# "Development" as State Identity? Locating the State vis-à-vis Development Reality in India

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The postcolonial Indian state has notably projected development-oriented identities. This article interrogates these identities vis-à-vis state realities surrounding the following questions: What are the projected state identities in contemporary India? How have they come to be adopted? Have they unraveled in practice and if so, how and why? What are the contemporary state's realities, and how (mis)aligned are they with projected identities? What consequences does this (mis)alignment hold for development realities?



While one can, and should, question the utility of essentializing the state concept, as well as how to do so meaningfully, much of the popular imagination and scholarly literature speaks to the salience of the postcolonial Indian state.[1] As Rajnarayan Chandavarkar notes, in independent India it was "taken for granted that the direction and guidance of the state was indispensable to the task of dragging India into the modern world."[2] Similarly, Ashis Nandy emphasizes that the state was the "hegemonic actor in the public realm."[3] This article begins by identifying the key development-oriented identities articulated and projected by the contemporary Indian state: economic growth, welfare, and public order. While this appears to be a generic formulation, each of these aspects of projected identity has a distinct grounding in contemporary India.

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The article first explores these identities and briefly traces the postcolonial history that produced them. Next it explores their interconnections, finding tensions across these identities, tensions located in the construction of citizenship and in political contestation in and for the state. The article proceeds to develop an understanding of how politics and society shape the ways in which projected identities are manifested in practice and specifically, how patterns of democratic politics and social dominance produce a different set of identities—those of the "crony capitalist," "clientelist-populist," and "concessionary-repressive" state—in place of the imagined development-oriented state. Finally, the article underlines the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of the state: the salience of each identity, and its translation or mistranslation into development reality, varies with each of its constituent parts.

## Identities Projected by the State: Economic Growth, Welfare, and Public Order

### *The Economic Growth State*

Capitalist economic growth is, and has been for many years, a clear imperative for the Indian state. With macroeconomic policies of liberalization and privatization, the state is undoubtedly a key driver of capitalist economic growth and sees itself as such. The formal industrial and service sectors—as opposed to agriculture or the informal economy across sectors—are privileged in regulatory and fiscal policy, and this specific strategy of economic growth often finds the state and domestic capitalists in common cause.

The postcolonial, economic growth–driven state of the present is built upon a history of twists and turns with three clear phases. Independent India started out emphasizing capital-intensive, state-led, import-substituting industrial growth. Although state action led to a diversified capital-intensive industrial base, the strategy ran into several economic inefficiencies stemming from problems in the regulatory framework, foreign exchange constraints, and weak state capacity to discipline industrial capital.[4] Of political consequence, the import-substitution path did not strengthen employment-generating sectors or sectors engaged in basic needs production for the large rural and urban poor populations. Economic and political opportunities created for those outside of the powerful groups that shaped state policy (e.g., wealthy industrialists, agriculturists, and urban salaried professionals, rather than laboring classes and those in the informal sector) were limited, even as broader sociopolitical developments occurred: democratic widening, decline of patron clientelism, and generally increased expectations from

the state.[5] From the late 1960s, there followed a second phase that foregrounded redistributive concerns for multiple groups, as is evident in state-mediated input provision and market guarantees for farmers and left-wing populist rhetoric embodied in the slogan *garibi hatao* (abolish poverty)—with some, but far from all, of the populist rhetoric reflected in policy outcomes.

The contemporary economic growth-driven state forms the third phase. It can be traced to when redistributive concerns of the 1970s were increasingly joined by economic growth concerns, particularly from the late 1980s onward. The salience of economic growth was influenced by low growth in the previous phase, when there was greater policy attention to populist redistribution, producing mounting fiscal deficit pressures and balance of payments complications.[6] Economic growth was also influenced by the changing global economic environment and ideational change among national elites—who were also influenced by the global economic landscape and discourses—as well as in reaction to India's growth history in early post-independence decades.[7]

The identity of the capitalist economic growth state is articulated through ideas of employment generation and trickle-down growth, along with the notion that market capitalism ultimately benefits consumers as competition diminishes long-term profits.[8] It is also defended through the argument that growth would generate fiscal revenues that the state can use for welfare expenditures.



### *The Welfare State*

The second identity projected by the contemporary Indian state is more directly development-oriented than the first.[9] In the last dozen years, the Indian state has made several socioeconomic entitlements justiciable—including the right to information, employment, forests, education, and food—thereby producing what Sanjay Ruparelia has described as a "new welfare architecture."[10] Previously, in constitutional-legal terms, citizenship was linked to civil liberties and political rights, while socioeconomic entitlements for positive liberties were separated from the notion of citizenship.[11] The legislation of welfare rights is a reflection of the failure of macro-institutional government accountability mechanisms (i.e., the political right to vote, bureaucratic implementation and monitoring, and judicial oversight). This is especially true given the growing inequality in the face of democratic widening and increasing pressures from civil society organizations, judicial activism, and social movements.[12]

There has also been an expansion in the ambit of who "does" governance to include a variety of organizations and social groups in what Neera Chandhoke describes as "pluralization" of the state, consistent with—and partly influenced

by—global good governance and new public management agendas.[13] Today, NGOs, business groups, and citizens are drawn into the ambit of formulating and implementing public policies and development programs. The influence of corporate capital is reflected in the greater involvement of large corporations through corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes. NGOs have become key actors in such network governance and are seen by technocrats as efficient at local service delivery.[14] These changes are couched in participatory rhetoric, reflected in the 1990s decentralization of government authority, ostensibly to empower rural and urban local self-government and activate institutions of direct democracy.

The welfare identity is articulated through legislation of socioeconomic rights in parliament (accompanying formal implementation procedures by the executive) and the formulation and implementation of a plethora of development *yojanas* (schemes). Both rights legislation and yojanas involve fiscal outlays and the creation of bureaucratic procedures for implementation. The involvement of different actors (e.g., NGOs, businesses, and decentralized governments) projects the state's interest in widening participation around development activities and improving implementation capacity.



## *The Public Order State*

The third and last identity projected by the contemporary Indian state is that of public order. Maintenance of public order is a classic state function, including regular policing and safeguarding of "internal security" against threats faced by the country.[15] Both aspects of state identity have a strong presence in India. India inherited—and maintained—a colonial policing system where, according to Chandavarkar, the "primary concern remained the maintenance of the irredeemably fragile political order."[16] The state took a tough stance on internal security, especially since India has had several insurgencies producing spiraling violence—such as in Punjab and Kashmir—in addition to multiple complex insurgencies in several northeast states, all met with a draconian state response. For instance, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Acts allow militarization of policing and curbing of civil liberties in "disturbed areas," and have produced a long history of human rights abuses.[17] In recent years, the internal security issue of greatest concern for the state's identity project has arguably been the Naxalite/Maoist movement, also considered an insurgency.[18] Recognizing the threat to public order—stemming from the threat primarily to its economic growth state identity, but also its welfare state identity—the state has followed a counterinsurgency strategy of militarization accompanied by some development yojanas.

In sum, the public order identity is articulated through the law and order machinery of the state, and in particular, the presence of policing and communication around it, as well as covert or overt military presence in regions judged to be threats to internal security.

## Democratic Politics, Social Dominance, and the State

To trace how these three development-oriented state identities play out in practice, it is important to first understand the nature of democratic politics and social dominance around which the Indian state exists, since together these factors shape the relationship of the state to development in practice. The nature of democratic politics and social dominance in India are thus briefly described below.

### *Democratic Politics*

Democratic politics in India has two important strands: party politics and movement politics. Consider first the nature of party politics. A spurt of democratic widening occurred in the late 1960s when there was a power struggle between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her rivals in the dominant Congress Party.[19] The power struggle was resolved with the exit of powerful state leaders, eventually leading to more competitive politics. Indira Gandhi adopted populist strategies and what Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph label "plebiscitary politics" to directly sway voters, with concomitant democratic widening.[20] The last three decades have seen what Yogendra Yadav terms a "democratic upsurge."[21] For instance, ethnic parties have attained success especially in the Hindi heartland, as many mobilizing lower/middle castes have emerged from the core of an earlier socialist formation (the Janata Party). This democratic upsurge was not about liberal notions of accountability or what Sanjay Ruparelia describes as "transcendent emancipatory politics," but rather an intensification of the demand polity where political mobilization in India's democracy was for greater access to political power and economic resources.[22]

Next, consider movement politics. Outside of party mobilization are what Rajni Kothari has described as "non-party political formations," which have become increasingly restive and influential. These include, for instance, movements for civil liberties represented by organizations such as the People's Union for Civil Liberties, struggles around displacement (e.g., the Narmada Bachao Andolan), multiple caste movements with different approaches (e.g., the radical Dalit Panthers and Kanshi Ram's organization of government employees), regional

movements (e.g., Telangana and Jharkhand movements), and people's science/environmental movements (e.g., Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad or KSSP).[23] According to Aparna and Nandini Sundar, these sociopolitical movements suggest the presence of a "deep republican impulse," especially from populations who see that "their rights as citizens are being violated."[24] As I argue later, movement politics generated resistance to specific actions of the state ostensibly made in the name of public order but which produced accusations of exploitation.

### *Social Dominance*

By social dominance, I refer to what Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao describe as "the exercise of authority in society by groups who achieved politico-economic superiority."[25] Two aspects of social dominance are relevant for exploring how projected state identities turned out in practice, which I label "macro-" and "micro-" level social dominance. Consider the macro level first. Although the Indian Constitution presents a formulation for a modern nation-state based on liberal democratic values, Weberian bureaucratic architecture, and most importantly, autonomy from society, specific dominant socioeconomic groups have compromised that autonomy at the macro level.[26] Scholarship has explored this assumed autonomy, particularly in relation to dominant classes.[27] Pranab Bardhan has proposed a political settlement model with three dominant classes—industrial capitalists, rich farmers, and the bureaucracy and salaried professionals—whose interests state powers cater to.[28] This makes for what Rudolph and Rudolph describe as a "weak/strong state" that has some autonomy through the class coalition settlement but that is also tied down through that compromise.[29]

Consistent with this, although articulated differently, Sudipta Kaviraj invokes Gramscian "passive revolution" to argue that the settlement restrained India's modernizing industrial capitalists from fully bending the state to their interests.[30] Post-liberalization, this coalition was upset decisively in favor of industrial capitalists.[31] The previous characterization, as well as the later one, is a far cry from the "embedded autonomy" of the classic "developmental state" exemplified by East Asian examples, where the state was autonomous enough to discipline capital even though it had ties to it.[32]

Micro-level social dominance refers to local patterns of social hierarchy—whose specifics can vary from one locality to another—which typically bring together material wealth and access to productive resources with high ritual status in the social hierarchy. The sociologist M.N. Srinivas developed the concept of the "dominant caste" to describe the underlying confluence of local economic, social, and political power.[33] Such micro-level social dominance is also related to

clientelism, where patrons hold asymmetrical power relations over poor clients through the patrons' social dominance or economic monopoly.[34] Further, as Vernon Hewitt notes, "while the state does not structure these particular hierarchies, it provides institutional and procedural forms of governance…that caste and jati [sub-caste] can use to improve their economic status."[35] In democratic clientelist arrangements, politicians and voters exchange particularistic benefits for votes, typically through brokers.[36] For instance, Anirudh Krishna describes brokers in Rajasthan who influence the local state on behalf of clients, who in turn deliver clients' votes to politicians.[37] This is the space of voter linkages for subaltern groups, such as slum dwellers in the "political society" described by Partha Chatterjee.[38] As I will argue later in greater depth, micro-level social dominance, when translated into clientelism as discussed above, compromises the implementation and welfare impact of development activities.

The nature of democratic politics and social dominance in India, described above, has transformed the projected state identities into very different state realities.

## Mismatch Between Projected Identities and State Realities



The nature of democratic politics and social dominance in India, described above, has transformed the projected state identities into very different state realities—the economic growth identity has yielded to a "crony capital" reality; the welfare identity to a "clientelist-populist" reality; and the public order identity to a "concessionary-repressive" reality—with important implications for development.[39] Below, I explore the identity-reality mismatch for each form of identity in turn.

### *The Reality of the Economic Growth Identity: The Crony Capital State*

To understand the identity-reality mismatch for the contemporary economic growth identity, it is useful to follow the distinction made by Dani Rodrik and Arvind Subramanian between "pro-market" and "pro-business" orientations of the state.[40] A pro-market orientation encourages new entrants into economic markets and generates competition that benefits consumers. A pro-business orientation, such as in South Korea in the 1980s, favors incumbent big business by raising profitability through easing corporate taxes and price/capacity regulations. Although the projected identity is one of pro-market idealism, in

reality Indian economic policy has had a pro-business orientation. This is partly due to considerable resistance from many incumbent capitalists to pro-market economic reforms.[41] Further, crony capital has a large presence in today's economic growth state. In practice, the pro-business orientation and crony capital lead to rent-seeking and corruption through the nexus between crony capital and the politicians/bureaucrats controlling government.[42] Arguably, this has depressed the growth rate in comparison to expectations based on the projected (pro-market) economic growth identity.

Two other factors, derived from India's democratic politics, have also circumscribed economic growth. Official discourse emphasizes the excesses of demand politics, which produce growth-dampening patronage/subsidies, as a "political constraint" on growth.[43] Further, wherever movement politics is strong, it stalls privatization and the loosening of environmental and labor regulations. Since such deregulation would have benefited crony capital and increased growth in the short term, the capital-friendly state also perceives movement politics as a growth constraint. However, deregulation to benefit crony capital, particularly the lowering of environmental and labor standards, can hardly be considered development-friendly in the first place.



Nevertheless, official estimates suggest that the goal of economic growth is being satisfied to some extent. Some have argued that this is important for generating fiscal revenues to support welfare state activities.[44] Despite this, the reality of the crony capital state has generated concerns of "jobless growth," agrarian distress, increased informalization of labor, and fragmentation of collective action possibilities for labor, suggesting alarming inequalities associated with the realities of this specific economic growth model.[45]

In short, the specifics of macro-level social dominance and populist democratic politics have transformed the projected economic growth identity into the reality of the crony capital state: dominant big business and crony capital receive considerable rents through economic regulation by the state, and populist politics fritters away fiscal expenditures that could have gone to job-creating, growth-enhancing activities.

### *The Reality of the Welfare Identity: The Clientelist-Populist State*

There is little doubt that India's development reality is at considerable odds with the state's projected welfare state identity. Why is this the case? To start with, note that the capitalist economic growth identity and the welfare state identity stand in classical antinomy. This is reflected, for instance, in reduced public emphasis on the social sector in relative terms in the era of the economic growth state.[46] In

Indian conditions, the capital-led state engages in some welfare activities partly because such activities are a reluctant price to pay for the pursuit of growth. Consistent with this, using Foucault's concept of governmentality, Chatterjee argues that the welfare state identity is a political project adopted to partially reverse the effects of primitive accumulation (displacement of lands and traditional livelihoods).[47] Democratic widening, electoral pressures, and new expectations of state practice ensure that such a reversal is "a necessary political condition for the continued rapid growth of corporate capital."[48] If the crony capital state only reluctantly concedes to welfare activities, it follows that the formulation and implementation of such activities are inevitably compromised. The state does not want to tackle underlying structural constraints, for instance, through land reforms and asset redistribution, that could directly hurt dominant class interests. Tackling these would require far greater ideological intent and a different type of embedded autonomy—partially present in a few regions such as Kerala and West Bengal, where a programmatic leftist governing party with organizational penetration particularly in rural areas has been able to partially neutralize socially dominant groups and implement land reforms and some welfare projects.[49] As Jos Mooij notes, this can account for "the inability to allocate sufficient resources, and indifference and mismanagement during implementation…[since] it is the gesture of reaching out that may be enough, rather than the outcomes in terms of social development, welfare, or expenditure levels."[50]

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A second reason for the subversion of the welfare identity in practice has to do with the specific nature of populism, from democratic politics, and clientelism, from social dominance, associated with the state. As discussed previously, democratic widening and demand politics increase the pressures toward populism, which, as Akhil Gupta notes, is the "medium in which the discourses and practices of development are conveyed."[51] The literature traces this to Indira Gandhi's electoral strategy—following her rift with other political leaders of the dominant Congress Party in the late 1960s—of centralized left-wing populism (e.g., bank nationalization, and anti-poverty rhetoric and policies) to attract voters away from their traditional ties with her rivals. Such fiscal populism, while ostensibly directed at the poor, nevertheless went disproportionately to middle-income socioeconomic groups because they were better organized in

expressing their demands. For instance, in the 1970s, and particularly by the 1980s, middle-caste farmers with medium-sized landholdings became an important political constituency to which governments hastened to provide benefits such as guaranteed markets and subsidized credit and inputs.[52] Until then, large-scale benefits had flowed only to the dominant class coalition, particularly its urban constituents. The widening of the demand polity, success of regional and ethnic parties, and economic diversification brought in other demand groups. The government responded to demand group pressures by ramping up fiscal expenditures and borrowing to account for increasing fiscal deficits.[53]

Despite the presence of fiscal populism, state-society relations have also been characterized by considerable degrees of clientelism. Clientelist deal-making activities, dependent on micro-level social dominance, provide access to state institutions for a large population and occur outside formal Weberian rules of state.[54] India's experience suggests that it is not inconsistent for clientelism to operate simultaneously with populism. For instance, Jeffrey Witsoe observes that, until the 1990s, traditional elite landowning castes in Bihar continued to be influential "despite Indira Gandhi's populism…through control of the very welfare schemes that were meant to end rural poverty."[55] These welfare yojanas were designed for segmented development domains and for different socioeconomic groups constructed by policymakers—such as marginal farmers, BPL (Below Poverty Line) households, tribal groups, and so on.[56] Despite their formulation as targeted and non-discretionary, these yojanas became clientelist in implementation, considerably circumscribing their welfare impact.[57]



Related to the clientelist-populist state explanation for the mismatch between projected welfare state identity and development reality is the depoliticized nature of the projected welfare identity itself. While CSR connects directly with governmentality, much NGO activity—which depends on government, CSR, and related funds—is also traceable to similar approaches. The state allows businesses (CSR), NGOs, and others to perform state development activities, and such franchising of the state depoliticizes development and obscures structural inequalities.[58] For instance, Vasudha Chhotray observes that participatory watershed development policy in the 1990s sought to create local citizens' committees based on the problematic assumption that locality is "a self-sufficient, harmonious entity, unstratified by factors such as landownership and caste relations."[59] When this depoliticized identity confronts politics in practice, including the politics inherent in hierarchical social relations, together they shape a different development reality. In the face of weak subaltern resistance, local capture and corruption can ensue—and even if there is what Witsoe describes

as a "'democratization' of corruption," it thwarts yojana success, welfare rights implementation, and effective decentralization.[60] This produces what Patrick Heller and Vijayendra Rao describe as an "undercapacitated citizenship" which "conflates the status of citizenship (a bundle of rights) with the practice of citizenship."[61] By contrast, when the welfare state identity confronts a relatively progressive, subaltern politics, the resulting development reality is likely to be far more sanguine, as happened in Kerala.

In short, the specifics of micro- and macro-level social dominance and populist democratic politics have transformed the projected welfare identity into the reality of the clientelist-populist state. The dominance of capital limits substantive interest in welfare; populist politics fritters away fiscal expenditures that could have gone to development activities; and micro-level clientelism thwarts effective implementation of planned development activities that constitute the projected welfare identity.

Why has democratic politics failed to actualize the welfare state identity? Although democratic widening has produced a broadening spread of benefits such as state subsidies, as Witsoe notes this is at best a "mediated empowerment," rather than an emancipatory one, since the clientelist-populist state reinforces dependency on the state.[62] And democratic widening has still not had substantial impacts on large marginalized populations—particularly some Dalit and several Adivasi groups—which, Chatterjee argues, are "unable to gain access to the mechanisms of political society."[63] Further, progressive subaltern political movements over citizenship rights are still not widespread and are often propped up by urban middle-class activists, producing challenges of translating what Ruparelia believes are "moral claims and legal instruments into vernacular social imaginaries that arouse deeper popular attachments."[64]

The specifics of micro- and macro-level social dominance and populist democratic politics have transformed the projected welfare identity into the reality of the clientelist-populist state



### *The Reality of the Public Order Identity: The Concessionary-Repressive State*

In the case of the public order identity, there is perhaps an even bigger mismatch between projection and reality. A continuous failure of policing has been its non-interference in relatively invisibilized forms of violence that emanate from structural inequalities. This has been true for a large set of hate crimes, both

in the public sphere (caste and religious atrocities) and in the private sphere (domestic violence), as well as violence against the poor.[65] The circumstances of democratic widening, agrarian change, and asymmetric economic growth have together increased state-society and intergroup tensions, particularly along class and caste lines over the decades, making it harder for the official law and order machinery to maintain public order even when the tensions have spilled into visible violence. From the 1970s, the turn toward personal rule and deinstitutionalization of the police, judiciary, bureaucracy, and media created what Atul Kohli has described as a "growing crisis of governability."[66] In many instances, the state has either condoned group violence or actively been complicit in it for reasons of ideology and divisive politics for electoral gains.[67] This further erodes the perception of the state as an unbiased actor that maintains public order.

There is a further aspect to the mismatch. I argued above that the state negotiates many popular democratic demands through favorable populist fiscal responses manifested as development yojanas and implemented in a clientelist manner. The state is embedded in social hierarchies in such a way that the mechanics of government action for the provision of individual-level "benefits"—whether as a result of the politics of patronage or of struggles over citizenship rights—are almost universally clientelistic. However, some political demands, especially from non-party political formations, cannot easily be met with provision of individual-level benefits such as subsidized rice or income/caste certificates for claims on other subsidies. Consider, for instance, the 1970s environmental activism spearheaded by KSSP around the protection of Kerala's Silent Valley biosphere from a state hydroelectric project.[68] The state eventually conceded to the demands of this environmental and political movement. Another example is the ongoing Maoist insurgency in central India, where the state has sought to combine militarization with development yojanas without conceding to movement demands. These are instances of political demands that can be satisfied only through collective-level political concessions by the state: giving up the hydroelectric project for environmental preservation in the first case and giving up exploitative capital-led mining projects in the second. For such political demands, the yojana route (state provision of individual benefits that reduces to clientelism) is insufficient. The state either concedes (as in the KSSP case) or does not concede (as in the Maoist case). And if it does not concede, and cannot resolve political demands through yojanas, it turns to repression—in the Maoist case, in fact, even repression through militarization.[69] This is the "concessionary-repressive state," and it operates for political demands where the clientelist-populist state cannot operate.

In short, the specifics of micro- and macro-level social dominance and democratic politics have transformed the projected public order identity into the reality of the concessionary-repressive state. Micro-level dominance compromises unbiasedness in policing, and political movements fight to extract concessions in the name of freedom and justice from macro-level dominant groups that seek to repress them.

It must be said, however, that the mismatch between state identity and the development reality described above, across the three different identities, is far from absolute. In this, as in many other things, India's development reality is frustratingly difficult to characterize. As Fuller and Harriss note, "even the poor, low-status and weak can sometimes benefit from their own adequately competent manipulation of political and administrative systems."[70] Stuart Corbridge and his coauthors offer the caution that new citizenship spaces are indeed being created and that "we should not assume that claims on behalf of good governance are 'mere' rhetoric, however much these phrases are cheapened by misuse."[71]

## Conclusion

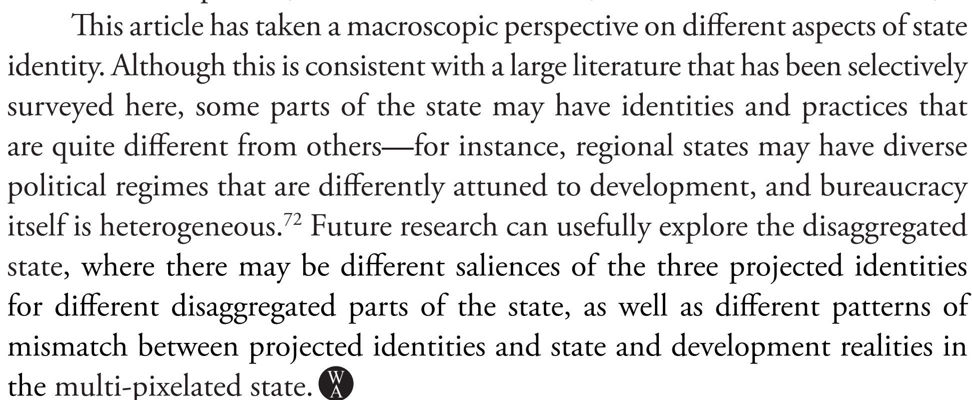
The title of this article asks whether "development" is indeed the identity of the Indian state. The article has explored the three central, development-oriented identities projected by the postcolonial Indian state. The first is economic growth through capital-led market expansion that could, in principle, create jobs and reduce poverty. The second is welfare through implementation of rights to socioeconomic entitlements and involvement of a range of actors (NGOs, decentralized governments, businesses) for purposes of service delivery for development. The third is public order through Weberian policing and maintenance of internal security against threats to the state. The specifics of these projected identities, and their relative salience, have themselves changed over the last few decades, partly in response to perceived impacts of state identities and practices on development realities.



This article has argued that the practical realities of state action have diverged from the state's projected identities and emphasized the centrality of democratic politics and social dominance in explaining this divergence. The economic growth identity was transformed by the actions of rent-seeking, dominant big business into the crony capital state. Furthermore, populist politics diverted fiscal expenditures to non-growth activities. The welfare identity was transformed into the clientelist-populist state by the operation of populist politics to divert fiscal expenditures to non-development activities and the presence of clientelism, which prevents effective implementation of development

plans. All of this reality was spanned by the reluctance of the capital-led state to engage in welfare activities. The public order identity was transformed into the concessionary-repressive state by the conflict between exploitative dominant groups and resistant political movements.

The original contribution of this article is in characterizing the development-oriented identities projected by the state, providing a conceptual explanation for how these identities have been subverted in practice, and characterizing the resulting state realities. Given the macroscopic nature of the argument, the three signifiers of projected identity (economic growth, welfare, public order) and the three signifiers of state reality (crony capital, clientelist-populist, concessionary-repressive) are advanced as convenient descriptive labels, with the knowledge that they can only imperfectly encompass the broad underlying phenomena. However, so characterizing the two sets of signifiers has enabled the article to trace the conceptual links that produce specific state realities from projected identities. These conceptual links from identities to realities were achieved through tracing the role of democratic politics (party electoral politics and movement politics) and social dominance (macro-level and micro-level).



This article has taken a macroscopic perspective on different aspects of state identity. Although this is consistent with a large literature that has been selectively surveyed here, some parts of the state may have identities and practices that are quite different from others—for instance, regional states may have diverse political regimes that are differently attuned to development, and bureaucracy itself is heterogeneous.[72] Future research can usefully explore the disaggregated state, where there may be different saliences of the three projected identities for different disaggregated parts of the state, as well as different patterns of mismatch between projected identities and state and development realities in the multi-pixelated state.



## Notes

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2. Rajnarayan S. Chandavarkar, "Customs of Governance: Colonialism and Democracy in Twentieth Century India," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 3 (2007): 462.
3. Ashis Nandy, "The Political Culture of the Indian State," *Daedalus* 118, no. 4 (1989): 2.
4. Dani Rodrik and Arvind Subramanian, "From 'Hindu growth' to Productivity Surge: The Mystery of the Indian Growth Transition," *IMF Staff Papers* 52, no. 2 (2005): 193–228; Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya, *Why Growth Matters: How Economic Growth in India Reduced Poverty and the Lessons for Other*

*Developing Countries* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013); Vivek Chibber, "Reviving the Developmental State? The Myth of the 'National Bourgeoisie,'" *Socialist Register* 41, no. 41 (2009): 144–65.

5. Pranab Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947–1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). The concept of patron clientelism is discussed later in the text, in the context of micro-level social dominance.

6. Bimal Jalan, *India's Economic Crisis: The Way Ahead* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991).

7. Rahul Mukherji, "Is India a Developmental State?," in *The Asian Developmental State*, ed. Yin-Wah Chu (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 217–36. Initially, macroeconomic reform involved what Rob Jenkins calls "stealth" tactics, but the reforms were mainstreamed over time. See: Rob Jenkins, *Democratic Politics and Economic Reform in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

8. Atul Kohli, "Politics of economic growth in India, 1980–2005 (Part II: The 1990s and beyond)," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 14 (2006): 1361–70.

9. Here "welfare state" is used to refer to an aspirational, projected identity of the state, though the term is typically used in the literature to refer to substantive social democratic welfare regimes. See, for instance: Gøsta Esping-Anderson, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

10. Sanjay Ruparelia, "India's new rights agenda: Genesis, promises, risks," *Pacific Affairs* 86, no. 3 (2013): 569–90. The rights legislation consists of the following: Right to Information Act (RTI) of 2005; National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005, renamed Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in 2009; Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 (officially, Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers [Recognition of Forest Rights] Act); Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 (officially, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act); Right to Food Act of 2013 (officially, National Food Security Act).

11. Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Citizenship and Its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

12. The argument is that the welfare state identity was partly constructed through democratic widening and political contestation for citizenship rights by those outside the dominant class coalition, and in the face of the depoliticizing economic growth orientation of the state. Examples include the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad. The contribution of these organizations to democratic politics is discussed later on in the text. For an overview, see: Amita Baviskar, "Social Movements," in *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India*, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 381–90; Mary Katzenstein, Smitu Kothari, and Uday Mehta, "Social Movement Politics in India: Institutions, Interests, and Identities," in *The Success of India's Democracy* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 242–69.



13. Neera Chandhoke, "Governance and the Pluralisation of the State: Implications for Democratic Citizenship," *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 28 (2003): 2957–68.

14. Sangeeta Kamat, "The NGO Phenomenon and Political Culture in the Third World," *Development* 46, no. 1 (2003): 88–93.

15. Commission on Centre-State Relations (Punchhi Commission), *Report of the Commission on Centre-State Relations, Volume V: Internal Security, Criminal Justice, and Centre-State Cooperation* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2010), 5; cited by: Sarah J. Watson and C. Christine Fair, "India's Stalled Internal Security Reforms," *India Review* 12, no. 4 (2013): 280–99.

16. Chandavarkar, "Customs of governance," 457.

17. Nivedita Menon and Aditya Nigam, *Power and Contestation: India Since 1989* (New York: Zed Books, 2007).

18. A decade ago, the prime minister declared that "the problem of Naxalism is the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country." See: "Maoists gravest threat to security, says PM," *Gulfnews.com*, April 14, 2006, http://m.gulfnews.com/maoists-gravest-threat-to-security-says-pm-1.232871?utm_referrer. For more on the perceived Maoist threat, see: Nandini Sundar, "Mimetic sovereignties, precarious citizenship: state effects in a looking-glass world," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 41, no. 4 (2014): 469–90.

19. Frankel, *India's Political Economy*.

20. Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the*

*Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 137.

21. Yogendra Yadav, "Understanding the Second Democratic Upsurge: Trends of Bahujan Participation in Electoral Politics in the 1990s," in *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*, ed. Francine R. Frankel et al. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 120–45.

22. Ruparelia, "India's New Rights Agenda," 581; Pratap Bhanu Mehta and Michael Walton, "Ideas, Interests and the Politics of Development Change in India: Capitalism, Inclusion and the State," (ESID working paper 36, 2014); For the origin of the term "demand polity," see: Rudolph and Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi*. For the origin of the term "patronage democracy," see: Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

23. Rajni Kothari, *State Against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance* (New Delhi: Ajantha Publishers, 1988).

24. Aparna Sundar and Nandini Sundar, "The Habits of the Political Heart: Recovering Politics from Governmentality," in *Re-framing Democracy and Agency in India: Interrogating Political Society*, ed. Ajay Gudavarthy (New Delhi: Anthem Press, 2014), 271.

25. Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao, "Introduction," in *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, ed. Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 2.

26. Sudipta Kaviraj, "On the Enchantment of the State: Indian Thought on the Role of the State in the Narrative of Modernity," *European Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 2 (2005): 263–96. Max Weber famously described modern state bureaucracies in terms of rule-bound, systemic, instrumental rationality. See: Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 956–1005.

27. For a recent review of this literature, see: Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, "Social Character of the Indian State: A Survey of Current Trends," in *The Indian State Political Science Series: Volume 1*, ed. Samir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 53–78.

28. Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India*.

29. Rudolph and Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi,* 9.



30. Sudipta Kaviraj, "A Critique of the Passive Revolution," *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, no. 45/47 (1988), 2429–44.

31. Partha Chatterjee, "Democracy and Economic Transformation in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 16 (2008): 53–62; Akhil Gupta and Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan, "Introduction: The State in India after Liberalization," in *The State in India After Liberalization: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Akhil Gupta and Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 1–28. This is not to deny that non-metropolitan, non-corporate capital is also important. See: Carol Upadhya, "Social and Cultural Strategies of Class Formation in Coastal Andhra Pradesh," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 31, no. 2 (1997): 169–93.

32. For articulation of the concepts of "embedded autonomy" and "developmental state," see: Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Chalmers Johnson, "The Developmental State: Odyssey of a Concept," in *The Developmental State*, ed. Meredith Woo-Cumings (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1999), 32–60. For a delineation of East Asian examples, see: Robert Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

33. M.N. Srinivas, *The Dominant Caste and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

34. Amit Bhaduri, "A Study in Agricultural Backwardness Under Semi-Feudalism," *Economic Journal* 83, no. 329 (1973): 120–37.

35. Vernon Hewitt, *Political Mobilisation and Democracy in India: States of Emergency* (London: Routledge, 2007), 68.

36. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, "Citizen-politician Linkages: An Introduction," in *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2007), 1–49. Many other names are used for brokers: *dalal*s, *pyraveerkar*s, middlemen, fixers, and so on.

37. Anirudh Krishna, *Active Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Democracy and Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

38. Chatterjee, "Democracy and economic transformation."

39. These hyphenated identity labels are admittedly unaesthetic, but they convey the odd hybridities and dichotomies inherent in each description.

40. Rodrik and Subramanian, "Hindu Growth," 195.

41. Jenkins, *Democratic Politics and Economic Reform*; Kohli, "Politics of Economic Growth."

42. Mehta and Walton, "Ideas, Interests and Politics."

43. Ministry of Finance, *Economic Survey 2015–16* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2016), 37.

44. Bhagwati and Panagariya, *Why Growth Matters*.

45. Supriya RoyChowdhury, "Old Classes and New Spaces: Urban Poverty, Unorganised Labour and New Unions," *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 50 (2003): 5277–84.

46. Jos Mooij and S. Mahendra Dev, "Social Sector Priorities: An Analysis of Budgets and Expenditures in India in the 1990s," *Development Policy Review* 22, no.1 (2004): 97–120.

47. Chatterjee, "Democracy and Economic Transformation." Governmentality refers to the motivations and practices of the state for regulating the population, conceiving its welfare, and producing citizens that conform to its expectations and policies. See: Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

48. Chatterjee, "Democracy and economic transformation," 61 (emphasis in the original).

49. Atul Kohli, *State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); V.K. Ramachandran, "On Kerala's Development Achievements," in *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, ed. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 205–356; Peter Evans and Patrick Heller "Human Development, State Transformation and the Politics of the Developmental State," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State*, ed. Stephan Leibfried et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 691–713.

50. Jos Mooij, "Is There an Indian Policy Process? An Investigation Into Two Social Policy Processes," *Social Policy & Administration* 41, no. 4 (2007): 323–38.

51. Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 34.



52. Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

53. Jalan, *India's Economic Crisis*.

54. Mehta and Walton, "Ideas, Interests and Politics." See also: Rodrik and Subramanian, "From 'Hindu Growth' to Productivity Surge," 193–228; Bhagwati and Panagariya, *Why Growth Matters*; Chibber, "Reviving the Developmental State?," 144–65.

55. Jeffrey Witsoe, "Everyday Corruption and the Political Mediation of the Indian state," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47, no. 6 (2012): 51.

56. Kuldeep Mathur, "Politics and Implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, no. 41/42 (1995): 2703–08.

57. Mooij, "Is There an Indian Policy Process?," 323–38.

58. Kamat, "The NGO phenomenon."

59. Vasudha Chhotray, "The 'Anti-politics Machine' in India: Depoliticisation through local institution building for participatory watershed development," *Journal of Development Studies* 43, no. 6 (2007): 1041.

60. Witsoe, "Everyday Corruption," 52. It has also been pointed out that the internal logics and practices in India's sprawling bureaucracy are not consistent with projected welfare state identity; Yamini Aiyar and Michael Walton, "Rights, Accountability and Citizenship: Examining India's Emerging Welfare State" (*Accountability Initiative Working Paper*, New Delhi, 2014)

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62. Witsoe, "Everyday Corruption," 53.

63. Chatterjee, "Democracy and economic transformation," 61; Menon and Nigam, *Power and Contestation*.

64. Ruparelia, "India's New Rights Agenda," 588. Note that this section in the text does not discuss

sclerosis in the public order state because that has been explored in the earlier description of the concessionary-repressive state.

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69. Sundar, "Mimetic sovereignties."

70. Fuller and Harriss, "For an anthropology of the modern Indian state," 25.

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