Why Has "Development" Become a Political Issue in Indian Politics?

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Most observers of India have an implicit model of how Indians vote.[1] They assume that voters in India act on their primary identities, such as caste or community, and that parties seek votes based on group identities—called vote banks—that can be collated into majorities and coalitions. K.C. Suri articulates the logic of this dominant model:

> People of this country vote more on the basis of emotional issues or primordial loyalties, such as caste, religion, language or region and less on the basis of policies. The victory or defeat of a party depends on how a party or leaders marshal support by appealing to these sentiments or forge coalitions of groups and parties based on these feelings. People of India, unlike in the West, do not think and act as classes, and they vote for the party or leader they think their own, regardless of its or his policies.[2]

Scholarship on India has accumulated strong evidence that elections are permeated by caste, language, religion, and identity politics.[3] The prominence of parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul

Muslimeen (AIMIM), organized around Dalits and Muslims respectively, seems to confirm this dominant model. India also has many regional parties, such as DMK, AIADMK, and AGP.[4] The two major parties—the Congress Party and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—also constantly seek to signal religious, caste-driven, and identity-based ideas and policies at the local level in an effort to garner political power. Similarly, intermediate and discriminated caste groups mobilize around caste identity to seek political representation.

Some recent examples confirm that caste logic is still important. On 6 July 2015, in the western state of Gujarat, Hardik Patel, a young (21 years old) unknown leader, began an agitation challenging both reservations for backward groups and demanding the inclusion of Patidars (a dominant farmer caste group in Gujarat) in the larger "other backward castes" (OBC) list.[5] Simultaneously, in August 2015, a rally organized by the Patels (a dominant farming caste) of Gujarat led to caste riots. More recently, as of February 2016, violence instigated by the Jats (a farming caste) of Haryana led to approximately 30 deaths and 170 injuries in Haryana and Delhi.[6] Even Delhi's water supply was affected by the violence for a week. Shops and malls were set on fire, and rampaging rioters roamed the streets. Jats, a powerful and wealthy caste, wanted to be categorized as an OBC, thus granting them eligibility for reservations in government jobs and colleges. The recently concluded Assam elections of 2016 emphasized a form of identity politics organized around the plight of a *Khilonjia*—an original inhabitant of Assam. This politics, grounded in an aversion to migrants from Bangladesh, and the need for Assam to focus on the identity of the "original Assamese," may be the key to understanding why BJP won by a landslide in Assam in 2016.[7]

Yet countervailing tendencies are also apparent. During the general elections of 2014, Delhi elections of 2013 and 2015, and the Bihar election of 2015, party officials, media outlets, and voters all debated development and related issues. Economic growth, employment, and access to public goods such as infrastructure, electricity, education, and healthcare have started to dominate electoral discourse and political discussions in India. How can we understand this apparent shift in Indian political economy? Why has Indian political discourse moved away from caste and identity politics to incorporate development issues?[8]

> Editors of the English press argue that current Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government should reenergize economic growth and ensure fiscal stability.

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Perhaps the first question we need to address is: what is development and how do different stakeholders in India view it? Bloggers, economists, and editors of the English press argue that current Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government should reenergize economic growth and ensure fiscal stability.[9] These development narratives look outward to global aspirations of being a rising power that India's high growth rate has helped propel. The Western-oriented middle class' circulation of these ideas is partly driven by personal material concerns and partly shaped by the positive reception that India has received in foreign capitals. However, other sections of India's population—the neo-middle class, perhaps, as well as poorer and lower classes—do not privilege growth over equity and distributional issues. They want both rising incomes and better schools.[10] Indian voters are no longer single-issue voters, thinking only through the lens of community or ethnic group identities, but have also begun to vote on their rising economic aspirations and their need for better social infrastructure (schools and health) as well as physical infrastructure (roads and access to electricity).

In this article, I explore the emergence of development as a distinct issue-axis in Indian politics. This idea deploys William Riker's theory of the emergence of a new issue space as a means to analyze development in India. Riker offered an interesting modification of the dominant spatial model of voting:

> Beyond these actions of voters, participants (either candidates or voters) might change the space itself, distorting it by adding or subtracting dimensions or by expanding dimensions as if they were elastic or elastic in certain distances. Adding or subtracting dimensions always changes the shape of the space and distribution of voters. Distorting dimensions need not change the relative position of voters, but in two dimensions it can easily affect the relative location of the center of the distribution, and in higher dimensions it can significantly change the kinds of coalitions.[11]

Essentially, Riker recognized the role of party strategy and rhetoric in creating new issue dimensions in politics. In India, I contend that a new issue dimension of development has been introduced in elections and in political discourse more generally, and the Indian electoral issue-space is no longer one-dimensional.

It must be acknowledged at the outset that development issues compete with, but do not displace, caste and religious identities in Indian politics. Even candidates chosen for their ability to appeal to their caste and community must speak the language of development. Elected politicians are being evaluat-

ed based on their ability to deliver jobs, roads, and public goods, but they also use patronage and personal appeals to their identity groups. Various developmental narratives discipline Indian parties and politicians. However, patronage is no longer an effective method of securing votes; Indian voters take money and other cash goods and vote their choices. Academic research is beginning to acknowledge that patronage is ineffective at vote-getting, and therefore politicians are forced to seek support by promising long-term change.[12]

A MOVE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT?

Slowly but surely, voters are demanding a focus on development, economic policies, and public goods in addition to identity politics. Voters are no longer voting only along caste lines. In 2014, surveyors found that economic growth, corruption, and inflation were the most salient issues among voters during the 2014 general elections for the sixteenth Lok Sabha (lower house of the Indian Parliament).[13] The recently held assembly elections confirm these findings. Though identity mobilization was a factor in Assam, development was the dominant issue both in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. In West Bengal, politician Mamata Banerjee recast herself as a people-oriented development chief minister, effectively going beyond the legacy of Singur, when her party, the Trinamool Congress (TMC), was seen as "anti-development." In 2007–08, protests had erupted in Singur, West Bengal against a Tata automobile factory. Organized and supported by TMC, these protests ultimately led Tata to leave West Bengal and set up a factory in Gujarat.[14] In 2016, TMC has been keen to move away from that legacy and make development the main focus of their campaign, publicizing varied policies that would benefit the poor: subsidized rice schemes, bicycles for female students, and construction of

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roads.[15] As noted by Surjit Bhalla in the *Indian Express*: "It is just that, unknown to the Congress and the Left but known to everyone else, the voter is demanding the same from all politicians: infrastructure, [electricity], jobs, and [water]. The voter is saying give us development, stupid. And, only the stupid are not listening."[16] Banerjee's party won 211 of the 294 available seats and 49 percent of the vote. Voters kept repeating: "Didi [elder sister] has brought roads to rural Bengal."[17]

Interestingly, diffusion processes are also at work. Parties and leaders are

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learning from each other, and states and regional leaders are adapting development projects from their neighbors and other states. Borrowing a strategy from Bihar's cycle program, TMC distributed bicycles with the TMC logo to schoolchildren.[18] They also adopted the "2kg rice scheme," which provides two kilograms of rice to every household below a certain income threshold, from a similar initiative announced by a series of parties in Tamil Nadu in the 1980s and 1990s.[19] Politicians may not deliver everything they promise, but the discourse of politics has shifted to that of development and livelihood issues.

While speeches about development and public goods are necessary, they alone may not be enough: parties need the organizational and administrative muscle to implement these new programs. TMC, for example, has put a lot of effort into capturing *panchayats* (local government councils) in rural areas and has sponsored new local clubs to counter the cadre-based mobilization of the erstwhile ruling party, the Communist Party-Marxist (CPM).[20] TMC has lobbied, fought, and tried to bring panchayat leaders into its party. As more and more panchayat bodies fall under its control, it uses their development budgets to distribute the provisions for roads and other goods on the ground.

These tendencies have reverberated throughout India's political landscape. In some areas of the country, development schemes, such as funds for roads and electricity, coexist with "cash for votes" arrangements, where politicians promise cash goods such as television sets to voters. Indian voters, however, are astute: they accept such promises, and since the secret ballot is well implemented, vote for the party whom they want to vote for.[21] In Bihar, the government initiated a scheme in 2007 where schoolgirls could obtain a check of 2,000 rupees to buy a bicycle upon passing the eighth grade. The Bihar government has spent 174.36 crores (1.74 billion rupees) on this scheme in the past three years, allowing 871,000 girls to travel to school more easily.[22] A monitoring mechanism is built into the program: the number of ninth-grade girls registered in Bihar's high schools went from 175,000 in 2007 to 600,000 in 2012, while school drop out rates declined significantly. During the 2014 elections, talk of the "Gujarat model of development" led Jayaraman Jayalalithaa, the then-chief minister of Tamil Nadu, to speak about her state's success in ensuring development for its citizens as a different approach.[23] Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also spoke of his development achievements: "In Bihar, all girls enrolled in government schools are given money for uniforms and scholarships. Boys and girls in class 9 and 10 are given money to buy bicycles. Does Mr. Modi's Gujarat provide this?"[24]

There is some reason to believe that this is a long-term trend: Indians

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show an increasing desire to vote based on projected development outcomes rather than on their primary identities, as they had in previous elections. James Manor argues that we are witnessing the emergence of a post-clientelist system.[25] Similarly, Vasundhra Sirnate and Pradeep Chibber note that:

> In 2011, a survey in Uttar Pradesh asked voters whether they preferred leaders who could govern to those with whom they had a jati/biradari [caste/community] relationship. Seventy percent of respondents preferred a politician who could deliver public goods and "govern;" and only 20 percent said that they would like someone from their jati/biradari as a political leader. There were no statistically significant differences in these responses between Hindus, Muslims, Dalits, upper castes, and other backward castes (OBCs).[26]

Many other prominent editors and commentators concur. Pratap Mehta, the president of the Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research, notes:

> [Voters] are choosing empowerment over patronage, the future over the past, performance over rhetoric, sincerity over cynicism, rootedness over disembodied charm, measured realism over flights of fantasy. They are carefully assessing alternatives through the prism of local circumstances. Identities still matter, but voters are no longer prisoners of those identities.[27]

Carolyn Elliot discusses how the state of Andhra Pradesh is moving from clientelistic politics to more of a welfare state model.[28] An analysis of the 2004 and 2009 elections showed that voters' perception of the performance of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, rather than their class and social origins, explained electoral outcomes across all levels.[29] Adam Auerbach and I argue that India is witnessing the rise of a distinct type of clientelism: "developmental clientelism," where voters reward the provision of public goods and developmental services even by their community-oriented patrons. We also suggest that, under some conditions, patron-client relationships may serve developmental ends—for example, the midday meal scheme in schools in Tamil Nadu, intended as a patronage good for voters, increased literacy levels in the state.[30]

WHY HAS THIS SHIFT HAPPENED?

India has undergone a quiet social and economic revolution in the last 30 years. The decline of the Nehru model of a state-dominated economy, economic

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reforms, increasing levels of literacy, and rising urbanization rates have jointly produced an explosion of rising expectations among Indian voters across a broader set of social groups, thus creating a growing demand for good governance and public services. Simultaneously, intense democratic competition has become a motivating factor for responsiveness from political elites. Together, these factors have created the push toward development. Thus, I outline two distinct supply-side and demand-side mechanisms that have driven the shift from identity to developmental politics and the creation of a new issue-dimension in Indian politics.

A Demand-Led Explanation?

We are beginning to see the emergence of a contingent social coalition on behalf of development and economic growth across India. This may be the political effect of 26 years of economic reforms, which started in 1991. The economic reforms of 1991 initiated domestic liberalization and the opening up of the Indian economy. Paradoxically, this trend of demanding higher levels of development speaks to the success of Manmohan Singh's government in focusing on the development of the common man and farmers. The Congress Party lost the 2014 election not because it failed but because it succeeded too well in bringing new groups into political life, such as the neo-middle classes with rising developmental aspirations. Indian voters want more of what the Congress government of 2004 promised. Their vote against the Congress Party in 2014 may have been a "revolution of rising expectations" and aspirations, rather than a criticism of the economic reforms.[31] The Congress Party is facing the consequences of its own success in creating a rights-based discourse around development.

Rising expectations have created a desire for higher economic incomes and consumption power among expanding sections of the Indian population. These are the middle classes and the neo-middle classes. At the same time, those at the lower end of the earnings spectrum lack the collective action mechanisms necessary to launch a concerted mobilization against the effects of economic reform.[32] Some of the economic losers, such as the urban and rural poor, agricultural laborers, and informal sector workers are also starting to seek incomes at the periphery of the semi-urban and urban economies, making them less likely to oppose the process of economic reform. Thus, for somewhat different reasons, both the winners and losers of this shift are beginning to demand development: development has become the dominant game in town.

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Many have argued that the reforms of 1991 benefited the old and emerging middle classes.[33] The middle classes have since then also grown and become more differentiated. While their numbers have increased, new professional groups, and the people who service them, have been incorporated within India's middle class topography. The Indian middle class consists of salaried professional classes, civil servants and clerks, salaried employees of new private sector companies, employees of public sector banks, call center employees, insurance agents, and real estate brokers. Members of the Indian middle class certainly vote for economic issues: they are supporters of both better roads to their localities, electric power to their homes, better infrastructure, and access to modern means of consumption. They also want privatized access to public services: gated communities, generators for when the power goes off, and access to privatized water and the multiplex malls around the city. They watch the stock market and invest in its diverse products. Many sections of this group vote economically, although they may also support a resurgent Hindu nationalist agenda.[34]

While the professional classes in major metropolitan centers such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata are all inserted into the mobile linkages of the global economy, creating a transnational middle class, the lower sections—white collar and salaried workers in the lower rungs of bureaucracies and the private sector, clerks, administrators, drivers of the professional classes, and sales personnel—seek to grow their incomes and are an aspirational middle class.[35] These groups also support economic liberalization and the higher incomes and consumption

> A similar dynamic has created a new underclass that supports economic liberalization and wants access to the public and club goods that the upper middle class has garnered for itself.

power that come with it, even though they face increased vulnerability in newly volatile labor markets and urban spaces.[36] They further demand a focus on development by politicians and government policy.

We also need to understand the perspective of the lower-middle-class, which has expanded the scope of the aspirational middle class, even though the lifestyles of those in it are closer to those of the poor. These lower-middle-class actors perceive economic globalization as a beneficent force, even when they may find greater economic problems in their own lives.[37] While systematic studies of globalization have found a differing impact on lower castes and

women, lower-middle-class women, at least, do not perceive economic liberalization to be "detrimental to their lives."[38] One reason for this lack of ill will is that new entrants to the middle class have seen a rise in income and opportunities even though their income stream may be more volatile. Shelley Feldman's 1992 study of women workers in export-processing zones found that women from rural middle-strata families found new employment opportunities there.[39] A similar dynamic is at work in many parts of India, creating a new underclass that supports economic liberalization and wants access to the public and club goods that the upper middle class has garnered for itself. This lower middle class wants a share of the growing economy and would like more public goods and club goods—jobs—for their group.

RURAL MIGRANTS, THE URBAN POOR, AND INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS

When we think of economic reform in India, we tend to think of the IT sector, engineering, and pharmaceuticals. Yet, by now, sectors that were usually considered less important—such as tourism, consumer goods, and the communication economy—have helped create rising incomes and, even more strikingly, rising aspirations. In West Bengal for example, urban cities are not only the homes of the middle classes, but also those of migrants and aspiring middle-class voters who engage in the informal economy. Auto-rickshaw and taxi unions, hawkers, and service providers to the urban middle classes have emerged as the new vote banks of urban India. These voters have different demands: they want roads to link their rural residencies with urban areas, and they want the state to do its job in providing basic public services. In some parts of the country—though not all—many agricultural residents, farmers, and even children of landlords have moved to urban and semi-urban towns, becoming consumers and service workers on the fringes of the new economy. These voters have much greater access to modern technologies and cell phones, allowing them to cultivate the social and political skills needed to demand different kinds of development goods. Overall, a new axis of developmental politics has emerged, where winners from the economic reforms, but also aspiring winners, seek to achieve their economic desires and aspirations. A developmental axis has displaced, if not replaced, the issue of identity and caste politics.

WHAT ABOUT RISING INEQUALITY AND POVERTY?

Together, these groups and classes constitute a nascent social coalition of win-

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ners and aspiring winners. While this social coalition is broader than most critics anticipated when liberalization began, liberalization has also created new pockets of stagnation in which people are confronted with their neighbors' rising incomes and the realization that this new prosperity has failed to lift all boats. The benefits of economic liberalization fell to very specific social and economic groups—those able to use urban-rural linkages to move out of rural areas; those based in urban areas, those able to use higher education in urban and foreign centers for social mobility; and those able to move into sectors that became more tightly linked to the global and urban economy.

This revolution of rising aspirations has also created new losers and groups that want a piece of the cake that eludes them. Some of the erstwhile-dominant castes and classes in rural areas now find themselves disenfranchised from the new urban global economy. The Patels of Gujarat and the Jats of Haryana are examples of such groups. Agricultural workers are also losers in this economy, especially in areas where the new, non-farm economy has not deepened and where rural workers depend only on farm income. These groups may not have benefited from the new economy as much as the transnational middle classes, but they nevertheless want a share of it. It is within these pockets of stagnation that we find support for new caste reservations, symbolized by the agitations of Gujarat's Patels and Haryana's Jats. This larger developmental dynamic may explain dual, seemingly paradoxical, phenomena: the rise of development in the mainstream political discourse of India and a backlash that mobilizes caste groups in urban centers along with once-dominant castes in rural India. Thus, winners and aspiring winners seek development, but new losers of the economic reform trajectory align with old style economic and social power. These powerful caste groups are reverting to the language of "competitive backwardization" and caste-based mobilization to address their declining wages and declining opportunities.[40] This explains the dual contradictory effect: the formation of a new issue space of development in Indian politics but also the reemergence of identity-driven, caste-based mobilization among some losers.

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How do Parties and Politicians Respond? A Politician's Dilemma

Since 1989, when coalition governments became more common, the political marketplace of India's democracy has become fragmented, volatile, and uncertain. The structure of democratic competition has been marked by the decline of the Congress Party, the rise of coalition and regional parties, and anti-incumbent trends. This has led to a marked anti-incumbency bias in Indian

politics. Many scholars have observed this increased political uncertainty and volatility.[41] Yet parties are finding that the practice of "ethnic headcounting"—when parties target different ethnic groups for policies and patronage—does not work any more.[42] A "revolution of rising expectations" has called upon parties and politicians to respond to this perfect storm in Indian political economy.

Politicians may thus be compelled to "overbid" on public expenditure, and provide—or promise to provide—longer-term public goods, such as education and infrastructure.[43] Even more interestingly, new classes, groups, and parties are emerging in response to the new mood and demands of Indian politics. The success of the AAP (Aam Admi Party, or the Common Man's Party) is a direct illustration of this trend. The AAP created a new issue dimension in the electoral discourse as its focus on corruption and good governance found new resonance in the city of Delhi. Similarly, different regional leaders are crafting their own regionally specific responses to this larger imperative. Development is entering electoral discourse and political strategies in varied ways. Mamata Banerjee's strategies to focus on specific public goods in the recently concluded assembly elections outlined previously; Bihar's continuing focus on development and girls; and Jayalalithaa's attempt in Tamil Nadu to promise policies aimed at women voters are all examples of how political actors of diverse persuasions are faced with a common imperative.

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We can identify three distinct models coterminous with alternative development strategies pursued by subnational Indian states within India: the Gujarat model, the Bihar model, and the Kerala model. The Gujarat model was discussed during the 2014 elections and denotes higher growth rates and investment flows.[44] Recently, the Bihar model of development has emerged as an alternative: Nitish Kumar, Bihar's chief minister, put forward a vision of "inclusive growth with justice," where poorer states receive financial transfers from the central government but are also allowed to develop their schemes autonomously. As Kumar has stated, "a country can grow only when all the states are allowed to grow."[45] Madhya Pradesh, a classic BIMARU state, has also pursued some of these development actions.[46] Meanwhile, the Kerala model is a longstanding template that relies on government action to improve its citizens' quality of life, particularly their health indicators and education levels.[47] Clearly, many developmental models—and many issues related to development—have become necessary given the demands and aspirations of the changing Indian voter across the length and breadth of India.

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Conclusion

Until recently, the worlds of economic policy and elections in India operated according to divergent logics. Governments implemented policies in pursuit of a range of goals: self-reliance, food sufficiency, growth, fiscal stability, or checked inflation. Political actors sought reelection by building durable vote banks and winning coalitions. India's multiethnic landscape offered many opportunities for identity politics and voting based on social groups. Now, the two worlds have intersected, and elections have begun to debate development and economic issues. The political space in India is no longer one-dimensional and instead has become dual or even multidimensional. This article has suggested that two separate mechanisms have contributed to this trend: voters demand development and parties need to craft more stable coalitions that endure beyond identity-driven social groups. Such development-driven responses may be able to address the anti-incumbency trend in Indian politics but it will not be easy to do as voters are sensitive and astute. Indian politics is in the midst of a quiet social and economic revolution that challenges us to refine our theories, concepts, and models of politics. Ⓦ

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Notes

1. This question is somewhat different from the issue of why people vote. For an explanation of why people vote in India, see: Mukulika Bannerjee, *Why India Votes?* (London: Routledge, 2014); Amit Ahuja and Pradeep Chhibber, "Why the Poor Vote in India: 'If I Don't Vote, I Am Dead to the State,'" *Studies in Comparative International Development* 47, no. 4 (2012): 1–22.

2. K.C. Suri, "Democracy, Economic Reforms and Election Results in India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 51 (2004): 5404–11.

3. Ashutosh Varshney, "Why Have Poor Democracies not Eradicated Poverty?," in *Battles Half Won*, ed. Ashutosh Varshney (New Delhi: Penguin, 2013), 259–77; Christophe Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of Lower Castes in North India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kanchan Chandra, "Counting Heads: A Theory of Voter and Elite Behavior in Patronage Democracies," in *Patrons, Clients, and Policies*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 84–109.

4. DMK stands for Dravida Munnetra Kazhagan, AIADMK for All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and AGP for Asom Gana Parishad.

5. Patidars are a farming community in Gujarat and are considered to be economically and socially powerful castes. Such castes are referred to as "dominant" castes in common parlance and scholarly debates. Other backward castes (OBC) refers to a constitutionally defined category of intermediate castes that are stated to require some reservations by the constitution and subsequent laws on reservations in India.

6. Jats are an agricultural caste group dominant in the state of Haryana and in some other northern states—Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.

7. Sanjib Baruah, "The Return of the Native," *Indian Express*, June 2, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/assam-assembly-elections-2016-results-bjp-sarbananda-sonowal-2829474. The

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party, defends the interests of India's majoritarian Hindu community and seeks to monitor or discipline migrants, who they argue have illegitimately benefited from the previous government's policies.

8. It must be admitted that analysts have historically looked upon India through the identity lens and may have missed a focus on development in the past. In Gujarat, for example, elections in the 1990s already involved debates about development issues. For this evidence, see: Aseema Sinha, *The Regional Roots of Development Politics in India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

9. For a representative view, see: Aatish Taseer, "Narendra Modi and India's Dashed Economic Hopes," *New York Times*, May 27, 2016; Sadanand Dhume, "It's Amateur Hour in Narendra Modi's India," *Wall Street Journal*, June 20, 2016.

10. For a similar argument, see: Christophe Jaffrelot, "Modi of the middle class," *Indian Express*, March 24, 2015, http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/modi-of-the-middle-class/.

11. William Riker, "Heresthetic and Rhetoric in the Spatial Model," in *Advances in the Spatial Theory of Voting*, ed. James Enelow and Melvin Hinch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 46–65.

12. James Manor and R. Kothari, "Epilogue: Caste and Politics in Recent Times," in *Caste in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2011), xi-lxi; Andrew Wyatt, "Combining Clientelist and Programmatic Politics in Tamil Nadu, South India," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 51, no. 1 (2013): 27–55; Carolyn Elliott, "Moving from Clientelist Politics toward a Welfare Regime: Evidence from the 2009 Assembly Elections in Andhra Pradesh," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 49, no. 1 (2011): 48–79; Aseema Sinha and Adam Auerbach, "From 'Patronage Democracy' to Developmental Clientelism: Degrees of Clientelism in the World's Largest Democracy" (paper presented at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Annual Conference on South Asia, October 2013); Mark Schneider, "Whither the Quid pro Quo?: Essays on Party-Voter Linkages and Distributive Politics in India," Ph.D Dissertation, Columbia University, 2015. What we don't know is if patronage was effective in the earlier period or has recently become more ineffective.

13. Milan Vaishnav, Devesh Kapur, and Neelanjan Sircar, "Growth is No. 1 Poll Issue for Voters, Survey Shows," *Carnegie Endowment*, March 16, 2014.

14. See: Subrata Nagchowdhury, "Bengal Elections: Singur Braces for High-Voltage Fight," *Indian Express*, April 29, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/elections-2016/india/india-news-india/west-bengal-assembly-election-2016-singur-tata-nano-project-rabin-deb-singur-movement-2774674/.

15. See: Sarah Hafeez, "West Bengal: This Time, New Roads, Bridges and Promises Provide a Reason to Vote," *Indian Express*, June 7, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/elections-2016/india/india-news-india/west-bengal-this-time-new-roads-bridges-and-promises-provide-a-reason-to-vote/; "Mamata Banerjee Promises 'New Bengal' in TMC Manifesto," *Indian Express*, March 18, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/elections-2016/politics/mamata-banerjee-tmc-manifesto-west-bengal.

16. Surjit Bhalla, "Burying the Ghost of Bihar," *Indian Express*, May 21, 2016, http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/assembly-elections-2016-burying-the-ghost-of-bihar-2811333.

17. Interviews with voters, ndtv.com, 2004 election coverage.

18. See: Aniruddha Ghosal, "2016 Assembly Polls: To Pedal to Power, CM Mamata Banerjee Adopts Nitish's Cycle Scheme," *Indian Express*, October 26, 2015, http://indianexpress.com/article/kolkata/2016-assembly-polls-to-pedal-to-power-cm-mamata-banerjee-adopts-nitishs-cycle-scheme/.

19. Many states started a government scheme to provide 2 kilograms of rice to poor families; Tamil Nadu was one of the first few states to provide this subsidy.

20. Dwapiayan Bhatterjee, *Government as Practice* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

21. Mark Schneider, "Whither the Quid pro Quo?."

22. Eddie Wright, "How Cycling set deprived Indian girls on a life-long journey," *Guardian*, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2011/nov/25/cycling-indian-schoolgirls-bike-blog.

23. "Gujarat development model a 'myth,' Tamil Nadu Far Better: Jayalalitha's Direct Attack on Modi," *Deccan Chronicle,* http://www.deccanchronicle.com/140417/nation-politics/article/tamil-nadu-placed-far-better-various-sectors-gujarat-says.

24. Manish Kumar, "Nitish Kumar Compares 'Backward Bihar' to Narendra Modi's 'Developed Gujarat,'" *NDTV,* http://www.ndtv.com/cheat-sheet/nitish-kumar-compares-backward-bihar-to-narendra-

modis-developed-gujarat-553722.

25. James Manor, "Beyond Clientelism: Digvijay's Participatory Pro-Poor Strategy in Madhya Pradesh," in *Power and Influence in India: Bosses, Lords and Captains,* ed. Pamela Price and Arild Ruud (London: Routledge, 2010), 193–213.

26. Vasundhra Sirnate and Pradeep Chibber, "No Longer Caste in Stone," *Indian Express*, http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/no-longer-caste-in-stone-2.

27. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Mandate for a Dream," *Indian Express*, March 7, 2012, http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/mandate-for-a-dream/921021.

28. Carolyn Elliott, "Moving from Clientist Politics toward a Welfare Regime: Evidence from the 2009 Assembly Elections in Andhra Pradesh," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 49, no. 1 (2011): 48–79.

29. Rahul Verma, "What Determines Electoral Outcomes in India?: Caste, Class, or Voter's Satisfaction with Government Performance," *Asian Survey* 52, no. 2 (2012): 270–97.

30. Adam Auerbach and Aseema Sinha, "Does Developmental Clientelism Exist?: Degrees of Clientelism in India" (paper presented at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Annual Conference on South Asia, October 2013).

31. Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernization in the Middle East* (New York: Free Press, 1958).

32. Aseema Sinha, "India's Unlikely Democracy: Economic Growth and Political Accommodation," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 2 (2007): 41–54.

33. Atul Kohli, "Politics of Economic Liberalization in India," *World Development* 17, no. 3 (1989): 305–28; Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

34. Mona Mehta and Aseema Sinha, "Modi's 'Willing Executioners:' Nationalism, Civil Society, and Rise of Intolerance in India" (paper in progress).

35. For a recent Pew Study which found that only 2 percent of India's population is middle class if one defines middle class as a middle category earning somewhere between $10 to $20 a day, see: Rakesh Kochhar, "A Global Middle Class is More Promise than Reality," Pew Research Center, July 8, 2015, http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/08/a-global-middle-class-is-more-promise-than-reality. 95 percent of Indians still earn somewhere between $2 to $10 a day. Yet, the share of those who call themselves middle class is almost 50 percent. See: Venkat Ramakrishnan, "Everyone in India thinks they are 'middle class' and almost no one actually is," *Scroll,* July 10, 2015, http://scroll.in/article/740011/everyone-in-india-thinks-they-are-middle-class-and-almost-no-one-actually-is.

36. Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase and Timothy Scrase, *Globalization and the Middle Classes in India: The Social and Cultural Impact of Neoliberal Reforms* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

37. Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase, "Paradoxes of Globalization, Liberalization and Gender Equality: The Worldviews of the Lower Middle Class in West Bengal, India," *Gender and Society* 17, no. 4 (2003): 545.

38. Ibid.

39. Shelley Feldman, "Crisis, Islam, and Gender in Bangladesh: the Social Construction of a Female Labor Force," in *Unequal Burden: Economic Crises, Persistent Poverty and Women's Work,* ed. Lourdes Beneria and Shelley Feldman (Boulder: Westview, 1992), 105–30.

40. I have coined this phrase, competitive backward-ization, to refer to the claims of these caste groups that they be included in the OBC category. These powerful caste groups are claiming OBC status in order to get reservations in educational institutes and civil service jobs, a privilege accessible to Dalits and OBCs until now.

41. Lawrence Saez and Aseema Sinha, "Political Cycles, Political Institutions, and Public Expenditure in India, 1980–2000," *British Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 1 (2010): 91–113.

42. For Chandra's use of the term "ethnic head counting," see: Chandra, "Counting Heads."

43. Saez and Sinha, "Political Cycles."

44. See: Jerin Mathew, "India Elections 2014: Can Narendra Modi Make His Gujarat Model Work?" *International Business Times*, May 16, 2014, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/india-elections-2014-can-narenda-modi-make-his-gujarat-model-work-1448844.

45. "Interview with Nitish Kumar," *News 18*, August 7, 2013, http://www.news18.com/videos/politics/nitish-kumar-think-india-dialogue-629669.html.

46. Bimaru in Hindi means sick or ill. It is an acronym used to denote the backward states of India: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

47. There is a massive literature on the Kerala model. For illustrative purposes, see: Govindan Parayil, "The 'Kerala Model' of Development: Development and Sustainability in the Third World," *Third World Quarterly* 17, no. 5 (1996): 941–57.