes to historical accidents not always of an edifying kind'.[15]

The Indian National Congress (INC) had supported the idea of reorganising the states on a more rational basis as far back as 1905, and it was decided that conformity with the distribution of the major languages was the most sensible way of achieving this.[16] The linguistic redistribution of the provinces was confirmed as a clear political objective in 1920 at the Nagpur Conference, and again in 1928 in the Report of the Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conference.[17] It was believed that linguistic states would encourage greater administrative efficiency, political cohesion and economic development than the existing mosaic of multi-lingual states and Provinces. But after Independence it became clear that neither Nehru, Patel nor Gandhi were keen on these changes, and together with the amalgamation of the princely states, pre-existing territorial divisions were broadly retained.[18] When he was reminded about his earlier commitment to reorganisation, Nehru admitted that he was 'never very enthusiastic about linguistic provinces'.[19]

Nehru was concerned that the division of India into linguistic states would encourage the development of 'sub-nationalities', which might in turn come to demand their own separate sovereign states.[20] The 1948 Linguistic Provinces Commission of the Constituent Assembly (the Dar Commission) affirmed this view, and warned of the dangers to Indian unity posed by the creation of linguistic provinces.[21] Moore suggests that the confusion, changes and political battles that preceded the hasty British departure from India all contributed to a climate of uncertainty and concern about its potential disintegration.[22] Four events, circumstances and historical conditions contributed to this concern, and

were profoundly significant in shaping both the territorial map of states and the highly centralised Constitution.

First of all, the bloody events and communal nightmare that accompanied Partition. Hundreds of thousands died and millions were displaced, deeply traumatising the infant nation-state(s). The fear/threat of further dismemberment became highly formative in determining the Indian national leadership's early responses to questions of regional autonomy.[23]

Second, the challenge of integrating the princely states. As late as May 1947 Nehru protested to Mountbatten that British plans to let the Crown's paramountcy over the princely states lapse with Independence (rather than transferring paramountcy to the new sovereign authority) would result in the 'balkanisation' of India.[24] A bargain was eventually struck whereby India accepted dominion status in return for British assistance in bringing the princely states to heel. Jalal suggests that the horrors of Partition sobered and quieted the 'potentially more explosive' issue of provincial autonomy, and the princely states were integrated into the Indian Union within the remarkably short space of time of two years.[25] Rulers were told that they had only to delegate defence, foreign affairs and communications to the centre, but once they acceded the centre gradually assumed more extensive powers.[26]

Third, the modernising and nation-building aspirations of many in the Indian National Congress, later the Congress Party. Nehru exemplified this outlook, believing profoundly in the overarching cultural and societal unity of India, and the vision of India's destiny as a modern sovereign nation-state.[27] The struggle for Independence was seen by Nehru and many other nationalists as a critical period of 'nation-in-the-making' through the forging of a *modern* national consciousness, and they were concerned that the reactionary forces of ethnicity, language, religion and regional culture would hinder this process, or even prevail.

Fourth, the extensive cultural, linguistic, ethnic, geographical and religious diversity of India, which encouraged anxieties that this 'mere geographical expression'[28] might disintegrate. Despite Nehru's convictions about the unity of India, he was painfully aware that it had never before been united under one political authority.

It should be noted that Article 3 of the Constitution did make provision for a future states reorganisation, and one commentator has suggested that the initial lack of change was the result of other more pressing commitments for the new government than any intransigence on Nehru's part.[29] King also offers a positive reading of the way in which Nehru handled the issue of territorial reorganisation during the first critical years of independence.[30] Nevertheless, the map of India that emerged in 1947 was a clumsy division of Class 'A' states, which were made up of the former British Provinces, such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar; Class 'B' states, which were made up of former large princely states and large amalgamated unions of states, such as Hyderabad, Mysore and Rajasthan; and Class 'C' states, which were those formed out of smaller princely states,

such as Bhopal, Delhi and Vindhya Pradesh. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands did not come under this system, and were administered directly from the centre.[31] As Sukhwal notes, 'the boundaries formed after the integration of princely states and former British provinces were economically, administratively, linguistically and culturally illogical'.[32]

By the early 1950s, it was clear that state politicians, regional elites and, in some cases, ordinary people wanted change, and specifically the creation of states which would reflect linguistic and cultural patterns and differences. The centre was finally forced to concede in 1953 following protests and riots in Madras, and the fasting to death of a prominent Gandhian leader.[33] Madras was divided between Andhra Pradesh for Telugu speakers, and Madras State for Tamil speakers (in both states there remained, of course, other minority languages). It was clear that the issue of state boundaries required a more comprehensive policy study, and in the same year the Government of India set up a States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) to look into the matter of territorial reorganisation. The four principles guiding the Commissioners were (a) the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India, (b) linguistic and cultural homogeneity, (c) financial, economic and administrative considerations, and (d) the successful working of the Five Year Plans.[34]

The States Reorganisation Report which followed two years later proposed that India's unity would be enhanced, not compromised, by the greater recognition and protection of its regional languages and cultures.[35] Many of its recommendations were implemented in the 1956 States Reorganisation Act, leading to the redrawing of territorial boundaries to form more linguistically homogenous states, particularly in the south. Although language was the main criterion, other factors played a tacit part in these decisions, including regional culture, economic viability and religion.[36] But even as Nehru partially conceded the formation of linguistic states, he tried to mitigate the effects they might have on fanning sub-national sentiments by setting up five Zonal Councils (North, South, East, West and Central).[37] These Councils, each of which included several states, were expected to act 'as a corrective to the over-emphasis upon sectional and linguistic loyalties, [and were] an effort to establish values transcending language and religion'.[38] However, they were only given advisory roles, and failed to develop into significant political institutions.[39]

The 1956 reorganisation reduced the number of states in India from 27 to 14 (plus six centrally administered territories), many of which were geographically huge and extremely heterogeneous.[40] Some thought that the size and diversity of these states would prove inimical to their development. K.M. Pannikar, for example, one of the three States Reorganisation Commissioners, included a note of dissent on Uttar Pradesh (UP) in an appendix to the 1955 Report. He argued that UP should be divided as its sheer size would hinder administrative efficiency and development. He was also concerned that this enormous state, with by far the largest number of representatives in the national parliament, would exert an undue influence on central politics.[41] Pannikar was opposed by Nehru and other

senior politicians in Delhi and in UP itself, who for various reasons wanted the state to remain undivided, and who claimed to place their faith in the efficacy of planning. Development planners were expected to be able to take the geographical, cultural and remaining linguistic diversity of the large states into consideration and deal with it. It was also a period of optimism (amongst the elite anyway) with regard to the notion of *political* rationality and neutrality.[42] Although corruption, nepotism and overt caste and regional loyalties were present, they were not as entrenched or endemic as in later years.

But while Nehru may have hoped that these changes had satisfied the demand for territorial reordering, struggles continued in and across a number of states. In 1960, the bilingual Province of Bombay was divided into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat after violent language riots. Demands for a Punjab state were also resisted at first because they were perceived as being *religiously* (Sikh) motivated. Brass suggests that only after a leader was elected in whom Delhi leaders could place their trust was a state of Punjab conceded, ostensibly on *linguistic* grounds.[43] Accordingly, in 1966 'greater Punjab' was split between Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (although the latter did not receive full state recognition until 1971). Oommen has argued that in substance this amounted to the acceptance of religion as a valid basis for state formation.[44] Several new states have since been created in the north-east of India, and it would appear that ethnicity has also been granted recognition as an 'informally valid' basis for political-administrative reorganisation under certain circumstances. Meghalaya was accorded statehood in 1971, Manipur and Tripura in 1972, and Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram became states in 1986. Oommen suggests that their 'geopolitical resource' of being border areas helped them achieve statehood, although the years of fierce insurgency probably contributed to their success.[45] Goa upgraded from union territory status to a state in 1985, and Delhi in 1998.[46]

In the last two years there has been another wave of state creation, in the shape of Uttaranchal,[47] Jharkhand[48] and Chhattisgarh.[49] Each of the three areas is economically 'backward' (in official and popular jargon), and each shared a sense of injustice about their regional exploitation by the states of which they were previously a part (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh respectively). All three areas are also, to a degree, ethno-culturally marginal: Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh because of their relatively large *adivasi* (tribal) populations, and Uttaranchal because of its *pahari* (mountain) geography and identity. But there are also considerable differences between the three regions, particularly in terms of the histories of their regional identities; the many divisions and differences *within* each region; the vocabularies and strategies of protest they have employed; and their relationships with the different political parties, respective state governments and the centre. Thus, it must be emphasised that each of the regions and demands are unique, and each requires careful individual study. Nevertheless, despite their differences, these respective regional mobilisations

can also be analysed as part of a broader set of changes within India's political economy, which are the subject of this article.

THEORISING THE RECENT TERRITORIAL REORGANISATION IN INDIA

How has the central government's decision to create these new states been received in India? One response is that it represents a lurch towards the balkanisation of the country, as it will open a Pandora's Box of regional demands which may ultimately result in the disintegration of India. Nehru feared this possibility, and it formed the centre of Selig Harrison's dire warning that the linguistic states represented a dangerous encouragement to secessionist forces.[50] The global surge of ethno-nationalist conflict in the 1980s and 1990s and the tragic example of Yugoslavia have served to rekindle these fears.[51] An (unnamed) 'former Chief Minister of Bihar', for example, was quoted as saying, 'Divisions of Bihar will jeopardise national and regional interests and affect national unity and integrity besides encouraging separatist and extremist forces'.[52]

However, although a subject of debate, and a concern for many, this view is less influential than in previous years, and there are a number of reasons to reject the prognosis of India's disintegration. First, to take the example of the three new states, although the struggle in Jharkhand was often violent, and the demand for statehood in Uttaranchal was intense, the decision to make the Chhattisgarh region into a state was certainly not the act of a reluctant government succumbing to overwhelming popular protest and pressure. Indeed, a popular movement for a Chhattisgarh state seems to have been extremely muted, and the central government (BJP-led at the time) obviously did not envisage the creation of this or the other two states as representing a threat to India's unity. The experience of 50 years of Independence as a sovereign 'nation-state', during which crises in Punjab, Kashmir and the north-east have been weathered (if not always best or finally resolved), has perhaps engendered more security and confidence in India's continued unity amongst many policy makers.

Second, none of the regional movements in Uttaranchal, Jharkhand or Chhattisgarh displayed any serious separatist intent and, with the exception of certain struggles in the north-east (such as Bodoland, which has a moderate group seeking statehood and a more extreme group demanding secession), neither do most of the other contemporary regional movements in India. In the future, of course, all or part of a particular movement could come to embrace secessionist demands, but this seems unlikely. These mobilisations have been directed for the most part against their respective state governments, which were/are usually identified as the primary site of neglect, oppression and/or internal colonialism, rather than the central government. As Brass notes, regional groups are pushing for greater *access* to political power and control over the government purse, not cultural or linguistic separation.[53] This is not to say that

the movements for greater territorial autonomy in other regions will not be encouraged. Following the 1998 announcement, for example, there have been demands for a state of Kodagu, currently a part of Karnataka,[54] and from various ethnic groups in the north-east.[55] Two new political parties in Andhra Pradesh, both established in 1997, have made statehood for the Telengana region their main electoral plank,[56] while there have been increased stirrings of regional demands in Bundelkhand, Vidharba, eastern and western Uttar Pradesh, the Vindhya region and elsewhere. But although they will require careful handling, these regional demands need not necessarily be pernicious to the unity of India—a claim which leads us on to the second major theory concerning territorial reorganisation.

number of commentators have argued that the Indian polity is not sufficiently decentralised given the plural nature of India's society, culture and political past, and it could be suggested that the creation of smaller states would be one means of achieving this. Brass famously argued that the centralising drives of the state have in fact worsened regional and other societal tensions, rather than contained or managed them.[57] He suggests that the centralisation of power, decision making and control of resources in one of the world's most culturally diverse and socially fragmented countries has had unintended results. These include the erosion of the effectiveness of some political organisations; the declining ability of the central government to implement development plans in the states and localities; and the heightening of ethnic, religious, caste and other regional and cultural conflicts. In a new era of liberalisation, these pressures have only increased. States are now permitted to engage directly with external donor and corporate interests (from the World Bank to multinational corporations), and there is growing evidence of the regionally uneven impact that such policies are having, within states as well as between them.[58] States now have far more agency in negotiating their economic futures, and some are avidly pursuing a global identity and position. Liberalisation has opened up new political avenues of wealth creation, particularly for certain regions and sectional interests.[59]

The 'over-centralisation thesis' has led many commentators to suggest that administrative, territorial and political decentralisation would *strengthen* the nation-state of India, not, as many at the centre fear, weaken it.[60] The debates on how to achieve this have focused on strengthening and supporting local democratic institutions (notably the village panchayats and municipal councils), constitutional reform (such as devolving more power to the states) and encouraging greater political and bureaucratic transparency and accountability. But some commentators, notably Rasheeduddin Khan, have added to this another possibility: the major reorganisation of India's constituent units in order to encourage a more genuinely plural, decentralised and democratic nation-state.[61] In his 'manifesto for change from the present centralised, dysfunctional, anachronistic union system' to an 'equipoised, co-operative and contemporary federalism', Khan argues that India needs to return to 'socio-cultural ecology' as the basis for political-administrative organisation. Territorial reorganisation is one

of the measures required in order to transform the large, administratively unwieldy, politically troublesome and economically uneven states into a more 'rational' map of states based upon economic viability, socio-cultural homogeneity and political and administrative manageability. Khan actually proposes that India be made up of over 50 states. A number of other senior political commentators are sympathetic to this broad argument (if not, perhaps, to Khan's suggestion). Rajni Kothari, for example, suggested that 'A large part of such assertions (of ethnic identities demanding more autonomous spaces for themselves) need to be considered as natural concomitants of the democratic struggle for achieving a more participant and decentralised polity and economy'.[62]

Kothari believes that analyses of India's federal structure and processes have for too long been dominated by accounts of the workings of the union and its constituent units. He strongly suggests that we must go beyond these centre-state debates, which can present a sterile and overly 'mechanistic' view of federalism, and move towards an analysis of the more fundamental dialectic between the state and society. This is supported by a more 'organic' view of federalism which would recognise that Indian society is itself federal, and locates the weakness of the system in the poor politicising of that federalism. From this perspective, the regional movements of post-colonial India can be seen as one expression of the increasing political engagement of different, and often marginal, social groups, who are demanding a more participatory and decentralised polity. Both Rasheeduddin Khan and Rajni Kothari recognise, as Graham Smith argues, that 'there is no basis in political theory for claiming that smaller territorial units are necessarily more hospitable to democratic politics'.[63] Neither are smaller territorial units necessarily going to be more administratively efficient or 'developmentally' effective. But there is much that is positive and plausible in the arguments for smaller states, both for the specific regions under review, and even, arguably, as an agenda for a second states reorganisation. Many of the current states of India are administrative leviathans, and the sheer physical distance ordinary people, politicians and government officials have to cover can act to alienate groups and regions, and hinder sensitive or well-managed development planning and initiatives. Smaller states may well provide a more propitious environment for more manageable administrative loads; greater understanding of and commitment to the local region; and more proximity between people and political and institutional centres of power.

However, there are a number of problems with this agenda for a more 'rationally' organised map of India. First, under present administrative and government structures, the new states would require an expensive multiplication of capitals, assemblies (state parliaments), ministries, courts and other accoutrements of government. The ideal scenario would envisage that the reorganised states would facilitate enhanced economic growth through more effective and efficient development measures—an expectation that is by no means assured. Second, in terms of democratic functioning, these regional

mobilisations, like other social movements, can mask partial and elite interests and manipulations, even, or especially, in marginal areas. Again, there can be no automatic assumption that a new state would lead to greater social or political justice. A third problem concerns the impact that the creation of smaller, more culturally and linguistically homogenous states might have on fanning regional or ethnic chauvinism. India has a long history of 'sons of the soil' movements, which, although diverse in form and nature, usually aim at the exclusion of 'outsiders' from the state/region through expulsion, or privileging the 'native' population through the setting up of a system of preferential politics to guarantee their 'rights' to employment, land and political power.[64] None of these problems are inevitable or inexorable, and the various outcomes of territorial reorganisation would be highly place specific and context-dependent. However, these general concerns suggest caution must be exercised.

The BJP-led government which oversaw the creation of the latest three states offered the public little detail on the reasons for their decision beyond rather vague references to administrative efficiency and improved democratic transparency and responsibility. In March 1998, for example, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was quoted as being, 'of the view that the formation of these three states was necessary for the proper development of these areas'.[65] L.K.Advani, the Home Minister, stated that in general he favoured smaller states in the interests of growth and development: The rationale behind this decision was the administrative problems created because of the very large size of the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh'.[66] But, despite the political rhetoric, the evidence suggests that most parties are not motivated primarily by the developmental and democratic merits (or demerits, in the case of opponents) of greater federal decentralisation, but by considerations of short term political expediency. In some cases, the electoral benefits that might accrue to the parties over this issue seem to have outweighed any consideration of the financial, social or political viability of the states. With regard to Chhattisgarh, for example, it has been suggested that 'Nothing except electoral arithmetic seems to have prompted the entire spectrum of political parties relevant to Madhya Pradesh to support the formation of a separate Chhattisgarh State…privately the leaders of almost all parties admit that the move is devoid of any logic and could prove detrimental to both the States'.[67]

In the next section this relationship between political opportunism and the creation of new states is taken up in detail, and is situated within broader changes in the Indian political landscape.

THE CHANGING POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INDIA

In the mid-1960s there was something of a 'sea change' in India's political economy, marking a shift from what Rudolph and Rudolph have termed 'command' to 'demand politics'.[68] One of the best studies of this widely identified transition is Atul Kohli's exploration of India's 'growing crisis of

governability'. Kohli refers to the increasing 'strain' that has emerged in the Indian polity since the mid-1960s, demonstrated in the absence of enduring coalitions, a growing political ineffectiveness in dealing with important problems, and an inability to accommodate growing political conflict (including regional demands) without resorting to force and violence. These are argued to be the products of uncontrolled politicisation within both the state and civil society, which has resulted in the incapacity of the state to 'simultaneously promote development and to accommodate diverse interests'.[69]

Kohli contends that the roots of India's governability problem are political rather than socio-economic, with a highly interventionist state attempting to deal with a poor economy and in the process becoming the object of intense political competition. He traces the success and hegemony of the Congress Party prior to the mid-1960s to its strong party organisation (especially at the district level), its adaptive qualities, and the positive role that access to patronage resources played in building electoral support (often organised through 'traditional' vote banks). Congress also benefited from the charismatic leadership of Nehru, from the prestige and legitimacy it had won during the independence struggle, from a lack of any effective opposition, and from a favourable international economy aiding steady economic growth. But by the early 1970s major changes were clearly under way, signalled by the decline of India's institutions, and especially the Congress Party. Kohli associates this with Indira Gandhi's decision to rule and maintain power through populism—a strategy that, he suggests, was inherently destabilising. Power became more and more concentrated in the person of Mrs Gandhi and in the primacy of New Delhi over the states, for example through the initiation of the procedure of direct appointment from above rather than by election from below, and the constant intervention in state politics.

Although Kohli uses this familiar 'Nehru good/Indira bad' format in analysing changes in the Indian polity, he avoids, as Corbridge notes, the temptation to stylise the different periods too personally.[70] Nehru could afford to keep a lighter hand on the reins during the period of Congress hegemony, but by the time Mrs Gandhi came to power serious opposition had arisen at both the state and national level, and Kohli draws out some of the events and processes of the 1960s and 1970s that prompted Mrs Gandhi's 'strategy' of personalised rule.[71] The Indo-Chinese war in 1962 saw the Chinese cross the Indo-Tibet border with impunity, badly shaking India's confidence in itself and in its armed forces. Nehru's death in 1964, calamitous monsoon failures between 1965 and 1967, and the suspension of planning from 1966 to 1969 added to the erosion of early post-Independence optimism. The latter was part of a wider crisis in the Indian economy during Indira Gandhi's premiership, as it fell prey to some of the contradictions of a capital goods-based import substitution strategy. Suffocated by the mammoth bureaucracy that the complex planning and licensing system had engendered, the economy slowed down.[72] The growing power of the dominant proprietary classes vis-à-vis the central government further impaired the economy's ability to function efficiently, as savings vital to sustain capital

investment in industry were withheld.[73] Meanwhile the international economy was also tightening following the 1973/74 and 1978/79 oil crises, compounding internal difficulties.

Given this situation, Congress was increasingly forced to 'buy' votes with the adoption of social programmes for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and through various loans, concessions and benefits for other social groups such as farmers and students. The costs of these programmes could only be met by deficit financing, contributing to the growing fiscal crisis of the 1980s. This further politicised the regional policies of New Delhi and of the state governments, as different regions and social groups competed for scarce resources. Mrs Gandhi tried to maintain her authority by destabilising hostile state governments and through an even more concentrated personalisation of rule ('India is Indira and Indira is India' was a celebrated slogan, coined in 1976 by the then Congress President, Dev Kanta Barooah). In an atmosphere of growing paranoia, many Congress candidates were selected on the basis of their personal loyalty, not their aptitude, political experience or skill, and Indira Gandhi increasingly fell back on direct, populist campaigns, by-passing the (by now) largely defunct Congress organisation.

Kohli points to the continuing institutional decline that marks Congress and the wider Indian polity, and the growing mobilisation of various social and economic groups, including the intense regional and ethnic activism of the 1980s and 1990s. Closely related to this is one of the most important political trends of the last 20 years—the growth in the number and success of various regional parties taking power in individual states all over India.[74] These parties do not, or cannot, realistically aspire to national power, but they have come to exert an increasingly powerful role in the national polity in their position as allies of the larger parties.

However, for some time in the early 1990s, it looked as if the BJP might break this trend. As the party political expression of the Hindu Right, the BJP experienced a phenomenal rise in support over the 1980s and 1990s, and it has emerged as the biggest single-party opponent to Congress and the other smaller 'secular' left-wing parties.[75] Compared to the other major parties it has a well-established internal structure through its hierarchy of local, state and national organisations, and unlike many of its political opponents, the BJP appears to articulate a powerful and coherent vision of and for India, centring on the notion of 'Hindutva'—a Hindu nation-state. The unity of the *Hindu* body politic, and its masculine aggressiveness, have been signalled, for example, in the highly symbolic *yatras* or processions around India, and in the testing of the nuclear bombs in Pokhran in 1998.[76]

But a number of factors have worked against the BJP's particular vision of national unity, and may well be decisive in preventing the party from achieving undisputed political and ideological hegemony. These include the deep roots of secularism, and the left-wing and low caste backlash the BJP's rise to power has provoked.[77] The emergence and strengthening of lower and Backward caste

parties (especially in the north) over the 1990s, and the well-recorded rise of regional parties all over India have increased political competition for the BJP, while, although much depleted and weakened, the Congress Party is not yet spent, and at this time still forms the second largest single party in parliament. Another problem for the BJP is the cultural and religious diversity within India. The Hindu vision espoused by the BJP and its non-political associates not only alienates many amongst the non-Hindu population (such as Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, animists and Buddhists, and arguably the Scheduled Castes, or former Untouchables), but even amongst Hindus it is more often more regionally than nationally salient or attractive.[78] For these reasons, amongst others, although the BJP's 1998 election campaign was marked by considerably more moderation than in 1991 and 1996, the party still only won 179 parliamentary seats out of a total of 543. Because of these electoral weaknesses, by 1999 the BJP remained in the uncomfortable and unstable position of heading up a weak coalition government in alliance with a number of fractious and sometimes dangerously disruptive regional parties (notably the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu under Jayalalitha). In the elections of September-October 1999 the BJP won more seats, but they remained vulnerable to pressure from coalition partners, and overall the leverage of regional parties in national government is evident.

This has resulted in a situation in which a few seats either way can determine who rules in some of the states, and given the delicate balance at the centre, may even be influential in winning or losing government. The fierce political competition that this has engendered has, amongst other things, encouraged political parties to court a number of populist lines in different states. This is particularly true of the BJP, as it has sought to replace the waning support generated by the Ayodhya temple-mosque controversy with other issues, often pitched at the regional or state level. Regional movements may offer particularly attractive mobilisations to support, given the clear potential political pay-offs (in terms of MPs and state governments) that would result from the creation of a new federal unit. For example, in the 1998 general elections the BJP won 11 of the 14 Lok Sabha (national parliament) seats in the Jharkhand region; in Uttaranchal they won four out of four seats; and in Chhattisgarh they won seven out of 11 seats. Amongst other calculations of regional interest,[79] creating these areas as states would strengthen the BJP's hand against opposition parties in parliament, as well as bolster its position in relation to its demanding and dangerously powerful political allies. It would, in theory, deliver them more state governments, and possibly more MPs, as there are plans to increase representation in some areas. However, continued support for the BJP in these regions was, of course, by no means assured, and it was the potential for other parties to 'poach' the issue that appeared to drive their support for the new states and compete with the BJP over this issue. By the same token, the uncertainty as to who would reap the political reward for the new states is one reason why the BJP Government spent some time prevaricating on translating their promise into action.

DISCUSSION

The demand for new states has once again emerged as a major issue in India. In certain areas, often, although not always, characterised by economic and/or social marginalisation, and possessing a sense of geographical, ethnic, cultural and/or linguistic regional identity,[80] the struggle for a political voice and access to the state has been channelled into the desire for a separate state within the Union of India. These trends can be set within the politicisation of society observed by Kohli and many others, and the related growth of social movements over the last 20 years or so. The 'changes from below' are, of course, reflexively bound up with 'changes from above' and the broader trends within India's political economy in relation to internal border changes have been the focus of this article. This macro-political context is a key 'field of opportunity' within which these non-secessionist regional movements articulate and must be understood. The analysis presented here helps explain why a number of these demands (some of which go back decades) finally appear to be experiencing success. In a polity in which the central government has absolute constitutional power over changes to federal boundaries (even if, theoretically, the state legislatures do not approve the changes), the shift in political attitudes in New Delhi is critical.

The differences between Nehru and Indira Gandhi's regimes in relation to regional demands have been persuasively analysed by Brass.[81] He argues that whereas Nehru generally sought to distance the central government from the regional struggles in various states, and arbitrate only in the last instance, Indira Gandhi chose to meddle dangerously and sometimes subversively in regional and other issues. This, Brass suggests, resulted in escalating levels of bitterness and violence, and paradoxically, given Indira Gandhi's centralising desires, was associated with the increasing ineffectiveness of the central government in managing conflicts. As more regional parties began to erode Congress dominance in the states (and then at the centre), Indira Gandhi's government increasingly lost the ability, as well as the desire, to act neutrally and 'above' state politics. Although we must be careful not to draw too stark a divide between the rules of father and daughter, a decisive feature of the last 30 years of Indian politics has been the entry of the central government into the hurly-burly of state politics, and often in a poor position to negotiate or manage the situation.

This article has picked up the story from the late 1980s onwards, and suggests that continuing changes in India's political economy have resulted in a new relationship between the centre and those regions demanding greater political autonomy. It has argued that liberalisation, the rise of the Hindu right, the declining ability of any one party to win power at the centre, and the concomitant rise of coalition politics, have all contributed to a qualitatively different political terrain in India in the 1990s and the new millennium. In contrast to the relative stability of previous decades, the 1990s have witnessed a rapid 'turnover' of central governments, with four general elections between 1996 and 1999 alone (in the 44 years prior to 1991, there had only been ten

general elections). In these circumstances, different political parties have become significantly more receptive to the idea of (limited) territorial autonomy, given the votes this might win them. Political opportunism is hardly new in India, in relation to the creation of new states as much as anything else, and, as Brass's analysis above suggests, it would be foolish to suggest that short-term strategic decision making on this subject is an entirely novel situation. What is perhaps different is the degree and depth to which various *national* actors have been drawn in, such as the central bodies of the Congress Party, the Janata Party and the BJP (not just their state units), when in opposition and when in government, as well as various smaller but still influential parties. In the last few years, successive central governments have adopted a different attitude to a number of regional demands, which, although couched in the positive (and welcome) rhetoric of greater decentralisation, may simply represent the narrow electioneering that has often characterised local and regional party political responses to this issue. The centre is by no means toothless, and will no doubt continue to resist those non-secessionist regional movements which it deems inappropriate or divisive. However, at present, territorial reorganisation is very much back on the political agenda for India, revitalising debates on regionalism and federalism.

NOTES

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1. S.E.Corbridge, 'Federalism, Hindu Nationalism and Mythologies of Governance in Modern India', in G.E.Smith (ed.), *Federalism: The Multiethnic Challenge* (London: Longman, 1995), 101–27.
2. My concern here is with 'national' parties (such as Congress, the BJP and the Janata Party, which have an enduring national presence), as well as influential smaller parties that have played a significant role in recent federal politics through a sufficient presence in the national parliament. Examples would include the AIADMK, the Samajwadi Party and the Akali Dal.
3. M.Dent, 'Ethnicity and Territorial Politics in Nigeria', in Smith (ed.), *Federalism,*
4. T.K.Oommen, *State and Society in India: Studies in Nation-Building* (London: Sage, 1990).

5. This inconsistency in relation to Uttaranchal is discussed in detail in E.E.Mawdsley, 'Nonsecessionist Regionalism in India: The Uttarakhand Separate State Movement', *Environment and Planning* A, 29 (1997), 2217–35.
6. P.R.Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); R.D.King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).
7. This represents a future research agenda. During the regional struggle in Uttaranchal, for example, many men and women spoke not just of a new state but a different state. See E.E. Mawdsley, 'A New Mountain State: Politics, Territory and Development in the Indian Himalaya', *Mountain Research and Development,* 19/2 (1999), 101–12. While it is more than likely that old patterns of governance will continue, the projections of what a 'good' state would be is highly suggestive. There is much to explore here in relation to grassroots and elite debates about developmental and democratic functioning and ideologies, especially at this time of change, and intensity of expectation/disappointment.
8. Y.Yadav, The Third Electoral System', *Seminar,* 480 (1999).
9. L.Saez, *Federalism without a Centre: The Impact of Political and Economic Reform on India's Federal System* (New Delhi: Sage, 2002).
10. A.Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
11. Smith (ed.), *Federalism.*
12. B.D.Dua, *Presidential Rule in India, 1950–75: A Study in Crisis Politics* (Delhi: S.Chand, 1979); Brass, *Politics of India.*
13. R.Khan, *Federal India: A Design for Change* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1992), 39.
14. O.Spate, G.East and C.Fisher (eds.), *The Changing Map of Asia: A Political Geography* (London: Methuen, 1971).
15. Spate *et al, Changing Map,* 164.
16. King, *Nehru.*
17. Khan, *Federal India,* 43.
18. T.Vanhanen, *Politics of Ethnic Nepotism* (Delhi: Sterling Press, 1992).
19. J.Das Gupta, 'Ethnicity, Democracy and Development in India: Assam in a General Perspective', in A.Kohli (ed.), *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 148.
20. *King, Nehru.*
21. Government of India, *Report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission of the Constituent Assembly of India,* Delhi, 1949; P.R.Brass, 'Regions, Regionalism and Research on Modern Indian Society and Politics', in R.I.Crane (ed.), *Regions and Regionalism in South Asian Studies: An Exploratory Study* (Papers presented at a Symposium held at Duke University, 1966), 258–70.
22. R.J.Moore, 'India in 1947: The Limits to Unity', in A.J.Wilson and D.Dalton (eds.), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: Hurst, 1982).
23. A.Banerjee, The Ideology and Politics of India's National Identity', in Z.Hasan, S.N.Jha and R.Khan (eds.), *The State, Political Processes and Identity: Reflections on Modern India* (New Delhi: Sage, 1999), 283–96.

24. N.Mukarji, 'Resolving Centre-State Conflicts', *Economic and Political Weekly, 2* Sept. 1995, 2175–7.
25. Jalal, *Democracy,* R.K.Verma, *Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism in State Politics* (Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1994).
26. V.P.Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (Delhi: Orient Longman, 1956).
27. J.Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London: Meridian Books, 1946); R.K.Mookerjee, *The Fundamental Unity of India* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1954).
28. J.Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 92.
29. Vanhanen, *Ethnic Nepotism,* 70.
30. *King, Nehru.*
31. Menon, *Integration.*
32. Sukhwal quoted in Vanhanen, *Ethnic Nepotism,* 70.
33. P.Spear, *History of India: From the Sixteenth Century to the Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1965).
34. I.Narain, 'Cultural Pluralism, National Integration and Democracy in India', in K.R. Bombwall (ed.), *In National Power and State Autonomy* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1977).
35. Government of India, Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Lok Sabha Debates on the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission, Volumes I, II and III* (Delhi, 1955), 45.
36. R.Khan, 'Political and Socio-cultural Determinants of Federalism', in Bombwall (ed.), *National Power.*
37. A North-Eastern Zonal Council followed in 1972.
38. J.V.Bondurant, *Regionalism versus Provincialism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1958), 146.
39. R.Thakur, *The Government and Politics of India* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).
40. This remained true, inevitably, even on linguistic grounds. It has been estimated that India has over 3,000 languages and dialects, of which at least 33 languages have over a million speakers.
41. Government of India, *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission.*
42. S.Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India', in J.Manor (ed.), *Rethinking Third World Politics* (London: Longman, 1991).
43. Brass, *Politics of India.*
44. Oommen, *State and Society.*
45. Ibid.; Mukarji, 'Centre-State Conflicts'.
46. Union territories are smaller areas and cities which, usually for historical reasons, are directly adminstered by the centre in a number of key respects. Examples include the city of Chandigarh (on the border of Punjab and Haryana), Pondicherry and the Lakshadweep Islands.
47. For more details on Uttaranchal (also known as Uttarakhand), see, among others, M.Aryal, 'Angry Hills: An Uttarakhand State of Mind', *Himal* (Nov. 1994), 10–21; G.S.Mehta, *Uttarakhand, Prospects for Development* (Delhi: Indus Publications, 1996); Mawdsley, 'Nonsecessionist Regionalism'; and P.Kumar, *The Uttarakhand Movement: Construction of Regional Identity* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2000).
48. Jharkhand is made up of what had been southern Bihar. For more details, see S.E.Corbridge in this volume and The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society: Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950–1980', *Modern Asian Studies,* 22/1 (1988), 1–42;

and R.D.Munda, *The Jharkhand Movement: Retrospect and Prospect. A Report Submitted to Home Minister, Buta Singh* (Ranchi: Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee, 1990).

49. Chhattisgarh forms a large part of 'tribal' eastern Madhya Pradesh. Relatively little has been written about the regional movement or issue of statehood here, but see H.L.Shukla, *Chhattisgarh in Making* (Delhi: B.R.Publishing, 1999).
50. S.Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).
51. *Deccan Herald, 2* April 1998.
52. *Times of India* (New Delhi), 16 Sept. 1998.
53. Brass, *Politics of India;* see also Narain, 'Cultural Pluralism'.
54. *Deccan Herald,* 31 Aug. 1997.
55. Ibid., 2 April 1998.
56. Ibid., 16 Dec. 1997.
57. P.R.Brass, 'Pluralism, Regionalism and Decentralising Tendencies in Contemporary Indian Politics', Wilson and Dalton (eds.), *States of South Asia.*
58. N.Bajpai and J.D.Sachs, 'The Progress of Policy Reform and Variation in Performance at the Sub-national Level in India', Development Discussion Paper, 730 (Harvard University, Centre for International Development, 1999); M.S.Ahluwalia, 'Economic Performance of the States in the Post-Reforms Period', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 6 May 2000, 1637–48.
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60. R.Kothari, 'Federalism: The Problem', *Seminar,* 357 (1989), 13.
61. Khan, 'Determinants of Federalism'; Khan, *Federal India.*
62. Kothari, 'Federalism'.
63. G.E.Smith, 'Russia, Ethnoregionalism and the Politics of Federation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 19/2 (1996), 398.
64. M.Weiner, *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Das Gupta, 'Ethnicity'.
65. *Deccan Herald,* 31 March 1998.
66. *Times of India* (New Delhi), 11 June 1998.
68. *Deccan Herald,* 10 Sept. 1998.
69. L.Rudolph and S.H.Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987).
70. A.Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14.
71. Corbridge, 'Federalism'.
72. Jalal argues that Nehru's rule was more centralising than is commonly portrayed. For example, he was not averse to dismissing troublesome state governments (Congress included), such as the Communist Government of Kerala in 1959. Jalal, *Democracy.*
73. I.J.Ahluwalia, *Industrial Stagnation in India since the Mid-1960s* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985); J.P.Lewis, *India's Political Economy: Governance and Reform* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995). For a more sympathetic account of planning and India's economic performance, see S.Chakrabarty, *Development Planning: The Indian Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

74. P.Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).
75. P.Datta, *Regionalisation of Indian Politics* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1994).
76. C.Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, 1925 to the 1990s* (London: Hurst and Company, 1993); T.B.Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).
77. S.E.Corbridge, 'The Militarisation of all Hindudom'? The Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism', *Economy and Society,* 28/2 (1998), 222–55.
78. Z.Hasan, *Quest for Power: Opposition Movements and Post-Congress Politics in Uttar Pradesh* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).
79. J.Manor, 'Southern Discomfort: The BJP in Karnataka', in T.B.Hansen and C.Jaffrelot (eds.), *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); J.Chiriyankandath, 'Bounded Nationalism: Kerala and the Social and Regional Limits of Hindutva', in Hansen and Jaffrelot (eds.), *The BJP;* and Corbridge, 'Militarisation'.
80. For example, dividing Bihar was an attractive prospect to the BJP, as it would seriously undermine the power and political empire of Laloo Prasad Yadav, the tenacious *de facto* Chief Minister of the state.
81. This article does not address the thorny question of how regions may be defined in the Indian (or any other) context, but see contributors to: Crane, *Regions;* R.G.Fox (ed.), *Realm and Region in Traditional India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1977); as well as S.Maheshwari, 'Regionalism in India: Political and Administrative Response', in Bombwall (ed.), *National Power;* and J.E. Schwarztberg, *Historical Atlas of South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
82. Brass, *Politics of India.*

The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Names and Numbers

STUART CORBRIDGE

At first blush, the formation of the states of Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh in November 2000 would seem to signal the 'success of India's democracy' (to borrow a recent phrase from Atul Kohli).[1] And in key respects this is the case. The ability of the central state in India to manage centre-state relations has consistently upset the views of those observers, like Selig Harrison at the cusp of the 1960s, who believed that the formation of 'language states' would pave the way for a future of 'feuding regional ministries', and even anarchy or fascism.[2] As James Manor has pointed out, Prime Minister Nehru was pleasantly surprised by the way in which tensions in South India were relieved by an agreement to form the state of Andhra Pradesh in 1953.[3] This, along with the later creation of the states of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat, and the division of 'greater Punjab' in 1966, has surely strengthened—not weakened—democracy in India. Atul Kohli has suggested that:

> Within the framework of a centralized but accommodating state, democracy has enabled regional forces to successfully press their demands. These successes were manifest early in the area of identity politics, namely, in the reorganization of India along linguistic lines, and over the last three decades in the struggle to share economic resources between the national and state governments.[4]

And James Manor, too, echoing this argument, has suggested that the decentring of the nation in India has paved the way for 'political regeneration'.[5] More so than Kohli, perhaps, he accepts that the centre has been able to manage the states because of the fluidity of identities and demands within the states, but he also pays homage to the skills of those political activists and 'fixers' who 'remain capable of making the politics of bargaining work' .[6] In his view, it is the very plurality of contests for power within India, and not least since the revamping of *panchayati raj* institutions, which ensures that 'parties and politicians…remain

Stuart Corbridge, Department of Geography, London School of Economics, and College of Arts and Sciences, University of Miami

engaged with the politics of elections and bargaining, even when they suffer defeats in some contests'.[7] As the old saw has it, diversity ensures unity.

But is this really the case, and what are the costs of these engagements? One of the weaknesses of the pluralist account of the 'success' of India's polity is that it is focused more on the institutionalisation of democracy than on its substantial accomplishments (a point that is acknowledged by Kohli).[8] It is true that secessionist movements have been thin on the ground in India, and have been notably unsuccessful, but the continuing struggles in the north-east (which are properly recognised by Manor), and the often brutal containment of the struggles for an independent Kashmir or even Khalistan, are hardly testimony to the institutional strength of India's democracy. They are evidence rather of the military strength of what remains a strongly centralised power. And while it can be argued that the formation of three new states in 2000 was a victory for commonsense in Uttaranchal (the state of Uttar Pradesh being too large and too populous to govern effectively),[9] and for economic justice in the case of Jharkhand (the new state for too long serving as an internal colony for Bihar), it cannot be denied that the formation of these states had more to do with political bargains between a restricted number of elite actors than with the pressures from below acknowledged in official statements at the time.

want to suggest here that, while the formation of a state of Jharkhand is to be welcomed, and while there are some early signs that the government of Babulal Marandi will enjoy some success in attracting foreign capital (including increased loans from the World Bank), the state has been formed with little regard for the *adivasi* communities so long in the vanguard of the Jharkhand movement. The story I wish to tell is intended not as a rebuttal of the pluralist thesis but as a corrective. By focusing first on the formation of the demand for a Jharkhand state, and then on the changing economic geography of the region, I show how difficult it is to make an argument for a specifically 'tribal' state, a point not lost on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. At the same time, I show how New Delhi and Patna have been active in the production of Jharkhand as a 'detribalising territory', and how they have ignored the more pressing demands voiced by poorer households in Jharkhand for improved land rights. It is thus no coincidence that the successful decentring of the nation engineered in 2000 has been accompanied by a rising tide of Naxalism in Jharkhand, and by a turn to non-parliamentary popular movements. From the point of view of many *adivasi* (and non-*adivasi*) households, the substantial accomplishments of India's democracy have been hard to discern.

THE MOVEMENT FOR A JHARKHAND STATE

When Chief Minister Babulal Marandi assumed power in Ranchi city, the capital of the new state of Jharkhand, he did so at the behest of his masters in the BJP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in New Delhi. Marandi came back to Jharkhand from his position as Union Minister of State

for Forests and Environment. Perhaps more importantly, he was a 'tribal' *(adivasi)* politician who enjoyed the support of leading figures in the BJP in Patna, the capital city of the state of Bihar from which Jharkhand was being cleaved. Unlike Shibu Soren (the long-time leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and key figure in the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council set up in 1993), or even Karia Munda (another BJP MP, and long-time member for Khunti constituency in Ranchi District), Marandi had not been known for his activism in the Jharkhand movement. Marandi, indeed, was one of a group of politicians who had pressed the BJP in the 1990s to set up a separate state of Vananchal (land of forests in Hindi) rather than a state of Jharkhand. The BJP ran with this idea for several years, in contented recognition of the fact that Jharkhand, or at least those districts of 'Jharkhand' inside Bihar, was no longer an area dominated by *adivasis,* either numerically or economically. Although the BJP did come to win the votes of *adivasis* loyal to politicians who moved over to the party—including Marandi and Karia Munda—its support base was rooted in those communities which the *adivasis* have traditionally styled as *'Dikus'* (rapacious outsiders) or *Sadans* (long-settled and mainly agricultural communities of non-tribal origin). And when the BJP did finally embrace the call for a state of Jharkhand, it did so with the blessing of the region's manufacturing and trading classes (and, we can presume, the Tata group, on which more below), and with the intention of weakening Laloo Yadav and the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar. As the BJP rightly calculated, the separation of Jharkhand from Bihar would deprive the latter not just of substantial sales and excise revenues, but also of subsidised electricity provision.

The break-up of Bihar, of course, is hardly a matter of concern for activists within the Jharkhand movement, and it is a reasonable bet that some of them will have been encouraged by the crackdown on corruption initiated by Marandi early in 2002. It might also be the case that some *adivasi* communities will benefit from the significant expansion of World Bank funding planned for the forestry sector, or from an increase in jobs in manufacturing as and when foreign capital is attracted to the state. It is a disservice to these communities to maintain, as some in the cultural wing of the Jharkhand movement do, that they cannot benefit from improved governance or from sustained economic growth. Nevertheless, for long-standing observers of the region it was ominous, to say the least, that eight *adivasis* were shot dead by the police in Tapkara village in the Koel-Karo region on 2 February 2001, less than three months after the formation of the new state. The *adivasis* were killed when a large number of them protested at a police action that had, on the previous day, torn down a barricade which had been erected near Derang village as part of a campaign to keep contractors away from the site of a proposed dam on the Koel-Karo river system. The violent suppression of supporters of the Koel-Karo Jan Sanghatan brought to mind the notorious police firing on a demonstration called by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha at Gua township in western Singhbhum district in September 1980 to protest against 'police terror and state employment policies'

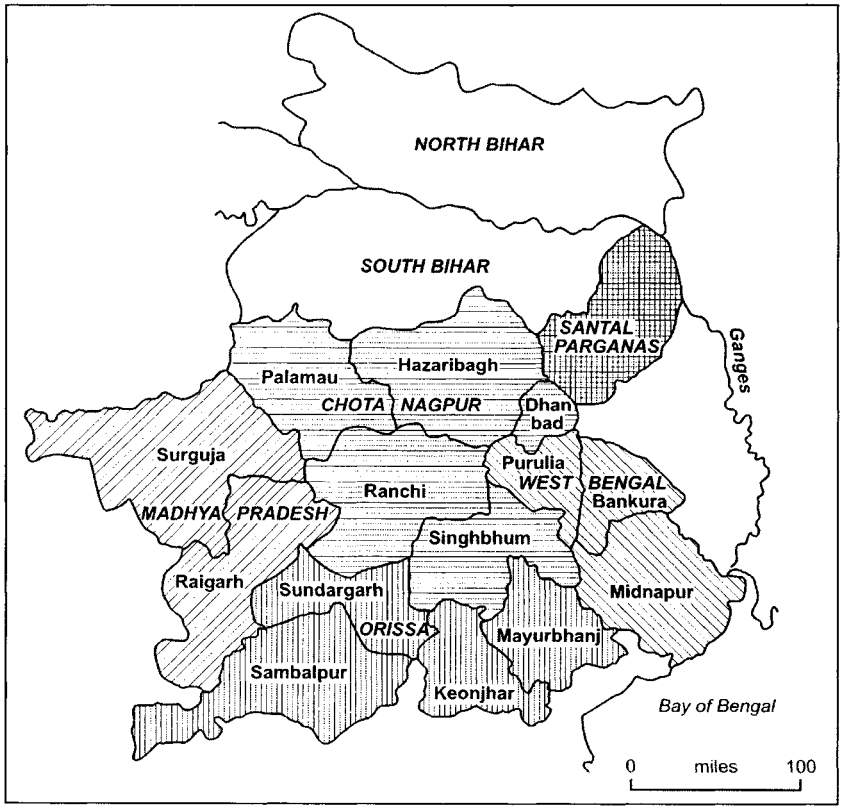
in the iron ore mining heartland of Jharkhand. The killing on that occasion of eight *adivasis* was followed by a police reign of terror in surrounding villages, and must be seen in the context of a wider struggle around the region's mineral and timber resources. More generally, this firing and the one at Tapkara need to be understood against the backdrop of a longstanding struggle not just for the territory of Jharkhand, but also for the integrity of the cultural and ethnic identities mobilised as part of that battle.[10]

For proponents of a greater Jharkhand state—a state combining the Chota Nagpur and Santhal Parganas regions from erstwhile Bihar with tribal-dominated districts in neighbouring Orissa, Madhya Pradesh (as was) and West Bengal, much as was proposed to the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in the 1950s (see Figure 1)—the struggle goes back to 'heroes of the Jharkhand movement like Konta Munda (1820); Singrai-Bindrai Manki (1831); Tilka Majhi, Sidhu, Kanu, Chand, Bhairav (1856); Biswanath, Sahdev, Ganpat Rai, Sheik Bhikari, Kurban Ali, Nilambar, Pitanbar (1857); Birsa Munda, Bharmi Munda (1900); [and] Jatra Bhagat (1915)'.[11] Its modern institutional history begins with the founding of the Chotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha in 1930, and of the Jharkhand Party itself in 1950. Under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, the Jharkhand Party was to establish itself as the principal opposition to Congress in Bihar in the general elections of 1952 and 1957, and it was encouraged to press its demand for a separate Jharkhand state to the SRC.

The bases of this demand are worth rehearsing, for they show both the strengths and limitations of a discourse centred upon ideas of culture and ethnicity, and more recently of environment. The submission to the SRC stated that the tribal communities of greater Jharkhand had long been in a majority in the region, and had been dealt with by the British on that basis. The British, indeed, had ruled most of the region, or those parts of it not falling under the sway of Native Princes, on the assumption (or pretext) that the 'indigenous communities' (those described as Aboriginal and Semi- Aboriginal Tribes in the Census of 1872) should be dealt with directly by an officer of the colonial state. This person enjoyed discretionary powers under the provisions setting up Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas, and he was required to keep the peace by dealing with the leaders of various tribal communities—the Mankis and Mundas. Failure to do so, the British supposed, would be akin to handing these communities over to the self-interested (and, later, 'politically motivated') big men of the Hindu communities who preyed upon their less well-educated countrymen.

In time, of course, as we shall see, the willingness of some Jharkhandi activists to define their communities as victims of Hindu outsiders, or as noble lords of the forest, would limit the possibilities for building a less ethnically restricted movement. But in the mid-1950s it seemingly made sense to present an argument for a specifically 'tribal' Jharkhand, and to ally this to a revanchist politics seeking to reclaim lost territory in the name of the true 'sons [and daughters] of the soil'.[12] The submission to the SRC made the further arguments,

FIGURE 1 THE DEMAND FOR GREATER JHARKHAND, c.1950



then (again using government constructions of what it was to be 'tribal'), that the integrity of the *adivasi* cultures of Gondwanaland would be lost if the tribal-dominated areas were administered from Patna or Calcutta, and if scant regard was paid to the distinctiveness of their music, religions, literatures and languages.[13] Finally, the Jharkhand Party made the claim, which has long been at the centre of tribal politics in the region, that *adivasi* livelihoods were under threat from outside interests and *Dikus.* A way of life that was in tune with nature was being undermined by timber contractors and mining capital, and by those recent immigrants who refused entry to *adivasis* in the shops and hotels of Ranchi city.

JHARKHAND UNDERMINED

To write in these terms, of course, is to oversimplify some key moments in the construction of Jharkhandi sub-nationalism. The discourse developed by the

Jharkhand Party involved a delicate and sometimes unsustainable compromise between a primordialist account of the rights of India's 'original people', and references both to the wit and wisdom of these people (and their ability to deal with non-tribal populations) and to the need for special protective measures on their behalf (including job reservations and the continuation of the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act of 1908). These tensions came to the fore during the debates of the Constituent Assembly, when Jaipal Singh refused to join the Muslim and Christian communities in giving up a claim upon reserved seats in the legislature —'Adivasis are not giving up anything because they have never had anything'[14] —even as he sought to remind members that:

> Adibasi society is the most democratic element in this country…. In Adibasi society all are equal, rich or poor. Everyone has equal opportunity and I do not wish that people should get away with the idea that by writing this constitution and operating it we are trying to put a new idea into the Adibasi society. What we are actually doing is you are learning and taking something.[15]

The demand for a separate Jharkhand state was also prosecuted, at least until the emergence of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in the 1970s, by educated members of an emerging tribal elite (itself heavily urbanised), and particularly by those who had been to mission schools and who enjoyed support from the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches.[16] Its leadership came disproportionately from the Munda and Santhal communities, although a stinging Memorandum on 'the adivasi problems in the central tribal belt of India' was circulated in 1968 by the prominent Oraon leader (later Bishop), Nirmal Minz.[17]

For our purposes, however, the history of the Jharkhand movement matters rather less than developments within the historical geography of the region itself, and the ways in which key actors in the post-colonial state came to seize on these developments—and actively to produce others—in order to discount the claims of Jaipal Singh and his co-workers and successors. Some of these developments formed part of the case that was developed against the demand for a Jharkhand state in the Report of the SRC (that tribals were no longer in a majority in Jharkhand, and lacked a link language), while other developments, including shifts in the economic geography of the region, had the effect of undermining the 'unity' of tribal society which Jaipal Singh and others took for granted.

The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society

At the heart of tribal policy and politics in India for the past 100 years has been an 'ideology of tribal economy and society'.[18] Roughly summarised, this is the view that 'tribal' societies are different: that they are organised according to a principle of equality not hierarchy (in gender as well as in class terms); that they are geared to the production of use values in remote and often forested areas of

central or north-eastern India; that they maintain animistic forms of religion; and that they are not equipped to deal with communities which are better versed in the law or the use of money. The noted Indian commentator B.D.Sharma suggested in the late 1970s that: There is no functional differentiation in the tribal community as yet even in relation to such basic aspects like the religious, social, economic and political. The tribal is not yet used to the sectoralised approach which is the distinguishing characteristic of modern advanced communities. For example, he cannot distinguish between a loan for consumption or for production purposes.'[19] And in the Report of the (Dhebar) Commission on Scheduled Castes and Tribes we are told that: 'It is difficult in the dry pages of an official report to convey to the reader the zest for life expressed in tribal poetry and dancing, the instinct for colour and pattern… [nevertheless] above all things, the tribal people are intensely lovable and have fascinated most of those who have had anything to do with them.'[20]

This perspective has the effect of constituting the *adivasi* communities as radically 'Other' to mainstream (caste) society, and of concentrating debate on the pros and cons of this Otherness. For some members of the Constituent Assembly the production of tribal identities was itself a function of British rule, and of the colonial power's attempts to rule India by enforced divisions. According to G.S.Ghurye, one of India's leading sociologists, the 'so-called Scheduled Tribes' were 'degraded Hindus' who needed to be assimilated back into the mainstream of Indian life—a view, incidentally, which informs some of the activities of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Jharkhand today.[21] For others, including Jawaharlal Nehru, the Otherness of the tribes had to be protected in much the same manner, and by roughly the same means, as the British had claimed to protect these communities—at least until they were able to look after themselves. This view also informed the politics of the Jharkhand Party, which celebrated not only a long line of tribal freedom fighters (including Birsa Munda) but also the republican traditions of *adivasi* society.

The problem that would come to haunt the Jharkhand Party, however, was that these descriptions of tribal society were increasingly at odds with the lived realities of many Jharkhandis. In the first 30 years of the twentieth century the economy of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas was based on a single rain-fed crop of paddy, and many tribal (and non-tribal) families had to make use of the forests surrounding their villages to make ends meet. A large number of families also had to migrate to the tea-gardens of Assam on a permanent or a circular basis. The Census of 1921 recorded 307,000 migrants coming to Santal Parganas and Chota Nagpur, and 947,000 leaving the region.[22] By the 1940s, however, there were developments in place that would change the economic geography of Jharkhand. Unlike in some parts of the north-east, or even the interior areas of modern-day Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, many tribal communities in Jharkhand found increased opportunities for work in the mines and factories that were growing up in India's resource triangle. This was very obviously the case in Hazaribagh and Manbhum (later Dhanbad) Districts, which had been developed

from the 1870s as major centres of coal and mica mining, and into which came large numbers of *'diku'* families from greater Bengal and the United Provinces.[23] Significantly, the Interim Report of the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (other than Assam) Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly concluded in 1947 that these two districts, along with Palamau, should be de-scheduled. Unsurprisingly, the recommendation drew a minute of dissent from Jaipal Singh, which protested the 'demolition of the economic, geographical and ethnic unity of the Chota Nagpur Division',[24] a point to which we will return.

More important in the longer run was the induction of large numbers of tribal labourers into the coal mines of Dhanbad and Hazaribagh, and into the iron ore and copper mines of Singhbhum District. Some of these labourers were pushed into the mines following the loss of their lands under the terms of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. Between 1915 and 1925 close to 100,000 acres of land in south-west Singhbhum passed into the 'public domain' for the quarries of the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Bengal Iron and Steel Company, and for the housing compounds, roads and railway lines that supplied them.[25] But many more were persuaded to work in the mines by the relatively high wages paid there. By the late 1940s some 7,600 miners were employed in the Singhbhum iron quarries (including 3,200 females), the vast majority of whom would have been *adivasis*. And when real wage rates (including dearness allowances, sick pay and leave allowances) increased significantly in the 1950s, some of these tribals, and many more in the coal mining areas to the north, were able to use their savings to purchase land from other tribal families, as they were permitted to do under the terms of the Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act.

It was through means such as this, as well as through the acquisition of government jobs reserved for Scheduled Tribes, that a growing number of tribal families were able to forge lifestyles which can be described as 'middle-class'.[26] Members of these families are well able to distinguish between loans for production and loans for consumption, and not a few of them have placed siblings in the administrative, forest or police services, just as middle-class families have done across India. Recent research has also confirmed that significant levels of inequality in the ownership and use of land are common in 'tribal' villages removed from the centres of mining capitalism, and that not all communities in Ranchi District listed as Scheduled Tribes are recognised as *'adivasi'* by members of the Munda and Oraon communities.[27] Some members of these communities—for example, the Oraon Bhagats—have also been pursuing a strategy of *sanskritization* that involves the forswearing of meat and alcohol, and the rejection of certain forms of ancestor worship. In short, there are good reasons to believe that the republican and communitarian 'traditions' which have long been celebrated by (tribal) Jharkhandi politicians, as well as in the official statements of the colonial and post-colonial state, are, if not quite invented traditions,[28] traditions that are under attack. Notwithstanding the efforts of cultural revivalists within the Jharkhand movement, the assumed unity of 'tribal Jharkhand' has been eroding at a pace that has only slowly been acknowledged

by a political campaign which is reluctant to concede the changing and multiform nature of 'tribal' identities.

The Politics of Names and Numbers

It is important to pause at this point. To suggest that tribal identities in Jharkhand are becoming more fluid is not to suggest that what Pramod Parajuli has called an '*adivasi* cosmovision' is unimportant in eastern India.[29] Nor is it to deny that large numbers of *adivasi* people have been marginalised by the processes of economic development I have described, or have not been its major victims in terms of loss of lands. Nor must we suppose that a more imaginative Jharkhandi politics cannot be conjured up, in which a sensitivity to the changing ways of being of tribal people might be combined with some recognition of the rights of those who have settled in the region more recently. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and the Jharkhand Coordination Committee have moved in this direction, as I explain below. In any case, the point I now wish to develop is the more straightforward one that inconsistencies in the demands and characterisations of the Jharkhand movement have been seized upon by generations of politicians who have not wished to see the creation of a 'tribal' state. Some of these politicians, moreover, have emerged from within a 'tribal community' that has found it difficult to speak with one voice.

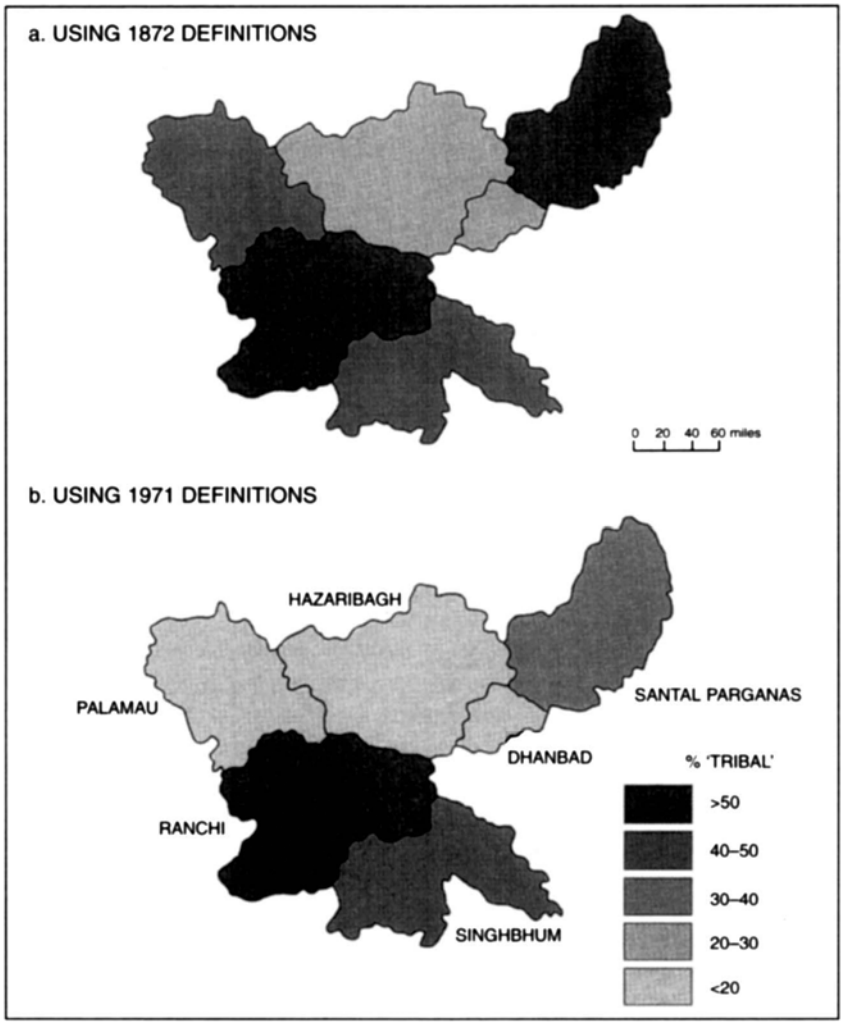
We see this well enough when we return to the deliberations of the SRC. On the face of it, one of the more straightforward claims made by the Jharkhand Party to the SRC was the suggestion that Jharkhand was a region in which tribal people were in a majority. It was reported to members of the Simon Commission in 1930 that 'the primitive tribes' made up 58 per cent of the population of the Chota Nagpur plateau,[30] and proponents of a greater Jharkhand state were able to raise this figure to 70 per cent when they added in the populations of the princely states of what became northern Orissa. How, then, could the SRC deny that the *adivasis* made up a majority of the proposed Jharkhand state? The answer is to be found in the ways in which the post-colonial state chose to recognise 'tribalness', or the designation of certain communities as Scheduled Tribes. In the Census of 1872 the British authorities provided a list of The Aboriginal and Semi-Hinduised Aboriginal Tribes of Chota Nagpur and Santal Parganas, Bihar'. Under the Aboriginal Tribes were listed such communities as the Asur and the Agaria, as well as the Bhuiher, Bhumij, Gond, Kol (Ho), Mal, Munda, Naik, Uraon, Sonthal and Tharu. Included under the list of Semi-Hinduised Aboriginal Tribes were the Bagdi, Bathudi, Bhar, Chamar, Dom, Ghatwal, Hari, Kadar, Mahali, Musahar, Pasi and Rajwar. In all, 31 communities were listed as Aboriginal Tribes in Chota Nagpur, with a further 31 being listed as Semi-Hinduised Aboriginal Tribes (the corresponding figures for Santal Parganas were 14 and 25). In the list of Scheduled Tribes presented by the state of Bihar following Independence just 30 communities were recorded. Following the conventions applied in north and central Bihar, communities such as the

Chamars and Musahars were now listed as Scheduled Castes, while other communities joined the ranks of what became the Other Backward Classes. Particularly in Hazaribagh and Manbhum Districts (or Dhanbad District, after part of Manbhum District was given to West Bengal as Purulia District), the very fact that some 'aboriginals' had gained employment in the mining or industrial sectors was taken as evidence of their 'detribalisation'.

This form of reasoning, which drew upon contemporary work on 'tribes in transition',[31] and which won considerable backing from non-tribal members of the Legislative Assembly, was not easily countered by members of the Jharkhand Party. However much Jaipal Singh sought to emphasise that 'tribal folk' had come out of their forest fastnesses, the rhetoric of his party was overwhelmingly edenic and republican. Meanwhile, in the Constituent Assembly Debates, the 'dominant nationalist discourse…undermined any suggestion of a separate tribal identity'.[32] In response to Jaipal Singh's suggestion that 'Adibasis collectively form a single community', K.M.Munshi charged that: There is nothing common between one tribe and another…. To call them Adibasis and group them together as one community will not only be an untruth in itself but would be absolutely ruinous for the tribes themselves'.[33] In any case, under the new definition of 'tribalness' the quest for an *adivasi* majority in Jharkhand, and certainly in the Bihar Jharkhand, was bound to grow more elusive. According to the data and definitions used in the Census of 1951, just 31.15 per cent of the population of Chota Nagpur, and 44.67 per cent of that of Santal Parganas was made up of Scheduled Tribals. Had the Census takers adopted the definitions used by the British in 1872, the percentage figures would have been 45.79 per cent and 55.21 per cent respectively. By the time of the Census of 1971, as Figure 2 makes clear, only Ranchi District was recorded as a tribal majority district (53.50 per cent), and the Scheduled Tribes made up just 30.94 per cent of the total population in Chota Nagpur and 36.22 per cent of that of Santal Parganas. By this time, too, even the 1872 definitions would not have worked significantly to the advantage of the cause of a tribal Jharkhand: the corresponding figures would have been 61.92 per cent for Ranchi District, 39.24 per cent for Chota Nagpur and 50.60 per cent for Santal Parganas.[34]

It would be unwise to argue that the *adivasis* of Jharkhand were cheated out of their birthright by the simple manipulation of names and numbers. The construction of 'tribalness' is always a matter of convention, and, as I suggested earlier, it would have been a conceit for Jharkhand Party leaders to claim that members of the dominant Munda, Santhal, Oraon and Ho communities treated Naiks or Mahlis on an equal basis. In any case, the greater damage was done by the mass migration of non-tribals to the region after Independence, and in the wake of Nehru's plans for the industrial transformation of Jharkhand. But it would be naïve to maintain that the highly circumscribed list of Scheduled Tribes produced by the Government of Bihar was not self-serving. The Government of Bihar brought pressure to bear on the SRC to dismiss the demand for a separate Jharkhand state. Fearing just that loss of revenues which would

FIGURE 2 THE TRIBAL POPULATION OF JHARKHAND 1971



Source: Census of India, 1872 and 1971.

later transpire, and being mindful of rumours that the Tatas were major financiers of the Jharkhand movement, the authorities in Bihar were at pains to rebuff claims of a tribal majority in Jharkhand, or of the integrity of a supposed 'tribal' culture. As we have seen, their efforts paid off. The SRC rejected the case for a Jharkhand state on the grounds that the tribes are in a minority in the Jharkhand region; that there is no specific link language in Jharkhand; and, significantly, that the economic balance of the neighbouring states would be disturbed by the formation of a Jharkhand state.

Co-optation and Violence

The Report of the SRC hastened the end of the Jharkhand Party as a credible force. The party did well in the parliamentary elections of 1957, but it lost ground to the Congress Party in 1962, and in 1963 Jaipal Singh defected to Congress in return for a senior position in the Government of Bihar. The 1960s were a grim decade for the Jharkhand movement. As defections continued apace, new parties emerged to fill the vacuum, but the fact that N.E.Horo (a noted Christian tribal leader) won a Lok Sabha seat as an Independent, and that the All-India Jharkhand Party in Chota Nagpur was countered by the Bihar Prant Hul Jharkhand in Santal Parganas, indicated the underlying tensions between Christian and non-Christian tribals on the one hand, and Santhals and Mundas on the other. More serious, though, was the continued immigration of non-tribals into Jharkhand, and the enormous loss of *adivasi* lands that was evident around the Heavy Engineering Complex at Hatia (Ranchi), or close to Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro or even Patratu. For all Nehru's rhetoric about the need to 'protect the genius of the tribal people',[35] it was his governments, and those of Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi in later years, which ensured that the ways of being of tribal men and women would be sacrificed to construct the new temples of India (the dams along the Damodar valley) or its major centres of heavy industry. Sadly, too, it was from this time, at least in the iron ore mining areas of western Singhbhum with which I am most familiar, that tribal employees lost ground to non-tribals as skilled labour came to substitute for unskilled labour. When I toured the giant Tata mines at Noamundi in 1979, the number of tribal employees was down to little more than 100, and then in low paid jobs. It was only in the squalid open cast quarries of the Rungtas that one could see Hos working as miners.

It was partly in response to the continuing dispossession of tribal lands—and of struggles over the use of Protected Forests—that the Jharkhand movement was revitalised in the 1970s by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM). Led by the Santhali tribal, Shibu Soren, the JMM developed a programme of direct actions reaching out to the industrial working class (led by A.K.Roy in Dhanbad) and the now substantial community of *Sadans* (those who had settled in Jharkhand and 'contributed to its prosperity', as the JMM put it). In both its red and green wings, the JMM developed a discourse rooted in a populist mixture of Marxism and ecology (resistance to the exploitation of the working class, resistance to the loss of land and trees, resistance to *Dikus* and Bihar) and an appeal to 'Our land, our policy, our identity, our culture', where the latter was understood in terms of *adivasi* practices and festivals.[36] The Morcha met with limited success in the parliamentary arena, but it was an irritant to Patna and New Delhi when it organised—sometimes with Jharkhandi student movements and/or the Jharkhand Coordination Committee (JCC)—a series of blockades that brought the region to a halt in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s, too, the Morcha had won a good deal of popular support when it helped to organise a forest

andolan (struggle) in Singhbhum District (an *andolan* that led directly to the Gua firings in 1980), and when it organised a number of land-grab movements.

The high point of the Morcha was probably achieved in the early 1990s, at the time of the minority Congress government of Narasimha Rao. The JMM was then able to use its position in the Lok Sabha to make a number of demands of the Government of India in return for its continuing support. In 1992 and 1993 it looked as if the Home Ministry might agree to the formation of a Jharkhand state, rather than an Area Autonomous Council (in which Soren would figure strongly), if only to secure the votes of the JMM and to damage the position of Laloo Yadav and the Janata Dal in Bihar. When push came to shove, however, as is well known, the government of Narasimha Rao allegedly chose to buy off the JMM leadership with substantial bank transfers, in the process continuing a strategy of co-optation developed by the centre over many years. The JMM was not helped, either, by the non-financial scandals that continued to dog Shibu Soren (including a murder charge) and Suraj Mandal.

At the same time, and in response to the growing violence that marked the struggle in Ranchi and Singhbhum Districts, the Government of Bihar, with support from New Delhi, began a harsh crackdown on activists in the Jharkhand movement, causing many of them to go underground. By the time the BJP announced the formation of a Jharkhand state, popular support for a tribal homeland was finding expression in other arenas: in the anti-dam struggles in the Koel-Karo river system, in the struggle against army firing ranges in the Neterhat plateau, and in the wave of Naxalism sweeping southwards from Bhojpur and Palamau and which, by November 2000, had reached the western fringes of Ranchi District. Significantly, the luminous green graffiti that had proclaimed support for the JMM or the JCC in 1993 - and which covered those parts of Ranchi close to the airport, Ranchi College and the Maidan—was notable by its absence in 2000. The walls of Ranchi City were more or less devoid of graffiti when the new state came into being, a sign, for sure, of the passivity or even scepticism of ordinary Jharkhandis.

CONCLUSION

The formation of a separate Jharkhand state admits of many tales. One tale would draw attention to the success of India's democracy, and rightly so. Despite the curfews imposed in Ranchi city shortly after the founding of the new state (in response to long-standing communal tensions), the transfer of power was accomplished without the bloodshed Laloo Yadav had threatened, and with a commendable level of administrative competence. Officers in the All-India Services were asked to choose whether they wished to continue to serve in Bihar, or whether they would prefer their tenure in Jharkhand, and most of their preferences were accommodated, albeit with the usual transfer of funds to politicians and senior civil servants. Negotiations also started on the distribution of assets between the two states, and the High Court of Jharkhand began to

distinguish itself by a campaign of judicial activism which challenged the tardiness of government in providing clean drinking water and wider roads. New companies began to move into the state, along with several NGOs which closed their offices in Patna in favour of new ones in Ranchi or Jamshedpur. Perhaps for the first time, the idea that Jharkhand might become a major centre of hi-tech industry—putting behind it the legacies of a Freight Equalisation Act that had discouraged value-added activities—was taken seriously by the local press.

This story needs to be told, for its lessons are important ones. Democracy in India does work in very many respects, and to the extent that Jharkhandis are rewarded with better governance and high rates of economic growth they will have reason to be thankful for its success. There remain doubts, even so, that all Jharkhandis will be fairly rewarded in the new state. The firings at Tapkara suggest that the protection of tribal land rights will not feature prominently in the agendas of the new government, and it is unlikely that rural dwellers will be compensated for the ecological services—including better quality air and water—they provide to the cities by virtue of their agro-forestry practices.[37] The simple transfer of powers from Bihar to Jharkhand also promises very little in terms of the day-to-day behaviour of state officials. Far too many men and women will continue to experience the 'state' *(sarkar)* as a distant body best approached by intermediaries *(dalaals),* or avoided for fear of abuse, intimidation or even arrest. For such people opposition to the state is becoming a more reasonable choice. This much is evident not just in the growing Naxalite movement, but in popular campaigns to keep the state 'out' of community forests or river systems.

These campaigns in turn speak to a third story that might be told of the continuing struggle for Jharkhand—one relating to memory and a sense of betrayal, particularly among the *adivasi* populations. This story circulates among the cadres of the JMM and the JCC, and others who have been active in perhaps the longest subnationalist struggle in India, including many tribal villagers. At the heart of the story, of course, is a tale of the 1950s and of the sabotaging of the 'legitimate' demand of the Jharkhand Party for a tribal state. But there is also a searching critique of the nature of democracy in India, and a questioning of its apparent success. What looks like success from one vantage point looks like hypocrisy from another—hypocrisy that extended in this case to the forced industrialisation of a region in which 'the tribals' were meant to enjoy state protection, and to a redefinition of 'tribalness' itself when that became convenient. For all the contradictions and silences in this story, and for all that it fails to address the situation which now pertains, it stands as a powerful corrective to a narrative of 'success' that is likewise reluctant to acknowledge its own silences.

NOTES

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Liberal, Secular Democracy and Explanations of Hindu Nationalism

RAJEEV BHARGAVA

The last few years have seen the growth of an enormously varied and rich scholarship on the rise of militant Hindu nationalism. Works by Jaffrelot, Hansen, Corbridge and Harriss, number just a few of these. My objective in this article is to fill an important lacuna in the intellectually astute and engaging explanations of this phenomenon available to us. Without building a coherent causal narrative, the first section lists some of these explanations for the resurgence of Hindu nationalism. The second identifies an important feature absent in these explanations, namely the normative vocabulary of liberal democracy embedded in the Indian Constitution. The third section argues against the view that its presence in the Indian public domain is anyway weak and wholly superficial. The fourth section, containing the meat of the article, delineates why and how it shapes the motivational structure of Hindu nationalists and how in turn they shape it. Although constrained by this framework, Hindu nationalists negotiate it by stretching the criteria of the application of key normative terms such as democracy and secularism. In doing so, they seek to transform not merely the meaning of words but an entire political culture. This crucial step has to be undertaken by them if they are to advance any further.[1] Since a complete explanation of a phenomenon must answer not only why-questions but also how-questions, the story of this ideological battle is a crucial ingredient in a fully adequate explanation of the resurgence of Hindu nationalism and the form it assumes. At the end, I hint toward a possible discourse-related, concept-sensitive explanation of the current crisis of secularism.

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE RESURGENCE OF HINDU NATIONALISM

What made the re-emergence of a vigorous anti-secular politics possible? What has put the saffron wave on the boil? What explains its 'move from the margins to the centre?' Before we proceed further, I will list a set of factors, neither exhaustive nor arranged in causal hierarchy, that explain the resurgence of

Rajeev Bhargava, Department of Politics, Delhi University

Hindu nationalism. My sole purpose here is to draw the attention of the reader to the missing link in the explanatory chain.

Long-Term Enabling Conditions

- The availability of certain forms of identities generated by specific religious regimes in India and the presence of certain strands of Hindu nationalism within most varieties of Indian nationalisms.[2]
- Colonial classification and enumeration that reified/essentialised communities and made their legal codification into discrete and incompatible groups possible.[3]
- The presence of an irreversible process of social egalitarianism that persistently challenges traditional hierarchies and forever throws up new interest and identity claims.
- The institutionalisation of representative democracy and its propensity to encourage ethno-religious political mobilisation.

Short-Term Enabling Conditions

- The presence of majoritarian democracy since the 1980s.
- A communalised state machinery causally linked to the gradual erosion of the state's commitment to secularism.[4]
- The availability of new bargaining strategies and the opportunities to directly undermine political opponents and to brazenly manipulate symbols in the political field.[5]
- Pervasive consumerism and an unconstrained disposition to pursue brutal self interest, fostered by the deployment of neo-liberal economic strategies.

Long-Term Actions by Primary Political Actors (Proponents of Hindutva)

- The relentless ideological and organisational work of militant Hindu nationalists day after day, every morning, against the 'Gandhi-Nehru vision of India' and to build politically useful 'welfarist' networks in civil society.[6]
- The sustained political manipulation of symbols of group identity to bolster the centralising and homogenising tendency within Hinduism and, by the simultaneous stigmatisation and emulation of others, to seek not only a massive comparative advantage for a modern, centralised, semiticised Hindu community, but also to replace liberal, secular democracy by the Hindu Rashtra.[7]

Short-Term Actions by Primary Political Actors

- Ideological and political campaigns such as the Ekmatayajna and mobilisation around issues such as the Meenakshipuram conversion, Babri Masjid, Shahbano and the missionary work of Christian organisations.
- The attractive packaging, at the right time, of historically produced notions of Hinduness.[8]

Short-Term and Long-Term Actions by Secondary Political Actors

- The strategy of the Congress to alternately abet majority and minority communalism.
- The role of the Congress in fostering Hindu majoritarianism.
- The politicisation of institutions, for short-term political gain, by the Congress Party.
- The instrumentalist attitude of left-wing parties to liberal democratic institutions.

Long-Term and Short-Term Actions of Social Actors

- The support given to Hindu nationalists by upper castes/middle classes to curb the rising assertiveness of hitherto marginalised groups and to tackle the political uncertainty generated by it.[9]
- Sections of Indian people support Hindu nationalism because it appears to rectify the apparently disastrous consequences of modernisation and to provide a solution to the atomisation, anomie, fragmentation and alienation seen to be necessary features of modernity.[10]

THE NORMATIVE VOCABULARY OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

I have here merely mentioned these factors. It is not part of my objective to construct a story out of this list, to assign causal weights to factors, or to assess their relative significance. On my part, I find each of these plausible. However, I believe something important to be missing in these accounts. The missing feature is this: the discourse of liberal democracy that compels even Hindu nationalists to legitimate their actions in terms of its normative vocabulary.

Readers may have noticed that explanations offered thus far focus on actions and their enabling conditions. As a first step towards identifying the missing pieces in a more comprehensive explanation, we must notice the structural constraints at work. The social and political fields that disenable human beings from acting in certain ways also direct them to seek alternative ways of acting

and therefore contribute to the explanation of what they do and how they realise their objectives. For instance, Jaffrelot claims that the success of Hindu nationalists has varied with the character and performance of the Indian state. The Nehruvian state, determinedly secular, kept Hindu nationalism firmly in check until the 1960s.[11] However, over time, with the communalisation of the legal machinery and of the wider public domain, a resurgent Hindu nationalism was witnessed. Going further, Hansen claims that wider constraints moulding Hindu nationalism are still at work today. For him, no matter how strongly they rely on hate speech or on violence against minorities, Hindu nationalists have had to advance, by and large, by following the procedures of parliamentary democracy and by respecting 'the judiciary, the electoral process and the rules of the game'.[12]

Indeed, both Jaffrelot and Hansen are sensitive to constraints on political actors imposed not only by institutions but by the availability of discursive genres and strategies. For Hansen, political action is conditioned by the 'structured archive of possible connotation and reconstruction available in the production of political legitimacy'.[13] Jaffrelot, even more explicitly, draws upon the work of Bourdieu and Bailey, and refers to the 'legitimating problematic of politics', to 'normative rules' by which particular actions are judged right or wrong and publicly justified or condemned.[14] join hands with this discourse sensitive analysis of political action because I believe, as its proponents do, that the resurgence of Hindu nationalism cannot be explained only by material interests, by the will to power or even by the ideals of nationalists themselves. A sound explanation must refer to public values and norms of justification constitutive of the conditions that inhibit or enable certain kinds of political acts.

Hansen clearly believes in the efficacy of certain kinds of discourses in shaping and perhaps even restricting the resurgence of Hindu nationalism. However, given his belief that liberal democracy never quite took root in India, it is not entirely clear whether in his view the discourse of liberal democracy is part of the legitimating problematic of politics which constrains Hindu nationalism. On the other hand, Jaffrelot's reference to the constraining power of the secular state on the activities of Hindu nationalists explicitly includes secularism as a legitimating norm. In the Nehruvian era, certain kinds of political actions were rendered impossible by the prevailing legitimating problematic. For example, the normative vocabulary of secularism frequently inhibited ethno-religious mobilisation, and therefore curbed the rise of Hindu nationalism. However, over time, as secularism lost its legitimacy, the very same acts, once inconceivable, became publicly acceptable. Quite clearly, Jaffrelot has a good sense of how values and principles enable or constrain political action. By and large, only those acts that can be publicly legitimated are realisable. If an action currently inhibited by available norms of public justification is to be performed, the content of these norms must first be altered. This indeed has been done. Over time, the discourse of public justification has in fact changed, a point amply

demonstrated by the erosion of secularism. Hence, the proliferation of Hindu nationalism.

agree with both Hansen and Jaffrelot on the explanatory significance of public norms and values, but differ on an important detail. For Hansen, the constitutional discourse of liberal democratic norms and values has never been salient in India. This is different from a more broadly conceived democratic discourse to which he does give overwhelming importance. For Jaffrelot, this discourse was once salient, but, with the gradual erosion of Nehruvianism, is now completely eclipsed. Indeed, its absence explains the rise of Hindu nationalism. For me, the discursive field set out by liberal democracy continues to shape, enable, and constrain the political strategies and discursive performance of Hindu nationalists. I believe liberal democracy is part of the standing discursive conditions in Indian society and that, therefore, Hindu nationalists frequently possess a motive to legitimate their actions in terms of its normative vocabulary. The central objective of this article is to show how this is so and to identify the actual mechanism by which it happens. More modestly put, I wish to carry forward and fine-tune Jaffrelot's analysis and in the process hope to bring to light the micro-level mechanisms by which Hindu nationalists are able to or are disenabled from implementing and advancing their agenda. Hardly anyone disagrees about the erosion of secularism. But surely differences can arise over the extent and outcome of this erosion and its precise mechanism. No doubt, the legitimating norms that govern Indian politics have changed but perhaps not quite in the manner suggested by Jaffrelot. The story of their erosion is more complicated. Conversely, the sedimentation of liberal democratic norms, both its dispersion and the depth it has reached in Indian society and polity, is more than is currently believed by many academics.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN THE INDIAN PUBLIC DOMAIN

I have assumed the existence of a liberal democratic discourse so far. But does it exist at all? Many critics believe it does not. Predictably, there are two versions of this critique, one strong, the other weak. The stronger version, which I have earlier called the 'cultural inadaptability' thesis, and which I associate with Ashis Nandy and T.N.Madan, makes a claim that modernity, Western by origin and character, is entirely alien to home-grown outlooks and can exist in India only superficially, by more or less coercive, external imposition.[15] For example, Madan argues that secularism is impossible in South Asia if viewed as a shared credo of life, impracticable as a basis for state action, and impotent as a blueprint for the foreseeable future. For Madan, secularism is impossible because it depends both on the distinction between the sacred and the profane and on the availability of a relation of equality between the two domains they inhabit. However, either South Asian religions make no such distinction or when they do it is invariably encompassed within the sacred giving the religious a distinct

priority over the secular. This makes it impossible to give equal validity to the domains of the sacred and the profane. Under such cultural conditions, secularism, born out of a dialectic between protestant Christianity and the enlightenment, cannot take root in India.

agree with the view that modernity originated in the West and migrated elsewhere, and also with the claim that in some spheres and to varying degrees it failed on its arrival to take root because non-modern cultural systems by which ordinary people lived their lives were deeply entrenched, resilient to change and not easily replaceable.[16] However, this view fails to notice two other processes also at work in India. First, Western modernity found a safe niche in these societies quite easily. To take just one example, Westernisation was adopted for purely instrumental reasons. Something akin to this process had begun as early as the late seventeenth century when a section of the commercial middle class were seen to be 'clad in a more stylish garb, with a head-dress of calico-coiled turban, light vest, and loose trousers. They all spoke English, offered their services for small wages, and waited on the passengers to execute their business'.[17] A rational choice to be Western was also not entirely uncommon in the early eighteenth century. Calcuttan youth, shocked by the murky excesses of traditions, 'openly adopted an aggressive attitude to everything Hindu and openly defied the cannons of their inherited religion,…while some of them offended public opinion by their youthful exuberance, such as drinking to excess, flinging beef-bones into the houses of the orthodox and parading the streets shouting "we have eaten Musalman bread"'.[18] In short, hyper-Westernisation became a form of protest against the filth in one's own traditions, something started by Ram Mohun Roy and continued to this day by Dalits. The proliferation of bespectacled statues of Ambedkar in a blue suit and polished shoes with the Constitution in hand is an apt reminder. Quite possibly, changes in society necessitated certain functions to be performed and, in the absence of functional analogues within existing cultural systems, this role could be fulfilled only by elements within Western modernity. This explains the painless, rather smooth acceptance in India of modern educational and legal systems. As early as 1841 'it was noticed that the Chamars, despised untouchables of northern India were not afraid to bring suits against their landlords'.[19] This quick absorption of Western modernity can be explained in other ways. Perhaps it contained many elements corresponding to deep mythical structures within non-Western civilisations. Despite differences on the surface, if any feature of Western modernity had a deeper universal structure, its absorption was mere formality. Something along these lines is suggested by Ashis Nandy in his explanation of why cricket, an early modern English game, gained huge popularity in the entire sub-continent.[20] However, a second equally important process also requires attention. When Western modernity began to interact with local cultural systems, something like a hybrid culture began to emerge, possibly by creative adaptation, for which an analogue can be found neither in Western modernity nor in indigenous tradition. These new phenomena resemble Western modern and

traditional entities and can be mistaken one for the other, but they escape the interpretative grid and discourse relating to both. This cluster of newly developed phenomena forged from Western modern and indigenous traditional cultural systems begets a different, alternative modernity. In non-Western societies, different modernities emerged as non-Western peoples broke loose from not only past practices but also from the shackles of a particular version of Western modernity imposed on them.[21]

Weaker versions do not defend the impossibility of the entry of modernity into India but claim that despite the efforts of early social reformers, the discourse of liberal democracy could not be easily transplanted or flourish on Indian soil for specific historical reasons. This view is found in works by Kaviraj, Khilnani, and even Hansen.

illustrate my point by a brief discussion of Khilnani's views.[22] In his book, *The Idea of India,* Khilnani claims that Indian liberalism was crippled from its origins: stamped by utilitarianism, and squeezed into a culture with little room for the individual.[23] The idea of natural right, essential to modern liberalisms, was only faintly articulated and failed to find a niche in nationalist thought.'[24] In India, 'Liberty was understood not as an individual right but as a nation's collective right to self-determination'.[25] The discourse of rights was disengaged from its individual moorings and attached quite naturally to groups, particularly to religious communities in a society fashioned by a collectivist mentality for centuries. With its emphasis on separate individuals moved by internal requirements of personal autonomy and tied to others by choice rather than circumstance, liberalism was bound to fail from the very start in such a culture. And it did. The final nail in the coffin was hammered home by the very political agent that liberalism nurtured in its initial encounter with India, the Indian National Congress. Gandhi's strategy of turning the Congress into a mass movement made a commitment to liberal and democratic institutions appear shallow or irrelevant. 'By the 1930s and 40s, Congress nationalism was divided between opinions that had little interest in liberal democracy.'[26] Not surprisingly, political representation was granted only to ascriptively defined groups, that is, those with immutable interests.

This presents a very skewed picture, nourished by a lopsided view of liberalism and a biased view of the history of liberal democracy in India. Above all, it is guilty of reverse anachronism. It extrapolates features of contemporary India into the past, sees continuity in the wrong places, and projects our concerns to remote relatives who lived in a world markedly different from ours. Views that appear constrictive to us were liberating for our forefathers. They were not exactly the same views, anyway. Besides, it fails to account properly for much that is crying out for explanation. Why did India adopt the constitution that it did? Why were fundamental rights accorded such a central place? Why adopt a constitution in the first place? Why the scramble to protect the rights of individuals and only a grudging acceptance of group rights? And in a deeply

hierarchical society, why such scant opposition to universal franchise, to the ban on untouchability, and to formal gender equality?

Proponents of the argument that liberal democracy is alien to cultural and social norms in India may respond by the claim that they possess a meaningful account of the birth of constitutional democracy in India. The Constitution, which was 'squarely in the best Western tradition', this view says, was given to the people of India by the political choice of an intellectual elite within a remarkably unrepresentative body.[27] Moreover, it was established in 'a fit of absentmindedness'; the elite had no idea of the political implications of its actions or of consequences that lay in store for them once franchise was extended to the poor and the uneducated.[28]

find this an extraordinary perspective on the making of the Indian Constitution: chosen, but unwittingly, by a body claiming to represent the real interests of everyone but in fact wholly unrepresentative, in the best traditions of the West because of the sharp manner in which it turned its back on the home-grown traditions of the national movement. By what magic was this miracle performed? How could the *very* people who rejected liberal democracy at the same time adopt or allow the adoption of a constitution in the tradition of Western liberal democracy? How could some of the most outstanding persons of an entire millennium choose a basic structure of their society without a clue as to its impact on that society or on its inherited traditions? This is not an easy question to answer and certainly not one to be dealt with in a few pages. But it is worthwhile to ask if a response that appears attractive at first sight retains plausibility on closer examination.

do not think it does. I believe it more plausible to argue that at least since Ram Mohun Roy, and well before the radical politicisation of the Indian National Congress, a distinct liberal stream existed which merged with and inherited a diffuse but persistent strain of something akin to a liberal view within local Indian traditions; that Western modernity could make a considerable impact on an aspiring middle stratum of Indian society because it genuinely articulated and responded to their needs; that there is more to utilitarianism than its strong collectivist trappings and, therefore, that even if liberalism came to India through utilitarianism, it washed up ideas neutral to say the least between the individual and the collective; that British imperialism, by installing the machinery of a modern state simultaneously opened up opportunities for resistance to it. Therefore, a classical political libertarianism with its emphasis on individual rights came to India as a structural feature of modern political life. Above all, democracy grew in India, as it did in many other places, under the guise of nationalism, and its commitment to political equality fitted in neatly with the egalitarian strands of liberalism as well as of utilitarianism. In the last instance, this meant that even outside the polity, liberal demands of equality of opportunity and the treatment of persons as equal individuals were considerably strengthened.

If all this is true then it is a gross exaggeration to assert that constitutional democracy in India was established in a fit of absent-mindedness, that the

discourse of rights was detached entirely from its classical individualist and political moorings and that Indian nationalism had little interest in liberal democracy. I have elaborated these points elsewhere.[29] A few will suffice for my discussion here. The history of civil liberties in India is at least two centuries old. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ram Mohun Roy protested against a regulation curtailing the freedom of the press. He argued that a state responsive to the needs of individuals and ready for intervention on their behalf makes available to them the means by which such needs are communicated, and therefore must permit unrestricted liberty of publication. The demand for a free press and opposition to its gagging persisted throughout British rule, particularly when the press was the principal instrument for the propagation and consolidation of India's nationalist ideology. Consider the fierce opposition to the infamous Rowlatt Act which gave the colonial state enormous emergency powers similar to wartime controls. It is true that the opposition to this act was not expressed in obviously liberal ways, but in its substantive content it was fundamentally liberal. An opposition to arbitrary detention is as classically liberal as you can get, and yet there is simply no one particular liberal method of opposing it, anytime, anywhere in the world.

Similarly, the claim that liberalism arrived in India already gravely compromised because it was brought by utilitarianism in its rampantly collectivist and paternalist mood is severely overstated. For a start, liberalism did not come to India only as a well-articulated philosophy through standard processes of ideological transmission, such as education and the press. To the contrary, many of its core values originated not by deliberate design on the part of British rulers, but simply as a consequence of practices and institutions set up by the rulers to serve British interests directly. Consider, for example, the introduction of the postal system or the railways and their dramatic impact on social mobility. Or consider the system of education introduced for the convenience of the rulers but which brought immense advantage to the ruled. Many local upper caste men may have been transformed into efficient servants of the empire. However, education also unwittingly created Indian nationals who eventually challenged the empire as well as some oppressive tendencies within their own social order. Similarly, by introducing the Indian Penal Code, the imperial legal system established the doctrine of equality of all before law. By a curious dialectic, every practice that began as a functional requirement of the raj contributed, at least partly, to its own undoing over time. Liberalism came to India not only through the spoken or printed word, but was directly embedded in practices, as a structural feature of institutions and technologies.

different, perhaps more subtle, view is expressed by Hansen. He notes that 'early intellectuals strove to retrieve the conceptual grammar of liberal democratic discourse from the connotative domain it had developed in the west and to implant it in the colonial context as a critique of colonial incompatibility with true universalism' and recognises the existence of 'a language of negative

rights defined in opposition to colonial power' but finds that liberalism did not take deep roots in India as 'the discourse of rights and equality was applied almost entirely to collectivities' and therefore the language of negative rights 'was subordinated throughout colonial struggle to rights of communities to representation, separate legislation, recognition and national self-determination'.[30] However, Hansen merely asserts this claim without citing any evidence in its support. True, the language of collective rights had a visible, sometimes overwhelming presence in India but it hardly follows from this that it automatically subsumed the language of individual rights. In fact, Hansen's claim begs the question: were the two languages always mutually exclusive? Did one have to subordinate the other? Could not one complement the other, occupying and responding to different spheres of equally valuable human aspirations? Indeed, Hansen's claim sits uncomfortably with his view that the agrarian movements of the 1970s reveal that as commercialisation and democratisation transform class and status, the language of rights and entitlements—the right to protest, assert oneself, to be heard by the government—has become naturalised in rural India.[31] This language of political assertion and protest is part precisely of the discourse of 'negative rights defined in opposition to colonial power'.

There is an undeniable crisis of liberal democracy in India today. It appears as if the institutions associated with liberal democracy are worn out and frayed at the edges. Given the Western origins of liberal democracy and its unmistakable distance from traditional Indian culture and because liberal democratic institutions appear so totally to lack legitimacy in contemporary India, it is tempting to believe that whatever else it might be Indian democracy never was and never can be liberal. However, this view is not convincing. On the contrary, the current crisis of liberal democracy is due in large part to its own success. The introduction of civil liberties gave voice to the mute, and the stage for action was set by the democratic process for those hitherto debarred from the public domain. They entered it with new modes of speech and action to which the initiators of liberal democracy were unaccustomed, and in numbers that greatly exceeded the tiny upper crust leading the national movement. It is no doubt true that those empowered by institutions of liberal democracy do not come from a cultural background with an obviously liberal or democratic character. However, it would be mistaken to conclude that this newly empowered class is wholly maladjusted to these institutions. Considerable evidence exists of its adaptation to these Western institutions (and of these institutions to these groups!). More importantly, tempting as it is, one should not succumb to the implausible idea that liberal democracy was forced out very quickly from the minds of the major political actors of the movement for Indian independence. To sum up, I stand by my claim that assertions about the absence of liberal democracy in India are grossly exaggerated, that an Indian version of liberal democratic discourse has been and continues to be part of the standing discursive conditions, and that it provides a valuable normative resource, and therefore, in different and often

unacknowledged ways, shapes the motivational structure of almost every social and political agent in India.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC DISCOURSE AS A LEGITIMATING MOTIVE

It is time to return to the explanatory narrative. So, how does the real story go, especially in conditions that have become more propitious for the consolidation of Hindu nationalism? Every society has an ethical identity or a range thereof. By the ethical identity of a society, I mean a certain kind of awareness of ourselves constituted partly by the values and principles in terms of which we aspire to judge our collective practices and institutions. I believe the professed and projected ethical identity of Indian society, no matter how fiercely contested, is still shaped at least partly and in some significant ways by the normative vocabulary of liberal democracy embedded in the Constitution—by the language of freedom and equality, of rights, justice, secularism and democracy. Furthermore, I believe that the discursive field created by the Constitution continues to hem in Hindu nationalists in the sense that they are continually compelled to justify their unseemly acts in terms of the normative vocabulary of the Constitution.

This means that Hindu nationalists must remain constantly alert to any inimical assessment of their acts by defenders of the Constitution, to meet the challenge posed by such critics and to hope to overcome it. They must convince their critics that key evaluative terms that constitute the core of the normative content of the Constitution can be used in reasonably suitable re-descriptions of actions that are mistakenly believed to be constitutionally illegitimate. They are frequently forced to point out to their critics that the standard criteria of the application of terms by which their ideological foes evaluate the constitutionality of their own actions also render constitutional the seemingly improper acts of the BJP.

Suppose, then, that Hindu nationalists act in a way that, on the standard interpretation of legitimating norms of the Constitution, is condemned as improper, say that it violates norms of democracy or secularism or rights. Hindu nationalists can respond to this objection in at least two ways: either to say, so what, and who cares?[32] Or else, say that the act under consideration does not violate rights or democracy or secularism because these terms are not what they are usually taken to mean but connote something different, that which had hitherto never been brought to light. They can then go on to claim that, when understood properly, by their lights, which is the only relevant way to understand them, their acts are perfectly consistent with what rights or secularism or democracy really mean. So they can now say, ‘Look here, contrary to your claim, I really am a rights-supporter or a supporter of secularism or a supporter of democracy’. The pertinent question to ask is: do or do not they have a motive

to take this second option? In short, do or do they not possess a motive to legitimate their acts in terms of the normative vocabulary of the Constitution?

believe they do, for three reasons. First, what might be called the residual normative power of the Constitution; no matter how mauled, abused, or neglected, the Constitution still retains instrumental value even for *Hindutva* forces. Despite all its alleged shortcomings, it has after all given some space to these forces to carry forward their agenda. Second, visibly ascendant social forces, such as the Dalits, which even Hindu nationalists cannot afford to ignore, support the Constitution. For them, its language—with its grammar of rights and democracy—remains a living force because in their own distinctive yet amorphous way, they recognise it to be an integral part of the conditions that improve their material well-being. In a small but important way, the Constitution really does empower ordinary people. Because it promises emancipation to a large majority of people, and captures the aspiration of those left behind or out of the processes of 'development', the constitutional discourse is a major, though not hegemonic, discursive resource. Perhaps a comparison between the moral language of the Constitution and the English language can be instructive here. English no longer enjoys the status it once had in post-colonial India, no longer bestows privilege on its speakers as it once did, but it is clear enough to everyone that it still brings enormous material benefits. Much the same may be true of our constitutional discourse.

It may no longer—perhaps never did—have the halo around it which makers of the Constitution thought it would or should enjoy, but, designed to give opportunity, entitlements and a life of dignity to everyone, it has immense practical utility. People may not care much about the high theory that surrounds or informs the Constitution, but they can nevertheless straightaway understand how it helps improve their day-to-day existence. The political party of Hindu nationalists, the BJP, is an electorally driven, culture-sensitive party, in search of moral hegemony and looking to extend, by all possible means, its moral legitimacy across diverse groups. Therefore, wherever possible, it hopes to co-opt the language of the Constitution. Since the BJP lacks complete legitimacy in the moral climate in which it finds itself, it cannibalises other values in order to legitimate its behaviour.

third reason is to do with the nature of the Indian middle class, the main support base of the BJP. This middle class does not act in defiance of the Western world but rather in the hope of being recognised properly by Western eyes. In this sense, the programme and strategy of a party supported by this middle class is bound to be different from the behaviour of a party led say by Khomeni. Since the language of rights and democracy continues to be an important constituent of international norms of public justification, and a part of the legitimating problematic of the politics of Western countries, it is not easily shrugged off. Those who seek recognition by the West must take care to legitimise their actions in terms of this discourse. So, in my view, the BJP does

possess a motive to legitimise its practices in terms of the normative vocabulary of the Indian Constitution.

To say that Hindu nationalists have a motive to legitimate their actions in terms of the normative vocabulary of the Constitution is not to suggest they take the normativity of this vocabulary seriously, that they really believe in these values or principles. I am not committed even to the view that they act out of mixed motives, combining their own paramount, sectional interests with a half-hearted belief in a smattering of constitutional principles. The situation under discussion is one where acts are guided neither wholly nor partly by professed constitutional principles. Everyone, all relevant parties, the subjects of these acts themselves, the co-inhabitants of the same political field, as well as observers, share the view that political actors do not hold or follow the principles they profess. On the contrary, all evidence, including that provided by subjects themselves, suggests the assessment of the critic to be right—their acts blatantly violate liberal democratic principles and are frequently meant to. Yet, a need is also felt by at least some members of the BJP that an appeal to others must be made in a language wholly alien to their own ideological ancestry and that their actions be legitimated in terms of this normative resource. It is of course true that straightforward manipulation is involved here. The real aim of Hindu nationalists is to alter the ethical identity and character of Indian politics and society. This real motive is camouflaged by putting on a mask, with as much sham sincerity as can be mustered, to claim publicly that actions condemned by ideological opponents can be easily re-described so that any disapproving judgement must be withheld. Despite these very real motives, and because agents are interested in the public legitimation of their actions, they are forced to adopt a rhetorical device, compelled to use the language of the Constitution, to talk and sometimes even behave as if the professed norm, value or principle was in fact part of their motivational set. They must pretend that their acts are in conformity with the principles and values in the normative tradition made available by the Constitution.

Undoubtedly, this is a cynical and unscrupulous move, ideological in the worst sense of the term, but it recoils on Hindu nationalists in that by adopting this rhetorical device they limit themselves only to those acts that can be so legitimated.[33] It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to continue to perform acts that, despite all the manoeuvres, can never get this legitimacy. Some acts are so blatantly beyond the pale of constitutional legitimacy, possessing an unethical character so obvious and plain that it is impossible for political agents to simultaneously adopt the rhetoric, feign sincerity and perform them. The need for legitimation, and the hold of the rhetoric of rights, democracy, even secularism is so strong that the performance of some acts must be forsaken. If Hindu nationalists continue to possess a motive to legitimate their actions in terms of the public, normative vocabulary made available by the Constitution, then in a sense the conditions that prohibited certain kinds of acts in the past continue to operate even today.

However, they do not operate in the same way and their hold has certainly loosened. This has happened because an ascendant Hindu nationalism, though constrained by this discourse, has also had an impact on it. It has had to confront it, but it has no reason to follow it in spirit. It has a motive to legitimate its actions in its terms but no motive to comply with it. Thus, many of its acts that would be inhibited in the past can now be performed provided they can *appear* to be constitutional. If so, the same constitutional language both constrains some types of acts and is part of the enabling condition of others.[34] How has this happened or how can this be done? How do Hindu nationalists manage to perform acts which they could not possibly have performed in the heyday of Nehruvian secularism? They do this by further muddying an already muddled discourse, by generating enough confusion and ambivalence to befuddle the observer. They do this, as Skinner puts it in an entirely different context, 'by the performance of a linguistic sleight of hand'.[35] The actors now perform an ideological trick, confounding the critic by dropping some criteria that apply in ordinary, standard cases of the use of an evaluative term but retaining others. They either try to stretch the meaning of constitutional terms or extend the range of cases to which they apply. If the strategy is to succeed, the manoeuvre has to be played delicately, with a considerable degree of deftness. Hindu nationalists must drop neither too many nor too few of the relevant criteria. If they do not drop enough, it will be obvious that the term does not apply to their acts. If they drop too many, it is again obvious that an entirely different meaning is invested in the old term, that it has been thoroughly distorted and abused.[36] Either way, it leaves the critic unconvinced. In order to make my point, let me take as examples two key constitutional terms, democracy, which I discuss briefly, and, secularism, of which I speak in some detail.

Democracy

In the Constitution, the term 'democracy' refers to a complex, five-feature system in which (a) decisions are reached by a peaceful procedure wherein (b) the widest possible range of individual as well as group interests are represented (c) by persons elected through a system of universal franchise, (d) who discuss and accommodate the enduring needs and current preferences of each others' constituencies and who (e) are inhibited from arriving at decisions that may adversely affect the common interests and rights of all citizens.[37] The Constitution particularly emphasises our identity as citizens that presupposes political community and political equality, regardless of caste, religion, gender or race, and identifies democracy with the alternating rule of temporary political majorities that must never infringe the legitimate rights of individuals or of religion-based minorities. Equality of citizenship, rule by temporary political majority, and the protection of individual and group rights are central to this conception of democracy.

Gradually, the political practice of very nearly every major political party and the sustained ideological work of Hindu nationalists has transformed the constitutional meaning of 'democracy'. The final assault has come by a deft, though not entirely planned, strategy of subtracting some criteria of using the constitutional sense of the term. Features (a) and (c) are retained: democracy remains a system where decisions are taken by a peaceful procedure by representatives elected by all adults. But from both features (b) and (d), elements crucial to the earlier view are dropped. The widest range of interests may no longer be adequately represented in the decision-making arena, and the enduring needs of individuals and particularly minority communities need not be discussed or accommodated. Dropping these features opens up the strong possibility that feature (e) is violated. If so, an entire series of outcomes are rendered possible: the exclusion of certain communities from the system, the violation of community-specific or individual rights, and the infringement of the principle of equality of citizenship. The critical distinction between the temporary rule of a political majority and the more or less permanent rule by an ethno-religious majority is fudged. Democracy is identified now with majority rule; for many, it has begun to *mean* rule by a permanent majority, a system of peaceful rule by a political/ethno-religious group legitimately elected under a system of universal suffrage. It is crucial that the meaning of 'democracy' not be mutated beyond recognition. Only if some of the older criteria continue to apply do enough people remain convinced that the actions of political groups and the system generated by them are democratic. So, democracy remains an important ingredient of the legitimating problematic; only it now means something very, very different.

Secularism

Secularism provides my other example. To understand the conception of political secularism in the Indian Constitution, I need to draw the attention of the reader to three relevant issues. First, the distinctions between theocracy and establishment and between two kinds of establishment. A theocratic state is governed by divine laws directly administered by a priestly order claiming a divine commission. The Islamic Republic of Iran run by Ayatollahs is an obvious example. On the other hand, a state that establishes religion grants it official, legal recognition. Here, religion benefits from a formal alliance with government. The sacerdotal order does not govern a state where religion is established.

Establishment of religion takes two forms. In the classical European view, it means that 'a *single* Church or religion enjoys formal, legal, official monopolistic privilege through a union with the government of the state'.[38] Historical examples of established churches are the unreformed Anglican Church in England, the Anglican Church in the state of Virginia prior to disestablishment, or the established Roman Catholic churches of Italy and Spain.

Thus, if, in preference to all other religions, the state recognises a particular religion as the official religion, compels individuals to congregate for only one religion, punishes them for failing to profess a particular set of religious beliefs, levies taxes in support of one particular religion or makes instruction in one religion mandatory in educational institutions or in the media, then it establishes religion. This classical European view of establishment is to be distinguished from one where the state respects more than one religion, recognises and perhaps nurtures all religions without preferring one to the other. This might be termed 'multiple establishment' or 'establishment without a name'.[39] Such a state may levy a religious tax on everyone and yet grant citizens the freedom to remit the tax money to a church or religious organisation of their choice. It may financially aid schools run by religious institutions but on a non-discriminatory basis. It may punish people for disavowing or disrespecting religion, though not compel them to profess the beliefs of a particular religion. A state that respects multiple establishment treats all religion non-preferentially. It gives liberty to each group to conduct its religious affairs but is indifferent to the freedom of members within the group. The colony of New York in the middle of the seventeenth century that allowed every church of the Protestant faith to be established furnishes perhaps the earliest example of 'multiple establishment'. The colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire show a similar pattern.[40] Related examples abound in India, for example the Vijayanagar kingdom which granted official recognition to the Shaivites, the Vaishnavites and perhaps even the Jains. Arguably, the British Empire gave de facto legitimacy to multiple establishment. A secular state is to be distinguished not only from theocracy but also from a state where religion is established in either sense. It is a state in which religion has been disestablished. The disestablishment of religion means the separation of state not merely from one but from all religions. I shall call this feature A.[41]

Second, different meanings of disestablishment/separation and what it entails need to be specified. Separation can mean either (a) the exclusion of religion from the wider public domain (privatisation) or from the narrower political arena, that is, political power, particularly agencies of the state (de-politicisation) (feature B1); or (b) neutrality towards religion, that is, inclusion or exclusion, active encouragement or discouragement in the public or political domain but on a non-preferential basis. On this meaning of separation or disestablishment, religions may have a public, even a political presence, though on a non-preferential basis (feature B2); or, finally, (c) principled distance. Principled distance builds upon two ideas, at least one of which derives from a distinction drawn by the American philosopher, Ronald Dworkin between equal treatment and treating everyone as an equal.[42] The principle of equal treatment, in the relevant political sense, requires that the state treat all its citizens equally in relevant respect, for example in the distribution of a resource or opportunity. The principle of treating people as equals entails that every person is treated with equal concern and respect. This second principle may sometimes require equal

treatment, say equal distribution of resources, but it may also occasionally dictate unequal treatment. Treating people as equals is entirely consistent with differential treatment. This idea is the second feature of what I have called principled distance. To say that a state keeps a principled distance from religion is to claim that it intervenes or refrains from interfering in religion, depending entirely upon whether or not some values (liberty and equality) are protected or advanced. Moreover, it is to admit that a state may interfere in one religion more than in others, depending once again on the historical and social condition of all relevant religions. For the promotion of a particular value constitutive of secularism, some religion, relative to other religions, may require more interference from the state. On this interpretation of separation, a secular state neither mindlessly excludes all religions nor is blindly neutral towards them. This view allows the public or even the political presence of one, some or all religions but only if their public face or politicisation is compatible with some previously defined values or principles also constitutive of secularism (feature B3).

clarification of these values, which gives disestablishment or separation its point, is the third important issue for our discussion. Secularism is tied to substantive values and its connection with four specific values is definitive. The first of these is peace; any society must be prevented from regressing into barbarism, not an uncommon tendency where there exist two or more incompatible visions of the good life (feature C). Two auxiliary points may be mentioned here. First, we must eschew the tendency within Western modernist discourse to conceive of civil strife as a result purely of a clash of interests. The development of secularism in the West and elsewhere cannot be properly understood without fully comprehending the fear of cruelty and disorder that marks the conflict of ultimate ideals. This is as true of the American and the French experience as it is of India. Consider the United States. One might say that the first amendment, the pivot of American secularism, is a product of the widespread feeling of vulnerability experienced in different religious denomination such as the Anglicans, the Presbyterians and the Quakers, each dominant in one particular area but vulnerable in others and each viewing the other as fanatical, or at least as extremely odd.[43] Second, the development of secularism cannot be understood only in terms of the church-state model. It is equally important to view it in terms of what might be called the religious strife model. I have elsewhere written in detail about these two models.[44] All that needs to be said here is that it is sufficient for the church-state model to be operating within a non-pluralist Christian society. However, a religious strife model necessarily operates within a society in which there exist diverse and radically differing religions or religious denominations. The church-state model functions in societies in which separation is an internal feature of the dominant religion. The religious strife model of secularism, on the other hand, develops even if separation within some religions is not internally permissible but purely out of the contextual necessity in situations where there exist contending religions.

In short, in the first model, the state wrenches away from one religion, whereas in the other model it must distance itself from all religions at once. And, as I mentioned, this distancing is dictated by the vulnerabilities experienced by every single religious group. Each one fears persecution from the other as well as the disorder resulting from religious conflict.

The second extremely important value to which secularism is constitutively tied is religious liberty (feature D). This is an all too obvious point, but alas in the context of our times it needs constant re-emphasising. There are two dimensions to religious liberty. The first refers to the liberty of members of any one religious group (feature D1). In the case of most religious groups, one or two interpretations of its core beliefs and practices are dominant at any point of time. Given this dominance, it is important that every individual or sect within the group be given the right to criticise, revise or challenge the dominant interpretation. Sometimes revision and challenge may become so strong that an individual (or a sub-group) may be led to reject the religion into which s/he is born and, given ideal conditions of deliberation, to freely embrace another religion (feature D2). The second aspect of this important right is to grant an identical set of rights to those with totally different, even conflicting religious allegiances (feature D3). In any multi-religious society, liberties granted to one group must also be available in equal measure to others. Moreover, these liberties have both an individual and a group dimension.[45] Religious freedom must be understood both as a right available to every individual as well as the right to the maintenance of religious practices whose bearer can only be a group, not an individual (feature D4).

further value to which secularism has constitutive ties is equality, particularly equality of citizenship. The value of equal citizenship has two dimensions, one active, the other passive. To be a passive citizen is to be entitled to physical security, a minimum of material well-being and a sphere of one's own with which others ought not to interfere. This is what I have elsewhere called 'ordinary life with dignity' (feature E1). Although a part of this idea of passive citizenship goes back to ancient Rome, the radical emphasis on material well-being and on privacy is a result of a profound trans-valuation of values that has taken place under conditions of modernity.[46] This lies at the root of the idea of the right to life, liberty and material well-being. A citizen is entitled to these benefits. This is partly an extension of the point implicit in the defence of religious liberty but in part it adds something substantial of its own. The benefits of citizenship must be available to everyone and there is no scope here for discrimination on grounds of religion. This equal treatment is entailed by equal (passive) citizenship. One cannot have a system of law and state agencies working entirely in favour of one religious group and against another. If the system of law and indeed other state agencies work to protect the security and well-being of some individuals or groups but fail to secure these meagre but important benefits to others then the principle of equal (passive) citizenship is violated. The value of equal citizenship is distinct from that of religious liberty because the two can also

come into conflict with one another. For instance, citizenship rights can easily challenge hierarchical religions that are particularly sensitive to the vital interest of some of their members, those at the bottom of a sanctioned hierarchy. To ensure equal treatment, to uphold the value of equal (passive) citizenship, the state may have to interfere in hierarchically organised religions.

The active dimension of citizenship also has two dimensions. First, the recognition of citizens as equal participants in the public domain (feature E2). Such active citizenship rights can be denied in two ways. Either when they are brutally excluded from the political domain (they are politically dead),[47] or when their recognition in the public domain betrays the social acceptance of a belief in the intrinsic superiority of one group as when there is communally weighed voting or efforts to dilute the votes of religious minorities through the use of gerrymandering techniques.[48] Those groups that are singled out as less worthy are demeaned and insulted, and encouraged to feel that patterns of disrespect existing in society at large enjoy official sanction. In contrast to this, equality of citizenship to which secularism is tied conveys a community-wide acknowledgement of equal respect for everyone.

The other related aspect of active citizenship is this: active participation does not mean the mere possession of the right to vote but also to have a role in public deliberation that is open to the expression of a wide range of competing views and carried out under conditions where these views can be responsibly assessed (feature E3). Citizens are not treated as equals in the public domain if, despite a formal right to vote, they are excluded from public deliberations by informal mechanisms that deprive groups of an effective voice in public fora. They then begin to feel that they are inadequately heard, that their views are not properly taken into account, that they have no real say in public matters, including those which vitally concern them. In short, if people are excluded or discriminated against on the ground that they belong to a particular religion, then the principle of equal citizenship and, therefore, one of the core values of secularism is violated.

Secularism in the Indian Constitution is a complex multi-value doctrine combining features A, B3 (as opposed to B1 and B2), and all of C, D (D1–D4) and E (E1–E3). (These positions are detailed in the Appendix below). In short, in India, the state is not merely anti-theocratic but is opposed in principle to the establishment of religion, in the sense that it keeps distance from religious institutions for the sake of peace between communities, the religious liberty of individuals and, where relevant, the religious autonomy of communities (rights of religious minorities). It eschews establishment also to uphold equality of citizenship, to maintain the ordinary and dignified life of *all* citizens and to protect the political rights of every citizen to vote and to deliberate on the common good, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

However, over the years, and particularly due to the sustained work by BJP ideologues, the term ‘secular’ has become unrecognisable. Secularism now connotes a political strategy underpinning the practices of a non-theocratic state

by which it (a) maintains peace between communities (feature C) and under certain conditions, within specified limits (b) protects the religious liberty of individuals (part of D). The BJP frequently cites the absence of communal rioting during its tenure as evidence of the secular character of states governed by it.[49] However, by persistently attacking the social and cultural rights of religious minorities, Hindu nationalists have snapped the link between secularism and minority rights. Furthermore, thanks to the change in the meaning of democracy, the connection with parts of E is almost completely broken. If secularism is just C and part of D, then it is fully compatible with the privatisation and de-politicisation of non-Hindu religions and the de-privatisation and re-politicisation of Hinduism. Full citizenship rights now depend on ethno-religious allegiance and need not be distributed equally. Principled distance (B3) too can now be reinterpreted to mean the distance of the state from religious institutions for the sake of communal peace and religious liberty of individuals and is compatible with the public-political presence of the majority religious community. In short, secularism is now indistinguishable from the ideology of established states. Much of the spade-work for this complete distortion of secularism was effected by the gradual fudging of the difference between secularism and multiple establishment (a confusion also generated by publicising secularism as equal respect of all religions) and then due to a further distortion of the meaning of multiple establishment. The complicity and practice of most political parties ensured that multiple establishment became a system that pampers the self-appointed, wholly non-accountable leadership of the fanatical fringe of almost every religious group. Secularism was now identified with the alternating appeasement of extremist religious groups. Once the connection of secularism with norms of equality and justice was obliterated and secularism identified with this peculiar form of multiple establishment, not much conceptual work was required to force the term to mean C and part of D, that is, a non-theocratic state with an overwhelming allegiance to the dominant religious group that, under conditions of inequality, still manages to maintain a modicum of peace.

Unlike the meaning of the term ‘democracy’, this piecemeal chopping of the criteria for the use of the term ‘secular’ has defiled the term beyond recognition, so much so that it is hard for even the most gullible to believe that its current connotation could be one of its possible meanings. It blatantly, in every conceivable way, infringes the idea of equality—of equal respect for religions or equality of citizenship—which lies at the heart of secularism. No matter how one tries, it is rather hard (whether one defends or opposes it) to stomach the view that secularism *means* a formal alliance of the state with the religion of the majority! This irretrievably abuses the term. Hindu nationalists first tried to bolster and popularise this bizarre meaning, retaining the positive, evaluative tone of the term ‘secular’ and coining the negative term ‘pseudo-secular’ to designate other more pertinent meanings. But when this strategy did not work, they abandoned this irreparably damaged term or altered its ‘speech-act

potential'; instead of expressing approval, it is now frequently used to condemn certain morally defensible views and actions (for instance, respect for the rights of minorities and justice for all).

At one time secularism and democracy were conceptually complementary. Now they are presented as mutually exclusive concepts requiring that we must choose only one. If democracy means the rule of an ethno-religious majority, a view that is part of middle class/upper caste common sense, and further, if the conceptual link cannot after all be snapped between secularism and equality (and therefore equality of citizenship/minority-rights), a conceptual association also part of their common sense, then, given the current conjuncture of meanings, a choice between democracy and secularism is inescapable. And herein lies the crisis of secularism. Paradoxically, the very resilience of the original meaning of secularism plunges it into deep crisis.

have argued that because of the presence in India of a liberal democratic discourse, Hindu nationalists have a motive to legitimate their acts in terms of its normative vocabulary. However, they possess an even stronger motive not to comply with its principles. This gives them an equally strong motive to change the criteria of their application. Without dropping the use of these terms, and much to the horror of committed constitutionalists who immediately see through the trick, they seek to appropriate this discourse and stretch, indeed over-stretch, the meaning of key terms. In altering the meaning of terms, they transform a whole political culture. I believe this change in political culture is a necessary condition of their takeover of the political arena and the state. The story of the relationships between this discourse, the major political actors in India and the broader political arena which they inhabit is an irreducible part of a comprehensive explanatory narrative of the resurgence of Hindu nationalists. Without it, we may possess a loose, passable grasp of why they do what they do but not a tight enough grip over how they do it. Without it, the mechanism at the micro-level will continue to elude us.

One final word: a subterranean cultural rebellion has been under way for a long time. Hindu nationalists have been painstakingly chipping away at the discourse they oppose. But it is intellectually lazy and politically foolish to literally write off the discourse of liberal democracy. Because it is there, it can be retrieved, refashioned and reinvigorated.

APPENDIX

Secularism

Feature A	Disestablishment of religion.
Feature B1	Exclusion of religion from state institutions.
Feature B2	State neutrality towards all religions.
Feature B3	Principled distance of the state from all religions.

Feature C	Prevention of barbarism.
Feature D1	Religious liberty of individuals to criticise and challenge their own religion.
Feature D2	The liberty of an individual to reject the religion into which he or she is born and to embrace another religion.
Feature D3	Equality of religious liberty.
Feature D4	The autonomy of religious groups to maintain or change their religious practices as they deem fit.
Feature E1	Equality of passive citizenship: to physical security, minimum material well-being, to ordinary life with dignity.
Feature E2	Equality of active citizenship: to vote and to hold public office.
Feature E3	Equality of active citizenship: to deliberate freely in the public domain.

NOTES

1. This statement assumes the presence of peaceful conditions. Everything can change if militancy creates a condition of symmetric or asymmetric barbarism. See R.Bhargava, 'Restoring Decency to Barbaric Society', in R.Rotberg and D.Thompson (eds.), *Truth vs. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 45–67.
2. P.van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40.
3. B.Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); S.Kaviraj, 'The Imaginary Institution in India', in P. Chatterjee and G.Pandey (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VII* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992); T.B.Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy andt Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); S.Corbridge and J.Harriss, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).
4. C.Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics; 1925 to the 90s* (New Delhi: Viking, 1996), 330–37.
5. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave.*
6. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics.*
7. Ibid.
8. On this see Hansen, *The Saffron Wave,* 19.
9. Ibid., 19. For Hansen, Hindutva is a way of imposing order on a disorderly world of democratic politics so that people can learn to live with the 'undecidable character of the social worlds they live in'.
10. As Hansen argues in *The Saffron Wave* 'because it connects meaningfully with the everyday world, Hindu nationalism enables people to make sense of and cope with their everyday anxieties of security, a sense of disorder and more generally the ambivalence of modern life'. Harold Gould makes a similar point in his chapter 'Religion and Politics in a UP Constituency', in D.E.Smith (ed.), *South Asian Politics and Religion* (Princeton:, Princeton University Press, 1966), 51–73. He

points to the support for the Janasangh provided by those wedded to tradition and disgruntled by modernity (p. 73).

11. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics,* 102, 106, 165, and 330–32.
12. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave,* 6.
13. Ibid., 27.
14. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics,* 106.
15. On the cultural inadaptability thesis and its critique see my review of T.N.Madan's *Modern Myths, Locked Minds* in *The Book Review,* 21/8 (1997), 11–13; and R.Bhargava, 'What is Secularism For?', in R.Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and its Critics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).
16. For a detailed argument to this effect see R.Bhargava, 'Are there Alternative Modernities?', N.N.Vohra (ed.), *Culture, Democracy and Development in South Asia* (New Delhi: Shipra, 2001).
17. B.B.Misra quoted in Y.Singh, *Modernization of Indian Tradition* (Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1988), 89.
18. C.Heimsath quoted in ibid., 91–2.
19. O'Malley quoted in ibid., 100.
20. A.Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket: On Games of Destiny and the Destiny of Games* (New York: Viking, 1989).
21. This explains the general ambivalence of non-Western intellectuals such as Gandhi and Tagore to modernity. On the relationship between modernity and tradition in India also see L.I.Rudolph and S.H.Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
22. For a detailed argument see R.Bhargava, 'The Democratic Vision of a New Republic: India, 1950', in F.Frankel *et al* (eds.), *Transforming India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).
23. S.Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1997), 26.
24. Ibid., 24.
25. Ibid., 26.
26. Ibid., 27.
27. Ibid., 34.
28. Ibid., 34.
29. Bhargava, 'The Democratic Vision of a New Republic'.
30. Hansen, *The Saffron Wave,* 40.
31. Ibid., 141.
32. This is exactly what many do. The point is that others of the same ilk are forced to distance themselves from such expressions of defiance.
33. See Q.Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', in J.Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 97–118. My own analysis is directly inspired by Skinner's approach. Skinner develops his methodology primarily for the study of the history of political thought. My focus, on the other hand, is collective political action. I try to apply some of his insights to the study of political action
34. Skinner convincingly argues that 'any principle which helps to legitimate a course of action must be amongst the enabling conditions of its occurrence'. Skinner, 'Some Problems', 117.
35. Ibid., 115.

36. Ibid., 115.
37. A proper analysis of the concept of democracy in the Indian Constitution is still awaited. However, for a broader and insightful understanding of this issue see G.Austin, *The Indian Constitution; Cornerstone of a Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).
38. L.W.Levy, *The Establishment Clause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 7.
39. Ibid., 12.
40. Ibid., 11.
41. A secular state is not anti-religious but exists and survives only when religion is no longer hegemonic. It admits a more general equality between believers and unbelievers. It secures peace not only between different kinds of religious believers but between believers and non-believers. It legally sanctions freedoms for all religions but also freedom from religion itself. (All these aspects make it different from a state with multiple establishment.) Thus, in a secular state, a formal or legal union between state and religion is impermissible. Official status is not given to religion. Persons are as free to disavow religion, as they are to profess one. No one is compelled to pay tax for religious purposes or to receive religious instruction. No automatic grants to religious institutions are available. The state of Virginia, after the disestablishment of the Anglican church (1786), the United States of America, particularly after the first amendment to its constitution (1791) and France, especially after the separation law of 1905, provide the clearest examples of a secular state. Despite the formal establishment of churches in England and Scotland, the United Kingdom is also, in many respects, a secular state. As Donald Smith points out, 'any modern state within the liberal democratic tradition will have many of the characteristics of a secular state'. D.E.Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 8.
42. R.Dworkin, 'Liberalism', in S.Hampshire (ed.), *Public and Private Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 125.
43. On this point see, Michael Mcconnell, 'Taking Religious Freedom Seriously', in Terry East Land (ed.), *Religious Liberty in the Supreme Court* (Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993), 497–510.
44. See my review of Madan's *Modern Myths, Locked Minds,* and Bhargava (ed.), *What is Secularism For?*
45. Ibid.
46. C.Taylor, *Sources of the* Self (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
47. This idea is closely related to the notion of social death that can be found in Orlando Patterson's writings. See C.Beitz, *Political Equality: An Essay in Democratic Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 109, n. 6.
48. Ibid., 110.
49. It is another matter that violence in the public domain ceases precisely when its cynical, manipulative perpetrators manage to achieve what in the first place they had used it for, namely, radical communal polarisation.

Whatever Happened to Cultural Nationalism in Tamil Nadu? Reading of Current Events and the Recent Literature on Tamil Politics

JOHN HARRISS

This article was first written shortly before elections to the State Legislative Assembly of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in May 2001. Of these elections the *Economic and Political Weekly's* correspondent wrote: 'Never before in the election history of this state—and probably of any other state in the Union—has an election been riddled with so much uncertainty, confusion and complication.'[1] At the time he was writing the alignments of significant political parties in Tamil Nadu had been thrown up in the air following the decision in February of the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) of S.Ramadoss to quit the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in which it had stood alongside the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagan (DMK), led by M. Karunanidhi, and to ally itself with the All India Annadurai Dravida Munnetra Kazhagan (AIADMK) of Jayalalitha Jayaram.[2] Shortly afterwards further confusion was added when another participant in the NDA alliance, ('Vaiko') V.Gopalsamy's Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), parted company with the DMK, even whilst remaining within the Alliance at the national level.[3] As things turned out, after much bickering and horse-trading, two alliances centred respectively on the DMK and the AIADMK, confronted each other in the polls.[4] This reflected the enduring hostility between the two principal parties to which the Dravidian Movement gave rise, and the bitter rivalry between their leaders; and then the calculations of the leaders of other parties, taking account of caste factors in particular, though often veiled by protestations about commitments to 'secularism' on the one hand or the need to struggle against corruption or casteism on the other.[5]

The two alliances included some strange bedfellows. The strangest combination of all was the DMK, the principal inheritor of the rationalist, secular and socially radical tradition of the Dravidian Movement, allied with the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—as it had been since April 1999; and that it should have allied itself, as well, with several newly formed caste-based parties. But scarcely less strange was that the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), formed by G.K.Moopanar when he quit the Congress-I in April 1996 precisely

John Harriss, Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics

because of its decision to form an electoral alliance with what he described at that time as 'the corrupt AIADMK', should have been be in alliance with that very same party. And almost as strange was the fact that both the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in Tamil Nadu should have fallen over themselves in their eagerness to support the so-called 'Secular Front' headed by the AIADMK, rather than offering support to efforts at forming a Third Front', and that they should have been so ready to welcome into the 'Secular Front' an explicitly caste-based party such as the PMK—which is the party of the Vanniyars (the most numerous caste group in Tamil Nadu).[6] The 'Secular Front' included, as well as the AIADMK (fighting in 141 constituencies), the TMC (32) and the Congress (15), the PMK (27), and the two Communist parties (eight each)[7]—though this arrangement did not hold in the union territory of Pondicherry (geographically surrounded by Tamil Nadu), where the AIADMK and the PMK opposed the Congress-I and the TMC! Marshalled against them were the DMK (167 constituencies) and the BJP (21 constituencies), allied with two Dalit parties, Dr K.Krishnasamy's Puthiya Tamizhagam, strong especially amongst Pallars in the southern districts, and R.Thirumavalavan's Dalit Panthers, ranged against the Vanniyars who commonly support the PMK in northern districts, as well as with several of the newly formed caste-based parties.[8] The Dalit parties had been driven into the arms of the NDA-linked alliance because of admission of the Vanniyar PMK into the 'Secular Front', and of the support for the AIADMK amongst the locally dominant Mukkulathors in the southern districts.

My aim in this essay is not, however, to recount the story of the formation of these alliances, or of the outcome of the elections, which showed that Jayalalitha Jayaram had got the alliance arithmetic right and that Karunanidhi had got it disastrously wrong, but rather to offer some analysis of the social and political conditions that have given rise to such strange political groupings.[9] It is, in a way, the story of what happened to the earliest and apparently most successful movement of regional cultural nationalism in India, articulated by the Dravidian Movement, and originally associated with social radicalism. The failure of this project—or perhaps more accurately the inability of Dravidian politics to address contemporary anxieties—is marked by the ways in which Tamil politics are now structured by Hindu nationalism, by caste-based politics[10] (nowhere else in India were as many as seven caste-based political parties formed in the 12 months before the assembly elections of 2001), and by struggles between numerically dominant lower castes and Dalits. The starting point for the story is in the particularities of the argument of Narendra Subramanian's book *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* which, when it was published in 1999, was the first major academic study of Tamil politics to have appeared for a quarter of a century—since Marguerite Ross Barnett's influential book *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India* was published in 1976.

DOES SUCCESSFUL POPULISM CONSTRAIN HINDU NATIONALISM IN TAMIL NADU?

Subramanian gives an account of the politics of Tamil Nadu in terms of the emergence of 'successful populism'—successful at least in the sense that in Tamil Nadu populism has been the ally of stability, pluralism and democracy. A crucially important part of his argument is that while appeals first to 'Dravidian' and then to 'Tamil' ethnicity were successful in bringing about political mobilisation, the two 'Dravidian' parties have secured support in office principally by pursuing populist politics, though of a somewhat different type. He makes a fruitful and convincing distinction between what he describes as 'assertive populism' associated mainly with the DMK, and the 'paternalist populism' of the AIADMK.[11] His theme, then, is to show how 'populism [no matter what its specific modalities] tempers the potential of ethnicity to generate conflict and enables the maintenance of a pluralist democracy'.[12] Yet he still argues that The rise to dominance of the Dravidian parties, associated with appeals to caste [specifically Non-Brahmanism] and language,[13] has crucially inhibited the growth of other visions of community'—and specifically that 'Hindu revivalism…is nowhere weaker than in Tamil Nadu'.[14] He concedes, towards the end of the book, that under Jayalalitha between 1991 and 1996 The ADMK regime's tacit support helped the growth of Hindu revivalism' but still maintains that this 'nevertheless remains weakest in Tamil Nadu'.[15] The notion that 'Hindu revivalism is nowhere weaker than in Tamil Nadu' reflects a common perception that the state enjoys, on the whole, rather exceptional communal harmony, and that this can be attributed to the Dravidian Movement. But it is—sadly—something of a canard, and it is surprising—in view of the research that had already been published well before the publication of his book—that Subramanian should not have recognised it as such.[16] This oversight is a flaw in a book that contains much sound and compelling analysis, especially of patterns of political mobilisation in Tamil Nadu—and it means that its whole argument is ultimately misdirected.[17]

M.S.S.Pandian began drawing the rise of Hindu nationalist organisations in Tamil Nadu to the attention of readers of English before the end of the 1980s. The Hindu Munnani, which has played a significant role in facilitating the acceptance of Hindu nationalist ideas into political discourse in the state, was formed in the aftermath of the conversion of a group of Dalits to Islam in 1981, in the village of Meenakshipuram in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. As Subramanian himself notes, these conversions 'led to a wave of Hindu revivalist mobilization… organizations like the RSS [Rashtryá Swayamsevak Sangh] and the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] became more active and promoted local organizations which made limited attempts to adapt Hindu revivalist appeals…to Tamil culture'.[18] But he plays down the significance of these developments—whereas Pandian saw in them the germ at least of a 'new strategy of Brahmanism', based on a principle of inclusion of people within a pan-Hindu identity,

independent of caste distinctions, and aimed at deflecting the focus of conflict onto the Muslim 'Other' (and to a lesser extent, onto Christians).[19] He noted that the Munnani was controlled by Brahmans but included leaders from amongst locally dominant castes such as Nadars and Thevars, and that it seemed set on weakening the Shaivite/Vaishnavite distinction within Tamil Hinduism, as well as setting out an anti-caste ideology. The strategy, Pandian argued, was to draw together Non-Brahmans (including Dalits) under Brahman leadership, against Muslims. It was supported through the activities of the influential Kanchi Kamarkoti Mutt (in Kanchipuram), whose head, Acharya Jayendra Saraswathi—who has become a prominent speaker on VHP platforms—had determined to pursue a much more active social agenda than his greatly revered predecessor, and set up welfare organisations (the Jan Kalyan and Jan Jagran) to work especially with poor non-Brahmans in slums. The Kanchi Mutt had also started consecrating the Amman (goddess) temples of non-Brahmans.

Somewhat later (but still well in advance of the publication of Subramanian's book) Anandhi S. documented some of the key points Pandian made, in a study of the activities of the Hindu Munnani and of the RSS amongst Dalits living in slums in the Triplicane area of Chennai. In her own summary of her findings she wrote:

> Against [the] macro-background of the Dravidian Movement's ideological regression, we found that the increasing marginalisation of the Dalits, the deprivation of their community solidarity in the urban situation and the failure of Dravidian politics, particularly of the DMK, to provide a positive identity to them have led the Dalits to identify with a certain "Hinduness" as a way of subverting their marginality. Utilising this situation, the Hindu communal organisations…are actively mobilising the Dalits through various slum-level activities like night schools and youth camps; and attempting to subsume them under a pan-Hindu identity. Such Hindu collectivities have also been deployed during the recent Vinayaka processions to create anti-Muslim riots. The efforts of Hindu communal forces are rather successful. This is evident from the way a number of Dalits have subordinated their caste identity in the course of our interviews and claimed themselves as Hindus. The increasing participation of the Dalits in Hindu religious revivals and the internalisation of negative stereotypes about the Muslims by them are all indicators of this communalisation process among the Dalits.
>
> From the contradictory mosaic of Dalit commonsense…the Hindu communal forces have appropriated and activated a retrogressive element, that is, the Hindu identity. This process subverts [though it has certainly not destroyed, as Anandhi goes on to show] any contestatory Dalit politics based on their caste-based marginality within the Hindu fold and, in turn, the secularisation of the civil and political societies.[20]

According to her account, the organisation by the Munnani and the RSS of Vinayaka Chaturthi processions in Chennai has been a particularly successful means of forging a new collective identity among the Dalits of the Triplicane slums. This festival, long celebrated in a grand, public manner in Maharashtra, used not to be celebrated at all extensively in public spaces in Tamil Nadu, but thanks to the promotional activities of the Munnani and other Hindu organisations, the installation of images of Vinayaka in public places and their subsequent procession (sometimes in ways that are intended to provoke communal sentiments) have become widespread throughout both urban and rural parts of the state (and in Chennai, certainly, not only in 'slum' areas). Christopher Fuller, with a team of researchers, has been studying these processions at a number of sites over the last two years, and he argues that through them the Hindu communal organisations have been successful in 'normalising' Hindu nationalism in Tamil society. He writes: 'Looking back over Vinayaka Chaturthi since the mid-1980s, the most striking feature is the sheer scale and rapidity of its expansion from one little event in Chennai [in 1985] to the huge public festival celebrated throughout Tamil Nadu today, which has allowed the Hindu Munnani and Sangh Parivar to make their presence felt almost everywhere'.[21] It is most important to note, in his analysis of these events, that many of the celebrations are now organised by people who have no connection with the Hindu organisations, and who may indeed be explicitly anti-Munnani:

> Nonetheless, in every locality, the vast majority of independent festivals involving installation of images in public places came in the wake of Munnani initiatives, and a huge proportion of local Vinayaka temples have started new festivals or expanded old ones over the same period. Significantly, when the president of the Madurai Hindu Munnani was asked about these separate celebrations, he replied that the Munnani wants to see the widest possible involvement in the festival…. Observations of this kind highlighted for me how the normalisation of Hindu nationalism is proceeding. As strenuous denial of Munnani links actually tends to confirm, many people are liable to see any public celebration of Vinayaka Chaturthi as supportive of politicised Hinduism. And [yet] because the large-scale, public festival that the Munnani has vigorously promoted has become an important event in the calendar of so many Hindus, even independent celebrations can be plausibly claimed by Munnani spokesmen as further evidence that Hindus are now becoming a more united and assertive 'community', joined together in worshipping their god.[22]

These observations of the speed with which the invention of the tradition of public celebration of the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival has taken off in Tamil Nadu, and of the way in which it has contributed to what Fuller advisedly calls the 'normalisation' of Hindu nationalism, remind us that the anti-religious campaigns of the Self-Respect Movement and later of the Dravidar Kazhagam,

orchestrated by Periar, never won widespread support in Tamil society: 'Religion [was] seen as basically Brahmanical and oppressive and the essentially religious basis of life in Tamil society [was] not understood.'[23] Later, the DMK had to fight to rid itself of the opposition charge that it was 'anti-God' in the 1971 elections.[24] More recently, of course, during the rule of the AIADMK under (the Brahman!) Jayalalitha between 1991 and 1996, there was considerable state support for religion, and a resurgence of Brahmanism; while only shortly before the 2001 elections Karunanidhi was reported in *The Hindu* as having boasted at a conference of village temple priests about the increased number of temple dedications under his DMK government since 1996.[25] And for all the virulence of anti-Brahmanism in the 1940s and 1950s, through into the 1960s—which is widely attested to by Brahmans—their cultural prominence was never broken, nor their economic dominance checked.[26] It is a curious but common mistake to suppose that South Indian business is mainly in the hands of Chettiars and Nadars, the banking and trading communities. Pinto, for example, writes: 'Business in Tamil Nadu was never in the hands of Brahmans. The Brahmans were employed in education, bureaucracy and civil service.'[27] This is a complete misconception. It is true of course that there are not very many Brahman businessmen (and that many more Brahmans are employed in the professions), but those which are in business are very powerful.[28] The pre-eminence of Brahman families amongst the business leaders of Chennai is as marked today as it was when Milton Singer studied them in 1964.[29] Amongst his 17 'industrial leaders' Singer found nine Tamil Brahmans (and four Chettiars). The 19 'family or other ownership groups' which I identified amongst the 31 leading companies (those in *The Economic Times* list of the Top 500, with headquarters in Madras) included eight Tamil Brahmans (and only three Chettiars) The largest and most powerful industrial and commercial group of all in the south (TVS) belongs to a Brahman family; and the Brahman-owned family businesses of 1964 have, with only one exception (that of the ill-fated Standard Motor Company), consolidated their positions. They have been joined by highly successful new companies, in software products and in chemicals, also owned by Brahmans. The largest single group among the new software entrepreneurs (as of employees in this important new industry) who are now so prominent in Chennai are constituted by Brahmans. While it is not the case that all of these men are religious, a majority of them are, and they are deeply involved in a range of religious activities. They include keen supporters of the Sankaracharyas both of Sringeri and of Kanchipuram (the second of which I mentioned earlier), as well as of the Vedantic revival (or more accurately Neo-Vedantic revival) now taking place in Chennai; and they are active in the restoration of temples and the funding of ceremonies for their reconsecration.[30]

These activities have contributed significantly to the vitality of orthodox, Brahmanical Hinduism which is attested to in the demand that exists for the services of Brahman priests, for temple ceremonies and family rituals. This is confirmed in reports that it is increasingly difficult to find a *purohit* to come for a

family ceremony, not because there are fewer of them than there were, but because they are so much in demand. And whereas 30 years ago *purohits* were often poor people, most these days, it is said, have at least a two-wheeler if they do not have a car, and they are well paid for the services they perform. The religious revivalism of present-day Chennai is reflected, too, in the big audiences commanded by Hindu religious leaders who teach, with the utmost sincerity and conviction that 'conversion is violence' and who may, thereby—and despite their explicitly stated wishes—lend legitimacy to acts of violence against religious minorities. In this context it is hardly surprising that amongst upper and middle class people in Chennai, while few—so far, at least—are active supporters of the BJP, there is widespread sympathy for Hindu nationalist thinking.[31] These sentiments are reinforced to the extent that the policies of the BJP in office, and the mythology of Hindu nationalism, are supportive of the common concern that India should take its 'rightful' place as a leading power and influence in the world as a whole. The notion that India will achieve its potential only by being more truly its (Hindu) self is gaining ground. The view that 'Hindu revivalism' is weak in Tamil Nadu is, quite simply, wrong, even if it remains the case that the BJP, on its own, does not have a very prominent position electorally. Quite contrary to Subramanian's view, Hindu nationalism has been made to appear 'natural' or 'normal' at both ends of Tamil society.

The writers to whom I have referred, Subramanian, Pandian and Anandhi, while they have reached opposing judgements on the purchase of Hindu nationalism within Tamil society, converge around the view that the main Dravidian parties, the DMK and the AIADMK, have moved a long way from the precepts and practices of the Self-Respect Movement and Dravida Kazhagam. But while Anandhi and Pandian see this as an ultimately destructive 'ideological regression', Subramanian seems rather to welcome it. He argues in the following way. Dravidianism grew out of Non-Brahmanism directed—it has usually been held[32]—by upwardly mobile and more powerful members of intermediate castes against Brahman dominance in the institutions of colonial rule. In the hands of E.V. Ramaswami ('Periar') in the 1930s and 1940s it was associated with a vision of Dravidian and shudra primacy against 'Aryan' Brahmanism. It articulated, therefore, precisely that sense of 'ordinary people having been robbed of their due' which is at the core of the kind of thinking that can sensibly be described as 'populist'. Periar's rationalist assertions and his Non-Brahmanism led him to make sometimes dramatic attacks on Hinduism (rather than on religion in general), inverting orthodoxy, in what Subramanian calls 'the politics of heresy'. But these, in Subramanian's view, were politics of protest rather than of social change,[33] and the development of an inclusive Tamil nationalism—associating the Dravidian community with the non-Sanskritic Tamil language and cultural tradition,[34] and with its territory, rather than with the shudra category—and then the projection of this into active electoral politics, was the achievement of C.N.Annadurai and his followers. After 1949, when they split away from Periar to form the DMK, Annadurai and those who followed him

brought about an important shift 'from politics of heresy to the politics of community'. Subramanian does not concede that this shift obscured the material and ideological bases of oppression and subordination and might be considered to have been a regression. The thrust of it was anti-elite rather than anti-alien (Brahmans were treated increasingly as Tamils of a different stripe), emphasising a non-Sanskritic identity, Tamil as opposed to English speakers, and opposing the political elites governing India who wished to introduce Hindi as the sole national language. In contrast to what happened elsewhere, Subramanian argues that the DMK incorporated caste categories *within* a vision of popular community, in which what counted was 'doing Tamil' (culturally, linguistically) rather than an idea of Tamil racial substance.[35]

It rapidly became much more a populist than an ethnic discourse—of a plebeian stamp, emphasising the notion of the common (Tamil) man[36]—and the genius of Annadurai and others in the DMK was in their ability to create and to communicate a mytho-history which had meaning for ordinary people in a way that the 'scientific', developmental project of the Nehruvian state did not. A telling point is made in a footnote:

> The DMK protested against Nehru's visit to Madras in 1953 to inaugurate a science exhibition, demanding that an exhibition also be conducted on Tamil history, and criticizing the neglect of South Indian history in textbooks. The posture of the parties to this confrontation—Nehru inaugurating a science exhibition, and the DMK demanding attention to Dravidian cultural history—reflect their contrasting approaches to the formation of the citizen. To Nehru, who placed the spirit of science and rationality at the core of nation-building, the DMK's demands could only appear nonsensical.[37]

Not only Nehru, but the communists too, lost out: 'For instance [a DMK leader and a communist] debated [with] each other…on what is most indispensable to man, food (the supposed communist view) or *maanam* (dignity—the putative Dravidianist view). The terms of the debate clearly gave the DMK the high moral ground.'[38] Instinctively, it seems, the DMK leaders recognised what many intellectuals have only come to acknowledge much more recently. Sudipta Kaviraj has written eloquently about the 'neighbourly incommunication' between the modernising national political elite, and the 'vernacular' masses. The emerging Tamil political elite, however, was extraordinarily adept in building precisely that 'common thinker we-ness…and a single political language' which, according to Kaviraj, the elite of the Nehruvian state neglected.[39] No matter what its policy achievements, or its success in maintaining support amongst the 'big men' of the Tamil country, Congress lost out through the 1950s and 1960s, to the world of meaning—precisely a 'common thinker we-ness'—created by the DMK, as well as to its increasing organisational strength.

It is this culturally rooted and engineered meaning system that Subramanian opposes to the 'vacuous brand of secularism' of his parents' generation, and that he wishes to oppose also to the homogenising intentions of Hindu nationalism. Unfortunately the construction of such an ideology is not a 'policy choice'. Neither is it clear, in the 1990s and early in the twenty-first century, that the 'flexibility' of Dravidianism which Subramanian positively celebrates is not actually compatible with the ideology of Hindu nationalism. Subramanian, as I have pointed out, seems not to have recognised the strength of popular support for *hindutva* in Tamil society, though this was attested to in relation specifically to Dalits—as I have explained—in work published by Anandhi and M.S.S.Pandian already in 1994.[40] These writers, like Geetha and Rajadurai,[41] regret what they think of as having been the 'ideological regression' of the Dravidian Movement, when, with the formation of the DMK language, identity was privileged over the rest, which 'left Hindu identity as well as other identities unproblematised' and ended up by sanitising Hinduism 'of how it constituted relations of power through its interactions with other identities like caste and gender'.[42] This has allowed Hindu communal organisations to colonise parts of civil society in Tamil Nadu. Though Subramanian explains very well the ideological success of Dravidianism, and implicitly why Tamil Nadu is in important respects politically exceptional, he also brushes over the extent to which this ideology is not so much opposed to that of Hindu nationalism as open to it.

While Subramanian sees the move within the DMK away from the uncompromising rationalism, secularism and social radicalism of the earlier Self-Respect and Dravidian Movements as having had positive consequences, and reckons that the frankly populist ideology and policies which replaced them can be counted as having been 'successful'—in relation to political stability and pluralist democracy, and not just in terms of securing electoral support—Pandian, Anandhi, Geetha and Rajadurai regret it. They find it has meant that Dravidian politics have become increasingly less capable of responding to changes in Tamil society. The position they take may be approached through an exploration of the other important tendency in contemporary Tamil society and politics, reflected in the alignments of parties in the elections of 2001, and also very largely evaded by Subramanian: the increasingly overt conflict between lower caste Hindus and Dalits.

'SUCCESSFUL POPULISM' VERSUS CASTEISM?

A significant part of the context of the elections to the State Assembly in 2001 was the virulence of the antagonism between members of lower castes, like the Vanniyars and Thevars, and Dalits across the state as a whole. This is not a new phenomenon of course. But what is new is the extent to which Dalits are now organising themselves politically—though, as yet, there are still important political divisions amongst them. There are many constituencies in which the

voting decisions of Dalits (which make up around 20 per cent of voters) may be decisive. In part, the increased mobilisation of Dalits has come about because of the failure of the AIADMK under Jayalalitha to continue to reach out to the Dalits either in the paternalistic way M.G.Ramachandran (MGR) had managed so successfully, or through positive discrimination.[43] It is also, in some contexts —certainly not everywhere—an indication of a counter-hegemonic movement built from within the 'contradictory mosaic of Dalit commonsense', as Anandhi describes it. Alongside the mobilisation of Dalits in the Triplicane slums by Hindu nationalists she found also that 'a section of the Dalits are posing an *anti-hindutva* challenge by problematising their inferiorised identity as untouchables and by constituting a new social collectivity based on the Dalit identity'.[44] In this process, she argues, Dalits do draw on the critique of Brahmanism and of the caste system developed earlier on within the Dravidian Movement. But they also transcend the boundaries of anti-Brahmanism: The most significant feature of this newly emerging Dalit consciousness is its inclusive character. From the views expressed by these Dalits, it is clear that the inclusivity of the new Dalit identity is broad enough to accommodate different oppressed and discriminated people, particularly the poor Muslims of the slums. Here we find a progressive element of the Dalit commonsense.'[45] Anandhi notes too that The attempt to evolve a collective Dalit identity has also meant a rejection of the paternalism of the existing political parties'.[46] But by now, it is said: The transformation of Dalit movements into political forces has compelled established parties to woo them into their fold. But it has also led to sharp polarisation between Dalits and OBCs.'[47]

The pages of *Frontline* over the last two years or so record a catalogue of incidents of violence against Dalits. Dalits were denied access to a Mariamman temple by Vellala Gounder women in a village near Tiruvannamalai in September 2000 (on the occasion of the birthday of Periar), and those who attempted to get in were stoned; in May 2000 Dalits in Pudukottai were attacked because of their refusal to beat drums (a mark of their social inferiority) for the goddess festival; in May, too, three Dalits were murdered in Cuddalore in the context of tensions between the PMK and the Dalit Panthers; it was reliably reported that Dalits were prevented from voting in a number of villages in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, when for the first time their political organisations began to consolidate themselves and to join the political mainstream; and—most bloody of all the incidents of the more recent past—17 people, most of them Dalits, were killed in an attack by police on a demonstration of striking tea estate workers in Tirunelveli in July 1999. It has been reported by researchers who have worked over several decades in villages in Tamil Nadu that there is more overt discrimination against Dalits (for example, over access to tea shops) now than there was 20 years ago.[48] These violent incidents and the reinvention of untouchability in the practice of requiring Dalits to drink from a separate tumbler are surely a reflection of the attempts by powerful groups from higher castes—

like the Vanniyars—to reassert their hegemony in the face of Dalit assertions facilitated, in the first place, by the Dravidian Movement.

At the same time as these developments have been taking place there has also been political mobilisation—for somewhat different reasons—of various of the numerically significant intermediate and lower castes, beginning with the Vanniyars and the formation of the PMK in 1989, and followed in the last year or so by Yadhavas, by those describing themselves as 'Mudaliyars',[49] by Kongu Vellala Gounders, Kamma Naidus, Thevars, Saurashtrians and the 'Dravida Telugus'. A *Frontline* correspondent remarked drily:

> It is strange that such a large number of caste parties should sprout in Tamil Nadu, the cradle of the Dravidian movement headed by "Periyar" E.V.Ramasami, an iconoclast who doggedly fought both the caste system and Brahmin hegemony. At a conference of the All Mudaliyars' Federation on July 8 in Chennai C.N.Annadurai's grandson was felicitated (because of belonging to) the Mudaliyar community. [though] Annadurai, founder of the DMK, was a rationalist who strongly repudiated the caste system.[50]

The formation of these parties is in part the outcome of the frustrations of the ambitions of individual politicians (like A.C.Shanmugam of the Mudaliyars) in either the DMK or the AIADMK. But that they have been able to win support reflects the frustrations also of many ordinary people from these lower ranking castes, and in turn these frustrations and their consequences in terms of aggression against Dalits, together with the increasingly organised resistance on the part of the Dalits themselves, show—*contra* Narendra Subramanian—the inability of Dravidian populism to sustain the projects of pluralism and democracy the Dravidian Movement once espoused.

Subramanian's analysis draws largely on detailed studies of five assembly constituencies: Royapuram in northern Madras city, and Tiruvannamalai on the northern plains of Tamil Nadu; Mannargudi in the Kaveri valley; Dindigul on the southern plains; and Sermadevi in the Tamirapani Valley in the 'Deep South'. They were selected both to represent different regions with their varying social structures and different phases in the history of Dravidianism. The basic argument is that 'Dravidian populism successfully addressed the intermediate and lower strata' which were marginal to the strategies of the Congress, mobilising support (as it had done) through local elites, or of the communists who identified primarily with the propertyless.[51] By the term 'intermediate strata' Subramanian refers to those of both middle caste and middle class position, meaning white collar workers and small to middling property holders, and by 'lower strata' he refers to those from lower castes, especially Dalits/ Scheduled Castes with little or no property. The DMK, however, came to be rooted primarily amongst people 'with some social capability but limited political influence',[52] people from intermediate castes with small property, like small shopkeepers and small peasants, and including many of the Muslims of the state.

'Groups which were socially capable but culturally distinct from the gentry were the mainstay of early Dravidianist social coalitions, and were best able to appropriate party appeals for their ends.'[53] In office, from the outset the DMK 'benefited primarily rising groups and especially party supporters', while under Karunandhi a tilt towards 'emergent Backward Classes' became stronger, further alienating both the upper and the lower strata. The AIADMK, after its formation, garnered much more support amongst Scheduled Castes, those with little or no property, and amongst women,[54] and it created more space both for upper castes (MGR repudiated Non-Brahmanism) and (in the 1980s, at least) for non-Hindus, whilst still accommodating some demands of the intermediate strata. These arguments are derived partly from interviews with party activists and partly from the study of electoral geography. The latter, however, brings out the ways in which these social structural relationships have been modified by particular histories of party organisation and competition, and by the influence of caste solidarities. The DMK grew rapidly through the later 1950s and early 1960s amongst the numerous 'intermediate' groups of the northern plains, but the party never had quite the same success in the, in many ways comparable, social contexts of the southern and western plains, partly because of the strength of Congress (and in parts, right-wing Swatantra) organisation there, partly because of the difficulties the party had with such caste solidarities as those of the Mukkulathors (Thevars). The AIADMK has always performed better in the south and in the Tamirapani valley, as well as in rural areas rather than in the towns and cities of Tamil Nadu. The geography of party support was reflected still in the seat adjustments between alliance partners in the 2001 elections. In part the success of the AIADMK was because of the skill with which Jayalalitha and her close lieutenants selected the seats the party should fight in its own name.[55]

Subramanian portrays 'Dravidian populism', as it has been articulated by the DMK and AIADMK in their different ways, in a rather rose-tinted manner. His central concern is with the fact that, though Tamil Nadu has had a powerful political movement, and political parties deriving from it, which have projected a strong ethnic identity—initially that of 'the Dravidian' and later of 'the Tamilian'—the politics of the state have not succumbed to ethnically defined exclusivism, in spite of pressures towards it at different times. Rather, the politics of Dravidianism have had the effect of fostering social pluralism and a pluralist democracy. Given the pervasiveness of ethnic conflict in the contemporary world, and the common failure of states in managing such conflict, and in the context, too, of the strength of an exclusivist Hindu nationalism in Indian politics, Subramanian suggests that the Tamil case is of particular comparative interest. The core of his argument in response to the questions he poses is that in the politics of Dravidianism, though ethnic appeal has supplied cohesion, the dominant motif and mechanism has rather been populist. The populist features of Dravidian ideology rapidly became more significant than its ethnic features in generating support—as is shown, for instance, by the greater success of the AIADMK than of the DMK after 1977, in

spite of the fact that it adopted less militant postures, and had enormously popular leaders in MGR and then Jayalalitha, who were not actually native Tamils. Populism has here moderated the potential of ethnicity to generate disintegrative social conflict, and had 'sustained success [in aiding] the representation of emergent social groups'.[56]

Subramanian's association of the Dravidian political parties with 'social pluralism' and pluralist democracy seems perverse, in the sense that the arguments brush over the strongly repressive aspects of the rule of both the DMK and the AIADMK. These are actually referred to, for example, in passages on the attacks of the AIADMK regime on trade unions in which it is noted that The police were particularly violent in suppressing strikes in bicycle, automobile and textile factories, and in the Madras harbour', and in the subsequent short discussion of 'social control', where it is concluded that

> Although the inclinations of paternalist populism towards social control were tempered *by the prior strength of social pluralism* [whereas elsewhere Subramanian argues that what he calls "social pluralism" was rather *created* by the Dravidian parties], civil rights were abridged when MGR's government faced radical challenges and when Jayalalitha's felt beleagured.[57]

These observations—and similar ones made about the DMK regime in the 1970s, when it is said that 'Local DMK leaders and party activists resorted increasingly to violence to enforce their will [and] gangs of toughs became part of the party's repertoire everywhere'—are hard to reconcile with the idea that there is something special about the Dravidian parties which encourages 'social pluralism'.[58] Add to this problematical neglect in Subramanian's overall assessment the strong possibility, as we have seen, that Tamil cultural nationalism leaves open spaces in civil society for the mobilisation of Hindu nationalism, and the increasing evidence of the renewal of caste conflict in the state, it is rather hard to accept the notion that Dravidian populism has been such a great 'success' except in so far as it has indeed made for remarkably durable regimes. It is hardly surprising that the state has not exactly been in the forefront in the promotion of democratic decentralisation. Generally, it is widely felt, the rule of the Dravidian parties has become increasingly authoritarian, and focused on 'the leader' at the centre—and that these tendencies became even more strongly apparent in the 1990s, while developments in the economy were enhancing social exclusion.[59]

more convincing judgement on the record of the Dravidian Movement and of the DMK in particular is found in M.S.S.Pandian's writings. He has consistently argued that for all its twists and turns and political opportunism the Dravidian Movement was successful in infusing 'the much needed sense of self-respect among the Non-Brahmans'.[60] But he argues that uneven developments across caste groups (and, it should be added, the development of particular relationships

between certain caste groups and one or other of the two parties, like that between Thevars and the AIADMK in the south) created serious tensions.[61] The materially more advanced sections of the Non-Brahmans, such as the Chettiar elite, who during their economic ascendancy endorsed and funded the movement, found it no longer to be of any great relevance for their emerging new desires', while on the other hand Dalits and groups like the Vanniyars have fallen away because their aspirations have not been met by the Dravidian parties.[62] The most important and obvious reason for this tragic political shift is the growing power and caste arrogance of the Backward Class elites at the local level, which has often translated itself into anti-Adi Dravida [Dalit] violence'—which has then often been ignored by the leaders of the Dravidian parties.[63] Karunanidhi, for example, apparently prevaricated in his response to the police attack on the Dalits in Tirunelveli in July 1999, presumably because he wanted to try to win the support of the Thevars over from the AIADMK, exactly as Jayalalitha had done also, in response to a very similar event in 1995. The MDMK leader Vaiko is himself a representative of the elite Backward Classes (he is a Naidu), coming from a big landlord household. Pandian notes finally that 'with their recently acquired economic strength [the elite sections of the Nadars, Kallars, Gounders and others] are finding it possible to express a pan-Indian desire which is partly reflected in their drift to the Hindu right'.[64]

While Periar had 'articulated Tamilness and anti-Brahmanism to mean a certain kind of rationalism',[65] and 'self-respect' in terms of rigorous ethical principles, 'Annadurai and the DMK, after a brief period of frenetic radical movement activity, abandoned the goal of radical social reform and the DMK became a political party'.[66] It quickly compromised also on atheism and Non-Brahmanism (as we have seen), just as it quickly gave up the demand for a sovereign Dravida Nadu. Then the rationalist vision of 'self-respect' gave way, as Geetha and Rajadurai so pungently put it, to 'the farce of vulgarised "Tamilness"'—involving the creation of a mytho-history around such figures as Raja Raja Chozhan and Kattabomman, petty chieftains who were made to symbolise virility and heroic martial virtues, in defence of the dignity or 'honour' *(maanam)* of Tamilians, held to lie in the defence of the chastity of Tamil women.[67] And

> as the salient aspects of Non-Brahmanism gradually and systematically eroded in the DMK political praxis, the glitz and simulated glory that cinema offers came to characterise the political life of the party as a whole. In this sense MGR's emergence as a leader in his own right merely represented the fulfilment of a certain perverse historical logic that lay imminent in the Dravidian movement.[68]

The Dravidian Movement, with the ascendancy of MGR and the AIADMK, collapsed into sheer theatrics.

It has all proven extraordinarily successful, as Narendra Subramanian also argues, and as I have suggested through comparison with what Kaviraj asserts about the national political elite, in establishing ideological hegemony. But the AIADMK had (and has) no coherent ideology or economic and social policy. Pandian argues that Karunanidhi, however, has used reservations in a progressive way, but that he and the DMK have failed to carry on an ideological offensive in civil society against casteism.[69] The DMK's notions of social policy and of redistribution have converged too much with that of the 'charity from above' more explicitly espoused by the AIADMK, and exemplified so graphically in popular representations on calendars in the 1980s, of MGR as a deity up in the clouds pouring down largesse on the victims of floods and fires, on poor women and rickshaw wallahs. This was somewhat corrected in 1989–91 when the DMK administration introduced carefully considered social welfare measures, pioneering the provision of certain social benefits in India. The DMK government of 1996–2001, too, introduced a number of progressive welfare measures for the benefit of informal sector workers. But it is misleading to suggest, as Arun Swamy has done, that the AIADMK governments of the later 1970s and 1980s were very successful in regard to development objectives.[70] He takes no account at all of the way in which the operation of the fiscal system in the state at this time worked in the interests of the richer members of society, and actually taxed the poor, so that the benefits which the latter derived from, for example, the noon meals scheme, were to a significant extent paid for by the poor themselves through tax revenue. The schemes of the AIADMK, great vote catchers though they were, 'had very little consequence [therefore] in terms of a redistribution of income and wealth from the rich to the very poor'.[71]

The political success of the two Dravidian parties to which the non-Brahman, Self-Respect and Dravidian Movements gave rise has by now almost run its course. They will be on the scene for a long time to come, no doubt, but as the strange alliances of the 2001 election showed they were no longer able to mobilise widespread support across Tamil society. Members of the upper castes and of the upper and middle classes are less and less persuaded—even those who were in the past—by what is left of Dravidian/Tamil cultural nationalism, and seem more and more likely to be moved instead by the blandishments of Hindu nationalism. Populism in rhetoric and in policy practice has failed to hold the intermediate and lower castes, and the petty bourgeoisie (or the intermediate classes of the Kaleckian scheme), together. Increasingly, different caste groups have fallen out, and competition between the AIADMK and the DMK for support has tended to isolate them both from the Dalits who are organising themselves more and more effectively—or in some cases by the forces of *hindutva* so as to displace their resistance onto the Muslim, and latterly the Christian 'Other'. The failures of the Left on the one hand—it is now so obsessed by the defence of a narrowly defined 'secularism' as to have consented in casteist politics, as we have seen—and the regression from the social radicalism of the Dravidian Movement on the other, have exacted a high price.

NOTES

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1. MT, 'Tamil Nadu: Parade of Ex-friends and Ex-enemies', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 36/13 (2001), 1064.
2. The PMK was formed by the Vanniyar Sangam—the caste association of the Vanniyars, the most numerous caste community of Tamil Nadu—in 1989, in order to pursue their struggle for classification as a 'Most Backward Class'. The decision to quit the NDA in February had to do with Ramadoss' personal rivalry with another Vanniyar leader, V.R.Ramamurthi of the Tamizhaga Rajiv Congress, and his calculations over the possibility of his party securing power in Pondicherry.
3. The MDMK came into being in 1993/94 when Vaiko left the DMK as a result of conflict with Karunanidhi. Vaiko and Ramadoss (see note 2) are both unabashed supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), contrary to the views formally expressed by the DMK and to the policy of the NDA government. Politicians have made utterly contradictory statements over the creation of Tamil Eelam in order to remain within the same alliance at national level. The exit of the MDMK from its alliance with the DMK in the state weakened the DMK alliance in southern districts especially. Some reports suggest that Vaiko was virtually forced out by Karunandhi, as a result of disputes over seat allocations.
4. Enormous uncertainty surrounded the Tamil Nadu elections, especially because Jayalalitha was excluded from participating as a candidate in view of the criminal convictions standing against her. In the event, after the success of her party in the elections, she was immediately sworn in as Chief Minister by the Governor—though without any certainty that she would be allowed to continue in office.
5. See M.S.S.Pandian's brilliantly scathing commentary on 'The "Secular" Conceit', *The Hindu* (Chennai), 20 March 2001.
6. The Vanniyars gave rise to political parties also at an earlier stage in the political history of the state. This earlier history is explained in detail by Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph in their book *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
7. The alliance also included the Indian National League, Forward Bloc (a Thevar party) and the Tamilaga Munnetra Kazhagam, fighting in one constituency each.
8. Most importantly, the DMK-led alliance included the Makkal Tamil Desam, the party of the Yadhavas (6 seats) and the New Justice Party of the Mudaliyars (5), as well as the Kongu Nadu Vellala Katchi and the Tamil Nadu Muthuvayar Sangam. Other parties included were the MGR ADMK (3), the MGR Kazhagam (2) and the Tamilaga Muslim United Jammait (3).
9. In the event, the AIADMK-led front won 195 of the 234 seats in the Assembly. This was in spite of the fact that opinion polls suggested a fair degree of satisfaction with the DMK government's performance after 1996. Yogendra Yadav

wrote that 'there was no evidence of any widespread yearning for a regime that was similar to the one led by Jayalalitha during 1991–96' and that the 'explanation for the wave in Tamil Nadu seems to lie in the alliance arithmetic. Jayalalitha won the election not because of her popularity but because of the unbeatable alliance she cobbled together'. *Frontline* (Chennai), 8 June 2001, 113–17.

10. I use this expression rather than the commonly used term 'casteism', and in doing so I want to emphasise, following M.S.S.Pandian, the variety of logics that have led to caste-based politics in today's Tamil Nadu. Amongst the more significant caste groups, Yadhavas, though they are a large group, are geographically dispersed and have numerical strength only in a few pockets. Mudaliyars and Vellalas (these are generic names for caste groups including distinct jatis) claimed to be the natural leaders of the non-Brahmans early in the twentieth century, but then lost out with the arrival of the Self Respect Movement. Amongst them there is a sense of marginality to which some are now reacting. Thevars and Vanniyars, on the other hand, are both numerous and, generally speaking, relatively poor. They mostly stood outside the non-Brahman movement (hence the emergence of Vanniyar political parties in the 1950s referred to in note 6). Amongst them caste identity seems to play a compensatory role; and they are the caste communities which are most strongly anti-Dalit.
11. Under 'assertive populism' excluded groups are urged to assert themselves against the discrimination they have faced and to secure entitlements (under the DMK—to education, jobs, loans, subsidised consumer goods and sometimes small pieces of property). Under 'paternalist populism' a benevolent leader—and MGR, the founding genius of the AIADMK was the archetype of such a leader—or party promises to provide for 'the people' through subsidised wage goods and protection from repressive elites.
12. N.Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.
13. The Dravidian parties linked up effectively with the diverse but widely diffused sentiment of devotion to 'Mother Tamil' that developed from the end of the nineteenth century, and made it the defining feature of cultural nationalism in Tamil Nadu. This is the subject of Sumathi Ramaswamy's important book *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
14. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 31.
15. Ibid., 309.
16. Narendra Subramanian is not the only one to subscribe to it, however. The dependence of the B BJP on alliance with the Dravidian parties in winning some modest electoral support in Tamil Nadu has led astute observers of Indian politics such as James Manor to underestimate the extent of sympathy for *hindutva* in the state. He has asserted, for example, that the BJP's 'fundamental problem was and is that Hindu nationalism has never captured the imagination of voters in Karnataka or…elsewhere in the South'. J.Manor, 'Southern Discomfort: The BJP in Karnataka', in T.B.Hansen and C.Jaffrelot (eds.), *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 189.
17. I sought to argue this at length in a recent review article. J.Harriss, 'Populism, Tamil Style: Is It Really a Success?', *Review of Development and Change,* 5/2 (2000), 332–46.

18. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 308.
19. M.S.S.Pandian, 'From Exclusion to Inclusion: Brahminism's New Face in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 25/34 (1990), 1938–39.
20. Anandhi S., *Contending Identities: Dalits and Secular Politics in Madras Slums* (Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1995), 58–9.
21. C.Fuller, The "Vinayaka Chaturthi" Festival and Hindutva in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 36/19 (2001), 1614.
22. Fuller, "'Vinayaka Chaturthi'", 1614.
23. V.Geetha, and S.V.Rajadurai, 'DMK Hegemony: The Cultural Limits to Political Consensus', in T.V.Sathyamurthy (ed.), *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).
24. Pandian, 'From Exclusion to Inclusion'.
25. It is only fair to point out, however, that the Hindu Munnani's control over the Vinayaka processions has been opposed by the DMK in Chennai, even while the party has done business with the BJP. Karunanidhi has been accused of being 'an atheist wearing a yellow shawl'.
26. Fuller concludes his essay on Brahmans in contemporary Tamil society thus: 'in the twentieth century the Tamil Brahmans have almost completely lost their political and administrative power at the state level, although their overall economic position has probably strengthened…In addition, the Brahmans still possess vitally important 'cultural capital', because the mainly urban socio-economic elite, comprising both Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, is predisposed to identify its own high cultural values as Brahmanical'. C.Fuller, 'The Brahmins and Brahminical Values in Modern Tamil Nadu', in R.Guha and J.Parry (eds.), *Institutions and Inequalities: Essays in Honour of Andre Beteille* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51.
27. A.Pinto, 'End of Dravidian Era in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 34/24 (1999), 1487.
28. The belief that it is predominantly the Chettiars who run family firms in the south dies hard, however. It is repeated, for example, in Gurcharan Das' introduction to a recent issue of the journal *Seminar* devoted to family business (Oct. 1999). A more accurate assessment would be that of the dozen or so big business houses formerly owned by the Chettiars only three survive.
29. M.Singer, *When A Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (New York: Praeger, 1972).
30. These points are amplified in J.Harriss, The Great Tradition Globalizes: Reflections on Two Studies of the "Industrial Leaders" of Madras' (Manuscript, London School of Economics, 2001).
31. See Harriss, The Great Tradition', for a more detailed account.
32. Geetha and Rajadurai have recently qualified this conventional account, showing 'the various trajectories of Non-Brahman assertion beginning with the articulation of Dalit voices as these emerged from about the last decades of the nineteenth century'. V.Geetha and S.V. Rajadurai, *Towards a Non-Brahmin Millennium: From Iyothee Thass to Periyar* (Calcutta: Samiya, 1998), xv.
33. Geetha and Rajadurai, like Pandian and Anandhi, regard the Self Respect Movement differently, holding that it articulated a distinct and radical social vision. Geetha and Rajadurai, *Towards a Non-Brahmin Millennium.*

34. Already for long celebrated in the movements around devotion to 'Mother Tamil'. See note 13.
35. Dirks' argument about the strong association of caste (Brahman/Shudra) and ideas about race (Aryan/non-Aryan or Dravidian) in the ideology of the Dravidian Movement, deriving in the first place from the orientalist scholarship of Bishop Caldwell in the nineteenth century, is over-stated. Periar, Annadurai and Karunanidhi have all denounced claims to racial purity. N.Dirks, 'Recasting Tamil Society: the Politics of Caste and Race in Contemporary Southern India', in C.Fuller (ed.), *Caste Today* (Delhi: Oxford University Press 1996).
36. M.R.Barnett, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), Ch 7.
37. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 157, n. 90.
38. Ibid., 155, n. 83.
39. S.Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India', in J.Manor (ed.), *Rethinking Third World Politics* (London: Longman, 1991).
40. See references in Anandhi, *Contending Identities,* Ch. 3.
41. See Geetha and Rajadurai, 'DMK Hegemony'.
42. Anandhi, *Contending Identities,* 28.
43. Suresh Nambath noted that 'While elderly Dalits are with the AIADMK, the younger lot show a marked preference for the newly-formed Puthiya Tamizhagam and Dalit Panthers, which have grown in the last couple of years on the basis of identity politics. This is... reflective of the erosion in the vote bank of of the AIADMK after it came to acquire a pro-Thevar image'. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 30 April 2001.
44. Anandhi, *Contending Identities,* 59.
45. Ibid., 59. It has to be said, however, that this inclusiveness is not yet reflected in Dalit politics at the state level, for the Muslims are nowhere near the Dalit parties.
46. Ibid., 59.
47. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 21 April 2001. It was also noted by a correspondent of *The Hindu* that 'unlike as in the south, where Thevar-Dalit clashes were frequent and violent, the Vanniyar-Dalit conflict sharpened only with the political rivalry between the PMK and the Dalit Panthers'. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 8 May 2001.
48. V.K.Ramachandran, in personal communication with the author.
49. 'Elite, dominant communities in the north, such as Mudaliyars, have been edged out by the Vanniyars in political representation, thanks to the PMK and its alliance with one or other of the major parties. Sections of the Mudaliyars therefore felt the need to float the New Justice Party and ally with the DMK. The anti-Vanniyar feeling among the other backward classes arose also on account of their losing some of their share of the reservation pie with the bifurcation of the backward classes category into MBC (Most Backward Class) and BC (Backward Class)'. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 8 May 2001. Note that the 'Mudaliyars' who have joined the New Justice Party include members of different jatis, amongst them, for example, Sengunthar Mudaliyars who were traditionally weavers, and Thondaimandalam Thuluvu Vellalas, a dominant landowning caste from northern Tamil Nadu.
50. *Frontline* (Chennai), 2 March 2001, 47.
51. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 47.
52. Ibid., 48.
53. Ibid., 45.

54. MGR's appeal among women is discussed well by M.S.S.Pandian in his book *The Image Trap: M G Ramachandran in Film and Politics* (Delhi: Sage, 1992).
55. The AIADMK, which is relatively weak in the north, allotted to the TMC and the PMK seats in the northern districts. The few seats the AIADMK gave to its allies in the south and west were mostly those with an urban profile'. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 30 April 2001.
56. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 13, 310.
57. Ibid., 296.
58. Ibid., 236.
59. Ingrid Widlund offers a good account of the leadership cults in the Dravidian parties. I. Widlund, 'Paths to Power and Patterns of Influence: The Dravidian Parties in South Indian Politics' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Uppsala University, 2000). See also the work of Pamela Price. P.Price, 'Revolution and Rank in Tamil Nationalism', *Journal of Asian Studies,* 55/2 (1996), 359–83. It was noted in *The Hindu* 'In Tamil Nadu…the battle of the ballot has almost invariably been a clash of personalities and egos of the presiding deities of the two Dravidian outfits'. *The Hindu* (Chennai), 9 May 2001.
60. M.S.S.Pandian, 'Crisis in DMK', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 29/5 (1994), 221.
61. This 'special relationship' is cemented, according to close observers, because of the fact that Jayalalitha's companion, Sasikala Natarajan, is a Thevar.
62. Pandian, 'Crisis in DMK', 221. It should also be noted that some leading members of the Chettiar elite are now very prominent supporters of the Kanchi Mutt, as speeches to be found on the Mutt's website show.
63. Ibid., 221.
64. Ibid., 223.
65. Geetha and Rajadurai, 'DMK Hegemony', 558.
66. Barnett, *Cultural Nationalism,* 317.
67. Geetha and Rajadurai argue that 'the concept of maanam, with its feudal and patriarchal overtones, has gradually substituted itself for the secular concept of "self-respect"'. Geetha and Rajadurai, 'DMK Hegemony', 569.
68. Ibid., 551.
69. Pandian, 'Crisis in DMK'.
70. A.Swamy, 'Parties, Political Identities and the Absence of Mass Political Violence in South India', in A.Basu and A.Kohli (eds.), *Community Conflicts and the State in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).
71. Pandian is referring here to work by the late S.Guhan. Pandian, *The Image Trap,* 24.

Response to John Harriss

S.V.RAJADURAI and V.GEETHA

In his article, 'Whatever Happened to Cultural Nationalism in Tamil Nadu?', John Harriss argues, *contra* Narendra Subramanian, that Dravidian and/or Tamil populism, as exemplified in the political practice of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), as a political project has become gradually compromised. Populism has neither made for a pluralist democracy nor successfully contained ethnic conflicts. On one hand, Dalit militancy is on the rise, while on the other hand *hindutva* appears an attractive proposition, inserting itself, as it were, into those 'gaps' where populism has been compromised. Meanwhile, to complicate matters, discontented caste groups have emerged as articulate and visible players in the polity and civil society.

Harriss' article is strongest here, in its refutation of Subramanian's central thesis.[1] The idea of populism (in Subramanian's work) does appear ambiguous: it slips rather easily in and out of the category that political science and practice recognise as 'the popular'. Does the idea refer to political populism or does it seek to evoke the less common but immensely significant romantic vision of a 'popular community', revolving around an idealised 'common person' or 'persons'? That is, does the notion of the popular gesture towards strategies of mobilisation that subsume politics in rhetoric, concrete concerns in symbolic ones? Or does it connote a felt notion of the 'Tamil people', possessed of their own mytho-history, rites of passage, a distinctive language and culture?

However this may be, to us, the DMK's so-called populism comprises several elements: culturally persuasive arguments which helped construct an overarching Tamilness, and one easily available for public possession; economic populism that included nationalisation of transport, building of slum clearance housing projects and, of course, sporadic industrialisation and fiscal support, often accomplished through strategic bargains which the government of Tamil Nadu negotiated with the central government; and finally social radicalism, which was best expressed in the implementation of reservation policy.

It is this complex populism that led to the DMK's electoral and political success, though, politically, and Harriss' article points this out, the DMK has

S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha, Chennai

been powerful only within defined geographical locales in Tamil Nadu. However, historically, this disadvantage did not matter, since the electoral system does not convert the popular vote into seats (this is the case, for example, in Germany and France, and in nearby Sri Lanka) but follows an older method of declaring the one who has obtained the maximum number of votes the winner, while all others are declared losers. Thus, even while retaining only 35–40 per cent of the popular vote a party may come to power and form the government, simply because it has won the largest number of seats. Further, and this must not be forgotten, from its earliest days the DMK's identity and relevance were rendered legitimate by a lively and contentious Non-Brahman Tamil intelligenstia, by those organic intellectuals of the many Non-Brahman castes who saw in its will to power a transcendent passion for social justice and the commonwealth.

Here we must pause to ask if the DMK's populism did indeed reflect, in a synchronic sense (as Harriss suggests), an uneasy caste-balance—between certain castes which felt at home with that party while various others felt aggrieved and left out. It is true that over a period of time Dalits, for entirely understandable reasons, have deserted this premier party of the Dravidian Movement. But can one say this of other castes? It seems to us that if there existed—in the past—clearly discernible reasons, which made certain castes feel marginalised, these will have to be established precisely and contextually for each of these so-called marginal castes. This is an interpretative exercise that awaits research and one that may not be lightly undertaken given the complex interplay of motives, historical conditions and memory which inform political and social allegiances in this part of the world.

As we understand it, the re-emergence of caste-based groups as significant players in the polity is as symptomatic of power as it is of marginality. Thus Mukkulathor (political and civil) assertion exudes confidence as these men set about systematically confronting and resisting Dalit efforts at claiming their human rights and dues. In this instance, confident aggression resists defiant transgression—the Mukkulathors appear unable to abide Dalit militancy. The specific and material reasons for this aggression are many and can be enumerated through specific case studies—human rights groups that have probed into caste clashes between the Mukkulathors and Dalits have attempted such studies bristling with local colour and detail. Generally, though, it may be said that Dalit militancy, threatening as it does to disrupt the vicious logic of a system based on graded inequality, evokes both existential and political anxiety.

With the Vanniyars a different logic is clearly at work—large-scale material deprivation and a perceived bias on the part of the state towards Dalits work to render them both angrily pro-Vanniyar as well as anti-Dalit. They have sought and acquired an independent political identity, and one which cannot be subsumed in the generalised Non-Brahman commonweal that remains a staple of DMK rhetoric. Yet there were instances of important segments of this caste of toilers and peasants once fiercely championing the cause of Non-Brahmanism

and Dravidian social justice. In fact, the DMK in its early years was a political favourite among the Vanniyars. For example, in free India's first parliamentary elections in 1952 the influential north Indian businessman and newspaper baron, Ramnath Goenka was defeated by Thirukural Munisamy, a Vanniyar who supported assertions of a Tamil national identity. The DMK supported Munisamy's campaign and this factor proved decisive to his ultimate victory. In 1957, when the DMK contested elections for the first time, it won 15 seats. Of these, two were won by Vanniyars. Of the nine ministers in the first DMK cabinet of C.N. Annadurai (1967) there was one Vanniyar (A.Govindasamy).

Incidentally, many of the terms used in discussions of caste-based politics in the state, such as 'Mudaliyar' and 'Vellala', are generic terms applied to a number of smaller caste groups. Thus they denote titles but do not translate into particular caste or jati identities. For political purposes these umbrella terms are a useful way of aggregating a variety of groups. However these collections of castes sometimes overlap and are often organised into groupings containing social contradictions. There are many 'Mudaliyars' like Thondaimandala Thuluva Vellalas' (originally a land-owning caste that threw up some of the leading lights of the Justice Party like Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliyar, C.Natesa Mudaliyar and P.T.Rajan) who are classifed as a Forward Community, while 'Sengunthars' (a weaver caste described as 'Mudaliyar') fall into the other backward caste (OBC) category[2] The President of the New Justice Party belongs to the first category and his Vice-President comes from the second. This may be one of the reasons why this party proved to be a non-starter. Similarly 'Vellala' is also a generic term that can bring under its rubric various categories of Vellalas ranging from the earlier mentioned Thondaimandala Thuluva Vellalas of the southern district to the Karkatha Vellalas of the deep south and from the Kongu Vellalas ('Gounders' is their title) of the Kongu region to the Chozhia Vellalas of the eastern districts who call themselves 'Pillais'.[3] Beginning in the 1930s, the Devadasi community metamorphosed into Isai Vellalas, though 'isai' (music) has nothing to do with 'velanmai' (cultivation), the derivative of which is the term 'Vellala'.

When one talks about 'elite, dominant communities, such as Mudaliyars', one should bear in mind all these 'differences'. Vanniyars—at least those under the sway of the PMK—have of late complained of the 'domination' of Udayars, another OBC with a significant presence in the northern districts. This holds good for Chettiars as well, since it is also a generic term embracing a number of disparate trading castes and communities. Some members of the fishing community in Chennai also call themselves Chettiars while elite formations could be found in more than one Chettiar caste.

To return to Harriss' arguments: we would locate the keen revival of interest in religious issues characteristic of civil and social life in Tamil Nadu within the overall logic of the Dravidian movement's development. The movement's early rationalism and atheism suffered interesting mutations and transformations in the hands of DMK publicists and politicians and, over the years, they have attained

the status of pre-historic ideologies the party can celebrate without necessarily wanting to abide by them. Thus, the movement's early emphasis on the abolition of untouchability, the destruction of caste and women's emancipation was abandoned gradually, and even cast out of collective memory.

These changes are part of our immediate past and inform our present in quotidian ways and we are yet to understand fully their impact and implications. It may be said, though, that the DMK articulated a different sort of politics than had been practised by the Self-Respect Movement and even the early Dravidar Kazhagam, its immediate forbears. For one, a new generation of young people were active in the movement—in the 1940s—who practised a politics of representation, of spectacle and rhetoric, in place of a politics of persuasion and pedagogy. These young men desired power, wished to rule—they wanted to take their chances in electoral contests. They succeeded, won widespread acceptance and set about translating and transforming their founding ideologies into plans, policies and art. The questions before us are: was the displacing of the early Dravidian Movement's concerns onto the terrain of politics historically inevitable? Could the movement have survived into the era of popular democracy, with its promises of easy and accessible power? Could informed debate and impassioned polemic have stood out against the aura of compelling demagoguery? In other words, could social radicalism live on, without having to address the question of authority and practical politics?

Then, of course, there is the question of Tamilness: it possessed affective value, invoked deep personal feelings and emotions. The DMK deployed Tamilness as a category of analysis and expression, thus constructing an imagined community which took pride in its past and longed to translate that past to the present. Today, of course, this Tamilness is fractured—caste groups appear to want a more localised identity, Dalits have a quarrel with the very notion of Tamilness, religious minorities are being forced to declare allegiance to God or country, or both, but rarely for the linguistic community. Perhaps this fracturing is a fall-out of the DMK's manner of 'doing' Tamil—its pseudo-classicism, its love of the cliché and parable, its didacticism. In other words, in the DMK's success, in the very manner of it succeeding, lay the germ of its failure, its eventual limitations—here we have a sin, not so much of omission, but of commission even!

Has this erosion of a Dravidian consensus meant that Tamil society will respond to *hindutva?* It is not very clear, once again, if Hindu revivalist sentiments are on account of the DMK's failure to retain its founding consensus. There are many logics at work here and a careful empirical disentangling of them is required: if some Non-Brahman castes are today supportive of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), are they consistently so, are they split down the middle in some cases? Also, is there an organic link, which has nothing to do with the BJP, between the assertion of caste pride and hatred of Dalits and the emergence of a revivified Hinduism, which, of course, sits well with *hindutva.* That is, into what

local trajectories possessing their own internal histories is the BJP inserting its appeal?

It seems to us that we need to examine individual instances which point to the seeming support for *hindutva* before we arrive at any sort of a conclusion. For one, it is not at all clear that the BJP has been able to assert itself unequivocally, even in those locations where one may expect it to win. Consider the recent (2001) by-election to the Trichy parliamentary constituency (held along with the recent elections for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly). The by-election was caused by the death of Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, who was not only a cabinet minister in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government but also belonged to the Vellala Gounder community whose presence in the constituency is quite substantial. The BJP lost that election. Then again, in the Coimbatore mayoral election held in October this year, the BJP candidate lost—in spite of the sharp communal divide which appears to have emerged in this part of the state. The Coimbatore Corporation forms a significant part of Coimbatore parliamentary constituency and returned a BJP candidate twice in the past. But this year the BJP mayoral candidate Mylsamy, an influential Vellala Gounder lost to Malaravan, the AIADMK candidate, who, though belonging to the same community, is of humbler origin.

Pandian's and Anandhi's theses on Dalits, *hindutva* and caste do illuminate particular historic moments, but we need to ask if they are heuristic or historical.[4] Do they point to an actual material logic that can be profitably traced in and through them: if Meenakshipuram represented a new sort of consensus, has it been replicated, and to what purpose? Can one say that conversion in the state heeds a similar set of imperatives? It is clear from articles on conversion to Islam in recent issues of the Tamil Dalit journal, *Dalit Murasu,* that conversion happens even in those instances where there are no known *hindutva* practices—the lived reality of caste propels Dalits to seek out this measure.

On the question of the Vinayaka processions—they have settled into yearly affairs, with the crowds getting thinner each year, and the Dalit factor really appears unstable, suggesting perhaps Fuller should revisit his thesis.[5] And it is not only Dalits who are brought into the processions, but segments of the urban poor whose lives remain wretched, though not all of them are Dalits. Importantly, Dalit militancy, opposed resolutely to Brahmans and caste Hindus, is on the rise—witness the popularity of parties such as the Viduthalai Siruthaigal and Pudiya Tamizhagam, admittedly regional and sectoral, but popular nevertheless amongst vast sections of Dalit youth. Besides, Dalit intellectual life is vigorous and active and represents a determined assault on the ideologies of Brahmanism.

We would like to conclude with these observations: perhaps one may have to return to history, religious studies and social anthropology to understand the historical relationship of Tamils to religious life. Contrary to the polemical claims advanced by the Dravidian Movement, the Tamils have been a deeply religious people. Do we witness, then, in this historic hour of *hindutva,* the

unfolding of histories that fortuitously slide into the logic of *hindutva* without necessarily agreeing to all of its premises?

Secondly, we need to enquire more closely into the changing fortunes of castes, the relationship between a lived caste identity and a more inclusive, generic jati name, such as Vellala or Mudaliyar, differences which are often obscured through imprecise usage, and which further fudge the differences between groups that clearly seem themselves as local and others which claim a more inclusive identity. We also need to ask if caste identities are exclusive and question whether the positing of a caste identity closes off other identity markers to members of that caste. In our view, this is clearly not so. A Vanniyar, however he may assert his specific caste identity, also claims a Tamil ancestry and in this, rhetorically at least, is willing to be part of a common nation that is transcendent of caste.

Lastly, we have to work harder to establish caste-class links, and to determine the class-caste constituencies of political parties. Which Tamil castes for example accumulated capital? What is the relationship of Brahmans to material wealth, to capital accumulation? And what about the social, cultural and symbolic capitals (in the sense in which Pierre Bourdieu used these terms) they are vested with?

NOTES

1. N.Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).
2. C.N.Annadurai who began his career as a private secretary to the Justice Party leader Raja of Bobbili was a 'Sengunthar'.
3. Pillai is also a title claimed by any number of castes irrespective of their place in caste hierarchy—from Karkatha Vellalas a Forward Community, which is in many ways more Brahmanical than the Brahmans, to the Paraiyars.
4. Anandhi S., *Contending Identities: Dalits and Secular Politics in Madras Slums* (Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1995); M.S.S.Pandian, 'From Exclusion to Inclusion: Brahminism's New Face in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 25/34 (1990), 1938–9.
5. C.Fuller, The "Vinayaka Chaturthi" Festival and Hindutva in Tamil Nadu', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 36/19 (2001), 1607–16.

Identity Politics and Social Pluralism: Political Sociology and Political Change in Tamil Nadu

NARENDRA SUBRAMANIAN

John Harriss' article addresses some changes in identity politics in Tamil Nadu since the late colonial period, focusing primarily on changes over the last decade. The article engages extensively with my earlier work on ethnic and populist mobilisation by the Dravidian parties, and the associated changes in partisanship, political representation, associational life and patronage distribution in Tamil Nadu, from the late colonial period to the late 1980s.[1] In what follows I clarify some of my book's arguments in response to Harriss' article, and indicate some serious flaws in the Dravidianist narratives that Harriss adopts.[2]

My book's temporal focus ends in the late 1980s as the Dravidian parties ceased to be the major forces mobilising Tamil society thereafter, despite their continued electoral influence.[3] Nevertheless, Harriss faults me for failing to account for some changes of the last decade, criticisms which are relevant only to the extent that features of the political scene until the 1980s prefigured subsequent changes in ways my account might have not captured. I will discuss these recent changes—the growth of Hindu nationalism and 'casteism' (by which Harriss refers to some distinct phenomena: caste discrimination in everyday life, caste-based political competition, caste parties and violent caste conflict); and show how arguments offered and trends discussed in my book help explain features of these changes. In the process, I emphasise once more the need to study the ongoing formation of partisan subcultures to understand the relationship between political institutions and popular mentalities, and the impact of political mobilisation on tolerance and social pluralism.[4]

SOME OF THE BOOK'S ARGUMENTS

The book showed that the rapid growth of the Dravidian parties from the 1950s and their dominance over Tamil Nadu politics since the 1970s led to little intolerance or violence despite the intolerant potential of some early Dravidianist appeals. Rather, the Dravidian parties increased political participation, aided the representation of the emergent strata, enriched civic life, and thus strengthened

Narendra Subramanian, Department of Political Science, McGill University

pluralist democracy. Besides, the strength of these parties impeded the growth of religious nationalism, which instigated considerable collective violence in many other parts of India, much as many religious nationalist forces have elsewhere.

The Dravidian parties constrained violent conflict partly due to the inclusive features of their social vision, but more because they built cohesive partisan subcultures within which were linked caste and religious groups that might otherwise have come into conflict with each other. The DMK built such subcultures in the northern plains and the Kaveri valley from the 1950s to the early 1970s, and the AIADMK in the rest of Tamil Nadu (the western and southern plains, and the Tamiraparani valley) in the 1970s and 1980s. The DMK especially inhibited the growth of Hindu nationalism and conflict between religious groups in its early strongholds (the northern plains and the Kaveri valley), where it built close socio-political links between many Hindus from the other backward castes (OBCs) and Muslims (and to a lesser extent Christian OBCs).

argue that the DMK and the AIADMK aided social pluralism because of the organisational pluralism of these parties. By social pluralism, I refer to the existence of many active associations significantly autonomous of the state and of one another. Organisational pluralism denotes the extent of autonomy and flexibility characterising both relations within an organisation and transactions between the organisation and society. It has three components: *strategic flexibility* regarding long-term goals and outlook (not just short-term tactical dexterity in responding to changing political opportunities); *cadre autonomy*, the autonomy of local party units, party factions and party-affiliated associations from party leaders; and *supporter autonomy*, to appropriate party appeals in ways different from the explicit appeals and preferred programmes of party leaders. There was some autonomous associational activity in Tamil Nadu prior to the growth of the Dravidian parties. However, this did not guarantee the subsequent reinforcement of social pluralism as organisations lacking internal pluralism might have undermined autonomous associational activity if they had become very influential—as Hindu nationalism did in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Sikh movement in Punjab, and Sinhala and Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka.[5]

THE DRAVIDIAN PARTIES: ASPECTS OF THEIR HISTORY

Harriss' interpretation of the course of the Dravidian Movement and changes in Tamil Nadu politics makes extensive use of the accounts of M.S.S.Pandian, S.Anandhi, V.Geetha and S.V.Rajadurai, which proceed from an embrace of central features of early Dravidianist ideology. These authors derive their understanding of the Dravidianist organisations from leaders' narratives in writings, statements and cultural productions, not coupled with the study of approaches to political mobilisation and the outlooks predominant in partisan subcultures. Such methods are inadequate to provide informed analyses of social

movements, and are far removed from the Subaltern Studies collective's proclaimed ambition of offering historical narratives 'from below'. They lead Pandian and Anandhi to claim that the early Dravidian Movement under Periar's leadership embodied a 'radical social vision'. Rajadurai's and Geetha's more elaborate account of Periar's outlook contains long quotations from Periar (some well over a page in length) interspersed with much historical detail, but offers little by way of analysis.[6]

These accounts fail to recognise the exclusionary potential of early Dravidianism. The Self Respect Association and the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) operated with a layered conception of Dravidian identity—containing at its centre the Tamil-speaking OBCs of Tamil Nadu, and in successive concentric circles around this centre, South Indian OBCs who are not Tamil-speaking, Tamil Christians and Muslims, and Dalits. The groups clearly beyond the pale were Brahmans and 'north Indians' (that is, speakers of Sanskritic languages), a small minority of Tamil Nadu's population (about four per cent). But a further 30 per cent occupied the outer layers of this vision, including many groups with limited power.[7] This vision of community could have led to an exclusionary, perhaps violent, politics, especially as some groups at its core had considerable social power and it was articulated through demonstrative acts of heresy which offended many.

Periar exercised considerable control over the Self Respect Association and the DK. The heavy reliance of these organisations on affluent notables and their focus on religion as the main basis of social inequality limited their challenge to many forms of social dominance. These vanguardist organisations were disinclined to engage closely with popular mentalities, rejected many aspects of popular culture such as popular religion and some streams in popular literature, and distrusted electoral politics and universal suffrage. As a result, they gained inadequate support to promote major social changes and were confined to a politics of protest.

In keeping with Periar's social vision, the DK drew support mainly from some OBCs and gave Dalits only a subordinate role. Even Dalit intellectuals found autonomous voices only in the journals they ran, like *Oru Paisa Tamizhan,* rather than in the DK's organs *(Kudi Arsu, Viduthalai)* to which they also contributed. The DK's atheism was driven mainly by its opposition to caste-based dominance. So the DK primarily criticised Hinduism and not other religions, saw itself mainly as a movement to reform Hindu society and gave some Hindus (the OBCs) primacy in its vision of community. It opposed the post-colonial constitution's guarantee of freedom of religious belief and practice, an important cornerstone of tolerance in India, on the grounds that it implied the official acceptance of the caste discrimination intrinsic to Hinduism. The above features of early Dravidianism had the potential to undermine social pluralism. Harriss' claim that it was 'uncompromising [in its] rationalism, secularism and social radicalism' sits uneasily with these aspects of early Dravidianism.[8]

Harriss' sources consider the post-colonial history of the Dravidian parties one of 'ideological regression'. Some crucial points in the alleged regression are the adoption of Tamil nationalism from 1938; the formation in 1949 of the DMK and its abandonment of atheism; a decline in the DMK's emphasis on caste, language and state autonomy through the 1960s and 1970s; and the formation in 1972 of the AIADMK, which abandoned Non-Brahmanism and did not emphasise language and state autonomy. Ideological regression is supposed to have diverted the Dravidian Movement from building a more tolerant and democratic society.

This understanding ignores how the DMK abridged the intolerant potential of early Dravidianism; and the formation of the AIADMK further reduced intolerance and gave the lower strata greater political representation. The DMK's populist discourse of the 1950s and the 1960s associated Dravidian identity with the DMK sub-culture, predominantly composed of groups marginal to state-society links. It distinguished such groups, considered part of a popular community, from the elite by referring to partially overlapping categories such as caste and dialect use ('Non-Brahman', mainly OBC), language use (Tamil rather than other Indian languages or English) and occupation (non-landlord, non-professional). This urged the valorisation of plebeian norms, rather than the policing of ethnic boundaries.

The DMK and the AIADMK were far better attuned to Tamil society than the DK was, and promoted new waves of political mobilisation among the lower and the intermediate strata. The authority of Dravidianist leaders was contingent on their being able to present themselves as exemplars of their party's populist outlook. Cadre and supporters enjoyed considerable autonomy within party subcultures, and many supporters joined associations that challenged some policies their parties pursued. Such autonomy enabled crucial splits in the DK and the DMK when leaders appeared to have violated the party's social vision, leading to the formation of the DMK in 1949, the ADMK in 1972 and the MDMK in 1994. The need of leaders to maintain their legitimacy created some accountability, and led to the distribution of greater patronage more directly to the intermediate and the lower strata when the DMK and the AIADMK ruled.

Pandian and Harriss claim that the DMK was progressive, unlike the AIADMK, because of its preferential policies, although the preferences introduced by the two parties had similar advantages and shortcomings. While the DMK raised the OBC quota from 25 per cent to 31 per cent, the AIADMK followed a decade later by raising it from 31 per cent to 50 per cent. Both variants of OBC preferences disproportionately benefited groups with greater power and resources. If the DMK introduced a separate tier for the 'most backward castes' in response to this concern, voiced by some caste associations, the AIADMK subsequently made a distinct provision for women.

The view that the AIADMK represented the Dravidian movement's 'collapse into theatrics' obscures how film as a crucial medium for the AIADMK helped the party gain greater support among women and the lower strata, groups at the margins of DMK subcultures. Pandian offered interesting hypotheses on how

MGR's films might have influenced different social groups, but did not explore the impact of these films through interviews or collecting other material on popular mentalities. Despite the absence of such evidence, he claimed that MGR's films beguiled women and the poor into association with the social vision MGR upheld, a vision that provided them no agency or benefits.[9] Contrary to such claims, the AIADMK's promise of offering the poor and powerless protection gave the lower strata an alternative to the DMK's agenda, increasingly focused on the interests of the intermediate and upwardly mobile strata. Rather than being relegated to passivity, MGR's enthusiasts formed fan clubs which were central components of the paternalist populist subcultures that helped the DMK and then the AIADMK gain power. Besides, the AIADMK becoming Tamil Nadu's most popular party through much of the 1970s and 1980s gave the lower strata, women and non-Tamils greater political representation and defeated nativist articulations of Dravidianism.[10]

INTOLERANCE AND VIOLENT CONFLICT

Harriss discusses the growth of Hindu nationalism and 'casteism' since the 1980s. It is unclear which inference he draws from these trends—that the Dravidian parties left sufficient space all along for alternative visions of community, or that they inhibited such visions at some point but ceased to do so because of ideological regression. Harriss believes the growth of Hindu nationalism and casteism is damaging to my findings that the Dravidian parties curbed intolerance and violent conflict. Intolerance and collective violence were limited when the Dravidian parties were strongest, and grew only when these parties became weaker. Besides, the arguments offered in my book for the weakness of Hindu nationalism and the low levels of collective violence until the 1980s help one understand aspects of the subsequent modest growth of Hindu nationalism and inter-religious conflict, as well as the emergence of some caste parties and much violent caste conflict.

Hindu Nationalism

Hindu nationalist organisations grew over the last two decades in Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, their influence is limited in comparison not only with the old Hindu nationalist bastions in northern and western India, but also with states of more recent Hindu nationalist growth such as Karnataka, Assam, West Bengal, Andhra and Kerala. The BJP's electoral strength shows a similar pattern. It grew from extremely low levels until 1991 (between 0.0 per cent and 0.2 per cent) to ranging between 1.8 per cent and 7.1 per cent since 1996 in Tamil Nadu. As the BJP was a part of one of the state's two major electoral alliances in the last three elections (the parliamentary elections of 1998 and 1999, and the state assembly elections of 2001), the party's vote share was not reduced by its minor position in state politics. The BJP's electoral appeal is still much lower in Tamil Nadu than

in Karnataka, Assam, Orissa and West Bengal. Violent religious conflict is also lower in Tamil Nadu than in much of India, although it erupted over the last two decades in parts of the state. Harriss dismisses my claim that Hindu nationalism is relatively weak in Tamil Nadu without exploring such comparisons with other Indian states.

While conceding that the Sangh Parivar and the BJP are weak in Tamil Nadu, Harriss claims that there is 'widespread sympathy for Hindu nationalist thinking'. He defends this claim by alluding to the public celebration of Hindu festivals (although many participants oppose Hindu nationalist organisations), the participation of some Dalits in Hindu nationalist violence, support for the Indian state gaining greater international prominence, and the allegedly persistent strength of 'Brahmanism'—a term referring to the cultural influence and economic power of some Brahmans, as well as the influence of upper caste norms on other castes. I would suggest that these are inappropriate indices of the extent to which people give primacy to Hindu identity, are intolerant of non-Hindus or engage in Hindu nationalist violence. Some Dalits of Chennai do not represent the people of Tamil Nadu; the Dalits of Tamil Nadu are only marginally involved in Hindu nationalist organisations, and forces other than the Hindu nationalists favour the Indian state gaining international prominence. While Hindu nationalist organisations have promoted festivals like the Vinayaka Chaturthi, many participants in such festivals do not draw sharp boundaries between Hindus and non-Hindus. Public expressions of Hindu religiosity do not necessarily indicate support for Hindu nationalism, nor does a sense of Hindu identity necessarily lead to intolerance of non-Hindus or considerable religious conflict. The growth of broad Hindu nationalist subcultures endowed with significant resources had this effect in some parts of India, but this has happened only to a limited extent in Tamil Nadu.

'Brahmanism' is neither an index nor a cause of Hindu nationalist strength. While Brahmans are among the castes at the forefront of the Hindu nationalist movement around India and especially so in Tamil Nadu, considerable Brahman power in some social spheres coexisted with the weakness of Hindu nationalism in Tamil Nadu through the heyday of the Dravidian parties. On the other hand, assertions of lower and intermediate caste autonomy are directed against upper caste dominance, not Hindu nationalism; and so could coexist with Hindu nationalist strength. Industrialists of Brahman and other castes have been equally active in promoting Hindu religious activities and Hindu nationalist organisations. The involvement of many from upwardly mobile OBCs—especially the Kongu Vellala Gounder, the Mukkulathor and the Nadars—in Hindu nationalist organisations over the last two decades shows that Hindu nationalism has begun to break out of the largely Brahman social enclave it occupied until recently in Tamil Nadu, rather than being the result of a 'new strategy of Brahmanism'. Pandian's explanation of this trend (economic strength leads to 'pan-Indian desire' and thus to Hindu nationalism) ignores the following:

many economically powerful groups across the world have asserted narrower rather than broader identities; and Hindu nationalism is not pan-Indian.

My reading of the empirical evidence, then, suggests that Harriss overestimates Hindu nationalism's influence in Tamil Nadu. In addition, I would suggest that he misunderstands the relationship between the Dravidian parties and Hindu nationalism. Hindu nationalism was impeded for long in Tamil Nadu not by the ideology of the early Dravidian Movement, but by the DMK's construction of cohesive partisan subcultures incorporating networks linking various caste and religious groups. As the DK established only a small foothold in Tamil society, it did not crowd out the political forces it opposed. Besides, Periar placed a section of Tamil Hindus (the OBCs) at the core of the Dravidian community, relegated non-Hindus to its margins, and felt his movement was primarily engaged in reforming Hindu society. This made it possible for Dravidianism to find common ground with Hindu nationalism. This did not happen for long as the norms the DK and the DMK upheld (the autonomous elements in the cultures of the intermediate Tamil castes) were at variance with those the Hindu nationalists promoted (that is, upper caste and Sanskritic norms).

Although the DMK opposed Hindu nationalism until recently, this did not, on its own, impede Hindu nationalism, as other political forces (Congress and the AIADMK) were strong even in the DMK's heyday. Muslims were integral to the DMK's vision of political community, and the DMK built co-operative contact between Hindu OBCs and Muslims (and to a lesser extent Christian OBCs). So, the DMK's major presence inoculated Tamil society against Hindu nationalist growth and the violent religious conflict it brought in its wake elsewhere. It did so most effectively from the 1950s in the party's major strongholds, the northern plains and the Kaveri valley. As the AIADMK was open to Sanskritic culture and upper caste mores, it was more open than the DMK to Hindu nationalism. Although it drew significant support from non-Hindus, the AIADMK did not give them a central role in its social vision and did not promote extensive co-operation across religious boundaries, as was the case with Congress in much of India. So, unlike the DMK, it did not inhibit Hindu nationalism. Rather than a result of ideological regression, the ready coexistence of the AIADMK (and later the DMK too) with Hindu nationalism realised a potential implicit in early Dravidianist discourse.[11]

If Hindu nationalism and religious conflict experienced modest growth since the 1980s, this is crucially because the DMK's links with society and the cohesion of its subcultures declined. So, the DMK could ally itself with the BJP in the elections of 1999 and 2001 without alienating major support groups other than the Muslims. This alliance worked better because upwardly mobile OBCs had become prominent in the support bases of both parties. However, the patterns of growth of Hindu nationalism and religious violence since the 1980s confirms the DMK's role in restricting Hindu nationalism earlier. Such growth has been greatest in regions and among some groups that the DMK did not reach effectively—in the southern and western plains and the Tamiraparani valley, and

among the Mukkulathor, Nadars and Kongu Vellala Gounder. Hindu nationalists are strongest in Kanyakumari district, where the DMK had least influence all along. The only old DMK stronghold where Hindu nationalism has grown significantly is Chennai, a city whose rapid growth through immigration makes earlier solidarities less of a constraint on ongoing mobilisation. While links weakened over the last two decades between the DMK and its old support groups, leading some of them to largely abandon the DMK (notably the Vanniyars, now mainly aligned with the PMK), these groups mostly found alternatives other than Hindu nationalism. These patterns show that the links built through DMK mobilisation still limit Hindu nationalists somewhat despite the erosion of DMK subcultures. The DMK's growing disengagement from society, however, leaves room for Hindu nationalism's future growth.[12]

'Casteism'

Harriss considers the growth of 'casteism' over the last two decades a departure from early Dravidianism's anti-caste discourse. I would suggest that this analysis conflates some distinct phenomena (quotidian caste discrimination, caste-based political competition, caste parties and violent caste conflict), overstates the extent of recent growth in caste-based political competition, and misunderstands the relationships between the Dravidian parties and caste solidarity.

Caste parties were not prominent from the early 1960s to the late 1980s because Congress, the DMK and the AIADMK absorbed most caste groups into their social coalitions. The partial decline of the larger parties created space thereafter for some caste parties, and other small parties like the BJP and the MDMK. Only three of the many caste parties that emerged from 1989 onwards drew significant support—the PMK (among the Vanniyar), Puthiya Tamizhagam (among the Pallar) and the Viduthalai Siruththaikal (among the Paraiyar). These parties polled about 12 per cent of the vote at their most successful—in the 1999 parliamentary elections. The castes they mobilise account for a little over 20 per cent of Tamil Nadu's population. Surveys show that caste influences their voting preferences far more than those of other megacastes, notably the Mukkulathor. The three successful caste parties of Tamil Nadu draw little support outside their primary caste bases, unlike the BSP, the SP and the RJD in northern India. Mass mobilisation is a precondition for electoral success after two generations of Dravidianist mobilisation. Only the above three caste parties were successful because they alone emerged from earlier association to engage in local conflicts and influence preferential policies, and such association led to the alienation of the castes they represent from the major parties. As other caste parties were formed without a previous experience of mobilisation that recast party affiliations, these parties failed.[13]

Caste-based political competition was extensive from the 1960s to the 1980s, and did not increase considerably after 1989 despite the minor resurgence of caste parties. Caste associations were strong in Tamil Nadu in the late colonial

period and grew thereafter. The major parties (Congress, the DMK and the AIADMK) engaged with them far more extensively than with forces mobilising religious groups. The Dravidian parties engaged in different ways with particular megacastes. The DK described the Dravidian community as an aggregate of different castes, and appealed to distinct caste groups. Influenced by visions of the OBCs as an ethnic community, the DMK built multi-caste coalitions through the 1950s and 1960s more by winning over less privileged groups from caste notables than by tapping prior caste solidarities. It did so effectively in its early strongholds (the northern plains and the Kaveri valley), where it grew at the expense of the Vanniyar parties of the 1950s. Where it was weak, the DMK appealed to specific castes (for example, to the Mukkulathor in the southern plains) and alienated others in the process. The AIADMK, whose discourse did not present the OBCs as an ethnic community, associated most with particular castes and caste associations, aiding the growth of caste associations and caste solidarity when it ruled. Rather than reducing the political salience of caste, the Dravidian parties were associated with Tamil Nadu becoming a forerunner in OBC mobilisation.[14]

High OBC mobilisation had no definite implications for everyday caste discrimination (especially the practice of untouchability) and violent caste conflict, both of which varied in extent across Tamil Nadu. Parties were not the main agents in struggles against untouchability. Neither the Dravidian parties nor Congress led struggles against untouchability, although Dravidianist ideologues frequently criticised untouchability and some Congress activists led temple-entry agitations. The communists mobilised Dalits extensively in the Kaveri valley, thereby reducing social restrictions on Dalits, which had been greatest there until the 1940s. The upward mobility of many Dalits contributed to the decline of untouchability in the southern plains and the Tamiraparani valley due to extensive Dalit migration to Southeast Asia. Dalit social power increased least in the western plains, which is a reason why the Dalit caste concentrated there (the Arunthathiyar) did not form a caste party while the state's two other numerous Dalit castes did.

Violent conflict was greater across caste lines than across religious boundaries in Tamil Nadu since decolonisation, mainly pitting some OBCs against Dalits. However, violent caste conflict declined from the 1950s in regions where parties built cohesive multi-caste coalitions or mobilised Dalits against discrimination. The former was the case in the northern plains, where the DMK subcultures linked Vanniyars with many other castes (including some Dalits), resulting in a decline in preexisting Vanniyar-Dalit violence until most Vanniyars de-linked themselves from the DMK in the 1980s. The latter was the case in the Kaveri valley, where communist-led Dalit mobilisation ended the habitual physical punishment of Dalits and reduced the frequency of collective violence against Dalits (though not the extent of violence when it occurred, as it did in Kilavenmani in 1968).

Congress monopolised support among the Nadars and the Dalits until the 1970s and the AIADMK did so from the 1970s to the mid-1990s in the southern plains and the Tamiraparani valley. These parties did not build strong networks linking these groups to the Mukkulathor, the other major caste cluster of these regions, amongst which they enjoyed less support until the 1990s. So, Mukkulathor-Dalit violence was high in these regions through the post-colonial period, and remains so. The DMK leadership's reluctance to condemn such violence is not new either. It avoided protesting the worst post-colonial caste riot of Tamil Nadu which spread from Mudukulathor to a significant part of the southern plains in 1958 because the party prioritised seeking Mukkulathor support although its anti-caste discourse was strong then. The main recent change in caste conflict in the southern plains and the Tamiraparani valley was the greater organisation of the Dalits. The dominant castes did not engage in much collective violence against the relatively quiescent Dalits of the western plains, even while being free to punish some of them.

The political salience of caste in Tamil Nadu often favoured social pluralism or at least did not erode it. This was true of most activities of caste associations and many instances in which parties engaged with specific megacastes; but not when the political salience of caste involved exclusion or violence. Even Dalit organisations that engaged in violence had ambiguous consequences for social pluralism as they helped the Dalits resist the dominance and violence of more powerful castes. Besides, some caste organisations that engaged in violence also participated in negotiations to reinstate peace after periods of violence.

THE DRAVIDIAN PARTIES AND SOCIAL PLURALISM

Harriss contests my finding that the Dravidian parties promoted social pluralism and democracy through the following claims: (i) the recent growth of Hindu nationalism, caste parties and collective violence shows that the Dravidian parties never impeded intolerance and collective violence; (ii) the shift from the DK to the later Dravidian parties diverted the Dravidian Movement from addressing the material and ideological bases of oppression; and (iii) the DMK and the AIADMK had authoritarian features. Elsewhere, he adds another criticism —that (iv) the Dravidianist regimes introduced inadequate socio-economic equality and democratic decentralisation, contrary to the communist regimes of Kerala.[15]

We saw that DMK subcultures inhibited Hindu nationalism and religious conflict until the 1980s because they included strong networks linking religious groups. Hindu nationalism and religious conflict grew slowly thereafter because the cohesion of DMK subcultures declined. Violence and intolerance were greater across caste than across religious lines even during the heyday of the Dravidian parties, though party mobilisation and modest Dalit upward mobility tempered caste violence and intolerance in some parts of Tamil Nadu through this period. Caste violence did not increase considerably in much of Tamil Nadu

over the last two decades. The partial erosion of Dravidianist subcultures was an important reason for its increase in the northern plains since the 1980s. Besides, the DMK and the AIADMK promoted the greater participation and representation of the intermediate and the lower strata, a rich civic life and tolerance far more than the DK did. The considerable authority of the leaders of the DMK and the AIADMK was contingent on their being able to present themselves as exemplars of their party's outlook. This rebuts the first three criticisms.

The fourth and to some extent the third criticism follow from misunderstanding how I define social pluralism—the existence of many active associations significantly autonomous of the state and of one another; and democracy—to denote polities with universal adult franchise, the regular conduct of free elections, the control of popular representatives over public decision-making and respect for civil rights.[16] These definitions are advisedly somewhat minimal as semi-industrialised societies do not easily reach these goals, and the circumstances in which they do so are worth examining. As I conceive them, pluralist democracies may vary considerably in the relations between state institutions (for example, the extent of devolution of administrative authority), state-society relations and party-society interactions (such as the disciplinary mechanisms that constrain social action) and social structures (for instance, the levels of socio-economic inequality). Harriss points to the absence of some outcomes he values, which are not components of pluralist democracy as I define it, and claims on this basis that Tamil Nadu did not witness pluralist democracy.

The following selection provides a sense of my mixed assessment of the Dravidian parties' impact:

> [The] internal pluralism which emerged within the Dravidian parties had its costs. While it reshaped notions of a popular/ethnic community so that they were more inclusive, it did so by making particular constructions of plebeian norms dominant in public culture. Anyone could adopt these norms, whatever their ancestry, but those who were uncomfortable with these norms and the vision of citizenship implicit in them were left with limited room for manoeuvre. They either swallowed their misgivings to retain a significant public voice, or were marginalized.
>
> The Dravidian parties' populist clientelism reached benefits more directly to the intermediate and lower strata, but constricted the autonomy of its beneficiaries. As populism coexisted with internal pluralism in Tamil Nadu, citizens had greater autonomy than they had in regions dominated by populist organizations which lacked internal pluralism. But Dravidianist supporters had to avoid forms of mobilization inimical to the dominant agenda, which promoted social mobility without introducing major changes in property rights. Others were constrained in their efforts to promote alternative agendas by Dravidianist dominance. Not only did

> Dravidian populism restrict efforts to change property rights, it also limited economic growth. It compensated for restricting economic growth and the extent of redistribution only with piecemeal increases in entitlements. Although pluralistic populism increased political participation and enriched civic life, society was unable to reach many of the ends for which it got mobilized. The pluralist dream was realized, yet went sour in many respects.[17]

In my view, Harriss does not engage with this qualified assessment, preferring to place unambiguous stamps (progress/reaction) on political phenomena. Such simplistic stamps do not capture many crucial features of politics.

CAUSALITY

Harriss contests my argument that the organisational pluralism of the Dravidian parties caused social pluralism by pointing out that, in my own assessment, there was some social pluralism in Tamil Nadu before the growth of the Dravidian parties.[18] This argument is based on the logically unsustainable premise that if X precedes Y, Y cannot be the cause for the continuation of X. Although there was some autonomous associational activity in late colonial Tamil Nadu, movements and parties lacking internal pluralism could have undermined social pluralism later, as Hindu nationalism did in Maharashtra and Gujarat, and Sinhala and Tamil nationalism did in Sri Lanka. The rise to dominance of the Dravidian parties, characterised by considerable organisational pluralism from the 1950s to the 1980s, crucially reinforced social pluralism in Tamil Nadu. This path-dependent explanation avoids the historical determinism of many versions of social capital theory, and leaves open the possibility of different future outcomes.[19] It indicates some reasons why social pluralism weakened over the last decade—a decline in the organisational pluralism as well as the influence of the major Dravidian parties and the emergence of new parties, some of which have little internal pluralism.

RECENT TRENDS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

My book did not closely examine the changes of the last decade as its temporal focus ended in the late 1980s. The combined vote share of parties that have emerged since 1989 was 18.1 per cent in 1999 and 24.9 per cent in 2001. These new political forces emerged in response to the diminished social presence of the Dravidian parties and need to be understood in that light. The Dravidian parties' social presence declined more than their combined vote share did (from 67.0 per cent to 62.3 per cent between 1991 and 2001). These parties ceased to be associated with distinctive political visions, and their links with activists and supporters as well as their contributions to civic life weakened. This partly reversed the invigoration of political participation through two decades of

Dravidianist mobilisation. Reflecting this, the voter turnout rate dipped below 60 per cent in 2001 for the first time since the DMK became one of Tamil Nadu's two major parties in 1962. While many of the new parties inhabit particular social niches, the alignments of most voters became more fluid. Political space remains somewhat crowded despite the partial decline of the Dravidian parties, making the rapid growth of new political forces unlikely. I outline these trends in forthcoming work, but they require further research.[20]

study of the outlooks and activities within emergent subcultures is crucial to understand the trajectories of the new political forces. Of these forces, Hindu nationalism and the Dalit parties depart most from earlier currents. Despite their modest growth so far, they have the greatest potential to transform Tamil politics and society. Dalit identity politics especially existed for long at the margins of party competition, although it gained an electoral presence only recently. So, the study of Dalit political impulsions and subaltern variants of Hindu identity politics, in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere, particularly requires the use of oral history and detailed ethnographies, combining the methods of anthropology and history with those of political sociology.

NOTES

1. My primary objective here is to respond to the criticisms raised in the article in this volume, but I also address some other problems in the other pieces Harriss has written that respond to my book, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999). See J.Harriss, 'Populism, Tamil Style. Is It Really a Success?', London School of Economics and Political Science Development Studies Institute Working Paper Series, 00–15 (2001).
2. For rather different critical assessments of my book, readers may refer to reviews by David Ludden and Sanjib Baruah respectively in the *Journal of Asian Studies,* 60/4 (2001), 1232–4; *American Political Science Review,* 95/1 (2001), 229–31.
3. N.Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.
4. My book *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization* elaborates my arguments for the period until the late 1980s; and Subramanian, 'Beyond Ethnicity and Populism? Changes and Continuities in Tamil Nadu's Electoral Map in the 1990s', in P.Wallace and R.Roy (eds.), *India's 1999 Elections and 20th Century Politics* (Delhi: Sage, forthcoming), outlines an understanding of changes through the 1990s. I discussed other recent changes in a talk titled 'The Dravidian Parties: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow', hosted by the Centre for Contemporary Studies, Chennai, India (July 2001).
5. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 37–6.
6. See S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha, *Periyar: Suyamariyaathai Samadharmam* (Coimbatore: Vidiyal Pathippakam, 1996). The title of the last chapter —'Avarthaan Periyar' (He was indeed a Respected Elder/Great One)—reflects the book's engagement in hagiography.

7. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 103–7.
8. Ibid., 101–21, 135 and 149.
9. M.S.S.Pandian, *The Image Trap: M.G. Ramachandran in Film and Politics* (Delhi: Sage, 1992).
10. These and other features of the DMK and the AIADMK are discussed in *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* chs.2, 4, 5 and 6.
11. Ibid., 107–10, 144–8, 202–4, 306–9 and 315–18.
12. Also see Subramanian, 'Beyond Ethnicity and Populism?'
13. The other parties which grew from 1989 onwards engaged in mass mobilisation (BJP, MDMK) or inherited support from their parent parties (TMC (M), MDMK).
14. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 30–31, 103, 138–42, 175–9, 290–92 and 305–6.
15. Harriss, 'Populism, Tamil Style'.
16. Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization,* 3–4.
17. Ibid., 72–3.
18. This is emphasised more in Harriss, 'Populism, Tamil Style'.
19. Historical determinism is evident in the classic statement of social capital theory in R. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
20. Subramanian, 'Beyond Ethnicity and Populism?'

Abstracts

Constitutional Centring: Nation Formation and Consociational Federalism in India and Pakistan, *by Katharine Adeney*

This article examines, elucidates and explains the different processes through which India and Pakistan, products of the same colonial regime and institutional frameworks, attempted to create and 'centre' their 'nations'. Both regimes were concerned with state and nation building, and both were ethnically diverse. The Congress and the Muslim League participated in, and influenced the debates on, constitution formation before independence. In assessing the constitutional preferences before independence, especially the Cabinet Mission Plan, this article supports the revisionist account of partition. Jinnah's preference for centralised consociational accommodation was compatible with a united India, whereas Nehru's preference for a centralised majoritarian federation was not. This article questions Lijphart's argument that India should be understood as a confirming case for consociational theory. A central assumption is that decentring of a nation should not be understood in negative terms but has been a force for stabilisation.

Redrawing the Body Politic: Federalism, Regionalism and the Creation of New States in India, *by Emma Mawdsley*

In 2000 the federal map of India was redrawn to create three new states, signifying a significant shift in the attitude of many of India's major political parties towards territorial reorganisation. This paper suggests that a new era in the political economy of India—associated with economic liberalisation; the rise of the Hindu right; the regionalisation of politics; and the emergence of a coalitional system of government in New Delhi—provides a new 'field of opportunities' for regions demanding state recognition. The paper concludes that, in this matter, the major political parties are driven primarily by expediency and opportunism rather than, as is claimed, by an evaluation of the democratic and developmental potential of smaller states.

The Continuing Struggle for India's Jharkhand: Democracy, Decentralisation and the Politics of Names and Numbers, *by Stuart Corbridge*

The formation of the new states of Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh is testimony to the strength of India's democracy. Power has been decentred and regionalist movements have been accommodated. It is not clear, however, that these formal accomplishments will provide for the empowerment of the adivasi (tribal) populations of Jharkhand. New Delhi and Patna were active over many decades in producing Jharkhand as a detribalising territory, and the new government is insensitive to the demands that poorer households are pressing for improved land rights. It is no coincidence that the successful decentring of the nation that was engineered in 2000 has been accompanied by a rising tide of Naxalism in Jharkhand, and by a turn to non-parliamentary popular movements.

Liberal, Secular Democracy and Explanations of Hindu Nationalism, *by Rajeev Bhargava*

A review of some of the key texts on the rise of Hindu nationalism in India reveals that more attention could be paid to the discursive context in which such politics has to operate. A liberal democratic discourse is a critical part of this context. As long as Hindu nationalists are not in a position to dispense with the language of liberal democracy their political tactics must be justified according to a loose and often distorted interpretation of secular, liberal democracy.

Whatever Happened to Cultural Nationalism in Tamil Nadu? A Reading of Current Events and the Recent Literature on Tamil Politics, *by John Harriss*

The 2001 Tamil Nadu assembly elections were remarkable for the emergence of a number of new political parties and the combination of political parties constituting the two rival electoral alliances. This article analyses the social and political conditions that gave rise to these strange alliances. In doing so the article reflects on the fate of the earliest movement of regional cultural nationalism in India, articulated by the Dravidian Movement, and originally associated with social radicalism. The inability of Dravidian politics to address contemporary anxieties is reflected in the ways in which Tamil politics is now structured by Hindu nationalism, by caste-based politics and by struggles between numerically dominant lower castes and Dalits.

Response to John Harriss, *by S.V.Rajadurai and V.Geetha*

In the context of the fragmentation of party politics and the apparent ideological crisis within the DMK there is a danger that developments favourable to progressive political movements in Tamil Nadu may be overlooked. It is also possible that some observers have overstated the viability of caste-based politics and Hindu nationalism in the state. This article also notes that scholars need to be alert to the sociological ambiguities that lie behind the current turn to identity politics in the state.

Identity Politics and Social Pluralism: Political Sociology and Political Change in Tamil Nadu, *by Narendra Subramanian*

Recent political changes in Tamil Nadu (south India) are best understood with reference to the subcultures associated with the state's major parties, the DMK and the AIADMK. These parties promoted political participation among the intermediate and the lower strata, enriched civic life, built cohesive subcultures which cut across ethnic boundaries, and limited collective violence in Tamil Nadu from the 1960s to the late 1980s. The partial erosion of these Dravidianist subcultures is a crucial reason for the weakening of political participation and civic life, and the modest growth of mobilisation and violence along caste and religious lines since then.

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