

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Strategies in Governance Transformation Processes.
The strategic selectivity of the subaltern's institutional access to the Indian state since 1980“

verfasst von / submitted by

Henrik Feindt, BA

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 589

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Internationale Entwicklung

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Mag. Dr. Helmut Krieger

Table of Contents

List of figures.....	I
Abstract.....	II
Abstract (German).....	III
Abbreviations and glossary.....	IV
Acknowledgement.....	V
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Meta-theory and methodology.....	2
2.1 Critical realism.....	2
2.2 Logical-historical reasoning.....	6
2.3 Outline.....	9
3. State of the art of theory of the state.....	12
3.1 Class.....	12
3.2 State.....	16
3.3 Etc.....	20
3.4 South.....	25
4. India.....	30
4.1 India's political economy around 1980.....	31
4.1.1 Getting there.....	31
4.1.1.1 Caste.....	34
4.1.1.2 Capital.....	37
4.1.1.3 Congress.....	39
4.1.1.4 Country.....	42
4.1.2 Development since.....	44
4.1.2.1 Liberalisation.....	44

4.1.2.2 Exclusion.....	47
4.2 Evolution of the state project.....	49
4.2.1 Bihar & Uttar Pradesh.....	51
4.2.1.1 Lalu.....	52
4.2.1.2 Mayawati.....	54
4.2.2 Congress & the BJP.....	57
4.2.2.1 Rise and fall (and rise again).....	58
4.2.2.2 2014.....	61
4.2.3 Articulating class and caste.....	63
4.2.3.1 Intermediates.....	63
4.2.3.2 Caste chemistry.....	65
4.2.3.3 Labour.....	67
4.2.3.4 Class alchemy.....	70
4.3 Strategic selectivity of the state.....	73
4.3.1 Reinventing the state.....	73
4.3.2 Middling.....	76
4.3.3 Silent and bourgeois revolutions.....	78
5. Conclusion.....	83
Literature.....	87

This work is under the Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence, a copy of which may be found here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> However, the author retains the right to publish any part of the work under whatever restrictive, commercial, crazy licence required to please academic journals etc.

List of figures

Figure 1: Sector share (%) of GDP, 1950-2013.....	31
Figure 2: Various social indicators for all India, 1950-2016.....	34
Figure 3: Caste and religious composition (%) of the Lok Sabha, 1952-2004.....	51
Figure 4: Various Lok Sabha election statistics, 1951-2014.....	57
Figure 5: Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts (in million), 1953-2014.....	68

Abstract

Based on a critical-realist, historical-materialist-political-analysis methodological framework, the text employs a Poulantzian theory of class and state, while highlighting ways of adding other relations (i.e. caste). Continuity and transformations in the strategic selectivity of the subaltern's institutional access to the Indian state are analysed by way of a historical narrative of the political economy of (caste-) party politics since independence, focussing on developments after 1980. It is shown how there are, especially for the lower-rungs of 'the subaltern' significant continuities in their exclusion from institutional access to the state, but that the concrete way that they are in- and excluded has shifted to a more 'middle-class' articulated relation, which itself has raised some sections that were previously subaltern into higher status and positioned these differently in the state project's relations of forces. Concretely, it is argued that narrow caste parties are receding in relevance, but that caste 'mainstreaming' has shifted the selectivities for some caste sections. Broader alliances across castes and classes indicate a shift to more inclusive hegemony projects; though only the Hindu nationalists seem to offer an effective platform – other forces are shown to have fractured along class and caste lines, especially in the 'second democratic upsurge'. Institutional modes of access to the state besides this party-representation are said to have to some extent been increased by rights-based social policies but that structural limitations still work selectively and that, despite potential for it, there currently is no subaltern state project.

Keywords: caste, class, state, party politics, India, democratisation, strategic selectivity

Abstract (German)

Basierend auf einem kritisch-realistischen, historisch-materialistisch-politischen methodologischen Analyserahmen, setzt der Text poulantzianische Theorien von Klasse und Staat ein, wobei Wege aufgezeigt werden, andere Verhältnisse (i.e. Kastenverhältnisse) darein zu integrieren. Kontinuität und Transformationen in der strategischen Selektivität des institutionellen Zugangs der Subalternen zum indischen Staat werden analysiert mittels eines historischen Narrativs der politischen Ökonomie von (Kasten-) Parteienpolitik seit der Unabhängigkeit, mit Fokus auf Entwicklungen ab 1980. Es wird gezeigt, wie insbesondere für die unteren Ränge ‚der Subalternen‘ signifikante Kontinuitäten hinsichtlich ihrer Exklusion von institutionalisiertem Zugang zum Staat bestehen, aber dass die konkrete Art und Weise, wie sie in- und exkludiert werden, sich zu einem mehr Mittelschichts-artikulierten Verhältnis verschoben hat. Dies hat einige vormals subalterne in einen höheren Status gehoben und sie anders in den Kräfteverhältnissen des Staatsprojekts positioniert. Konkret wird argumentiert, dass hochspezialisierte Kastenparteien in ihrer Bedeutung zurückgehen, aber dass Kasten- ‚Mainstreaming‘ die Selektivitäten für einige Kastensektionen verschoben hat. Breitere Allianzen über Kasten und Klassen hinweg deuten auf eine Verschiebung hin zu inklusiveren Hegemonieprojekten hin; jedoch scheinen nur die HindunationalistInnen eine effektive Plattform zu bieten – andere Kräfte spalteten sich entlang von Kasten- und Klassenlinien, insbesondere nach dem ‚zweiten demokratischen Aufschwung‘. Institutionelle Modi des Zugangs zum Staat neben Parteienrepräsentation werden bis zu einem gewissen Grad durch rechtebasierter Sozialpolitik verbessert, aber strukturelle Grenzen sind nach wie vor schlagend und fungieren selektiv. Trotz Potential in diese Richtung gibt es aktuell kein subalternes Staatsprojekt.

Schlagworte: Kaste, Klasse, Staat, Parteienpolitik, Indien, Demokratisierung, strategische Selektivität

Abbreviations and glossary

Adivasis	Indigenous Indians (otherwise: Scheduled Tribes)
BAMCEF	All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CPI-M	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Dalits	The oppressed (otherwise: ‘Untouchables’, Scheduled Castes)
GDP	Gross domestic product
Hindutva	‘Hinduness’ ideology of the Hindu nationalist movement
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
INC	Indian National Congress
Jati	Immediate referent of ‘caste’ (formerly also tied to occupation)
JD	Janata Dal
JD-U	Janata Dal (United)
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
OBC	Other Backward Class [Caste] (roughly equivalent: Sudra (see Varna))
Raj	Rule
RJD	Rashtriya Janata Dal
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SP	Samajwadi Party
ST	Scheduled tribe (otherwise: Adivasis)
SC	Scheduled caste (otherwise: Dalits)
UP	Uttar Pradesh
Varna	Caste group (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra)
Zamindar	Colonial, more or less feudal-like tax collector/ landlord

Acknowledgement

This text is the collective product of many people, most of whom will never read it. Nor would they necessarily condone its conclusions, or have made the mistakes I introduced into it. However, they certainly deserve credit and I would like to assure them of my heart-felt gratitude, not least for allowing me to make these mistakes – I stand in debt to the former to hopefully continue to learn from both. That is all this text is, really, an attempt to learn (to learn). To be continued.

First of all, I would like to thank Helmut Krieger for his patient, constructive and stimulating support in what feels like a much too long endeavour of conceptualising and drafting this thesis. Between the work on this thesis, various seminars and other academic engagements, there are few people from whom I have learned as much; for which I am very grateful.

Unfailing support of course also came from my family, who perhaps wonder what I was up to all these months (and years of study before that) and where exactly that might all lead to in the end. I am not sure either, but I do know that I would not rather have done anything else and I am most blessed in their enabling me to pursue this, whatever it will turn out to be.

I would also like to thank those ‘in formal academic positions’ whose inputs in discussions and seminars in various ways were essential in helping me think about the present topic: Elmar Flatschart, Christian Gulas (I hope to some day finally get around to integrating network analysis in inquiries such as this one), Johannes Jäger, Hans Pühretmayer, Wolfram Schaffar and of course Margret Steixner. And I would like to thank Rolf Bauer in advance, who has generously agreed to act as co-examiner in the oral defence of this thesis.

I also discussed parts of this text to great profit with Simon Gorski, Corinna Dengler and Max Stoisser, whose critical comments and helpful remarks added greatly to thinking through important aspects.

Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude and respect to all those involved in setting up and running the Institute for International Development in Vienna, whose contentious history shows how spaces for free academic contemplation are not to be taken for granted. At the danger of being labelled a Eurocentric, I might add that I came across few places with such a humane atmosphere of free knowledge production, which would be truly deserving of the old motto: *sapere aude*.

Incipe.

1. Introduction

“One might think of independent India as being Europe’s past as well as its future. It is Europe’s past, in that it has reproduced [...] the conflicts of a modernizing, industrializing and urbanizing society. But it is also its future in that it anticipated, by some fifty years, the European attempt to create a multilingual, multireligious, multiethnic, political and economic community.” (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 767–768)

Learning from India, then, is not only helpful, but, as Guha would be quick to add, simply fascinating. Not only is India the world’s largest democracy (population), it is also its fastest growing one (economy). It has defied predictions of its imminent collapse for decades (politics), just as it is said to be a vivid example of how democracy does not imply economic well-being (a people’s class struggles). Building, retaining and transforming the Indian state takes place against a tremendous societal heterogeneity – so much so, that it is said by some to be the closest one can come to a glimpse at a potential world state. Whatever one’s cosmopolitan aspirations, a political economist cannot but wonder at how, in India, democracy and capitalism; how elections, rights and production are articulated and how their governance has shaped developments.

This text will query two major developments of recent times: First, the so-called ‘second democratic upsurge’ (referring to the increasing political assertion of various marginalised groups) and second, economic liberalisation. Both began very roughly in the 1980s (with obvious precursors), and both significantly transformed governance processes. The first will provide a focus on caste, the second one on class. How both will be accommodated analytically will be detailed below; suffice to say here, that their inextricable interconnection will need theorisation conducive to the complexity hinted at above. This will be done while looking at the ‘biggest gamble in history’, at the ‘fascinating experiment’ that is the Indian state’s democracy. Caste and class are categories of distinction, exclusion and distribution. The question will thus be who has what access to democratic processes, the state’s institutions and how are their interests represented and inscribed here?

Caste and class are thus not discussed as such, but in their statal significance and in their significance for each other, while focussing on subaltern groups rather than elites. It will show that one of the governance processes most affected by recent transformations is party politics: Congress rule declines, new parties and political projects emerge, unstable coalitions fluctuate.

The question is thus: *How has the articulation of class and caste in the subaltern’s struggles on the strategic field of the Indian state, specifically as party politics, evolved since 1980?*

After developing a critical-realist, historical-materialist-political-analysis methodological framework, the text discusses the theoretical prerequisites of dealing with class and state, while highlighting ways of adding other relations (i.e., later, caste). ‘Evolution’ (viz. continuity and/ or transformation) requires a comparison of before and after which is provided by way of historical narrative of the political economy of (caste-) party politics with class as a structural/ context condition to be related to, not already found in, the former. From analysing this narrative with the developed theoretical categories, it is shown how there are, especially for the lower-rungs of ‘the subaltern’ significant continuities in their exclusion from institutional access to the state, but that the concrete way that they are in- and excluded (never absolute) has shifted to a more ‘middle-class’ articulated relation, which itself has raised some sections that were previously subaltern into higher status and positioned these differently in the state project’s relations of forces. Concretely, it is argued that more narrow caste parties are largely a phenomenon of the past, but that caste ‘mainstreaming’ in other parties has shifted the selectivities for some caste sections. Broader alliances across castes and classes indicate a shift to more inclusive hegemony projects; though only the Hindu nationalists seem to offer an effective platform – other forces are shown to have fractured along class and caste lines, especially in the ‘second democratic upsurge’. Institutional modes of access to the state, besides this party-representation are said to have to some extent been increased by rights-based social policies but that both access to these and their structural limitations still work selectively and that, despite potential for it, there currently is no subaltern state project.

2. Meta-theory and methodology

To make the research question graspable, this section first discusses the (social) scientific approach to it, i.e. the meta-theory (2.1), before introducing the methodology (2.2). Based on this, sub-questions are developed and the outline of the argument/ text is presented (2.3): section three discusses those theories which, in section four, allow interpretation of the events in question.

2.1 Critical realism

Critical¹ realism is a philosophy of science, including of social science. It is concerned with transcendental arguments (from what is to its conditions) on the nature of science and the world containing it. As such it is not to be ‘applied’, yet it can be: by theory and (other) scientific practice. So if and in so far as one accepts its understanding of science (and the world) as correct, one should interrogate one’s theories, methods and explanations on their compatibility, which then is on their jus-

¹ I very much share Collier’s (1994, p. xi) notion that, generally, the adjective ‘critical’ is pointless (as denomination of approaches), because it usually merely serves self-adulatory polemics rather than substantive argumentation.

tification as scientific. And one should submit to such inquiries: Ignorance neither makes the world disappear, nor does it make scientificity become obvious (Collier, 1994, pp. 17, 27, 205–206).

Critical realism (which is to say Roy Bhaskar) proposes a ‚depth realism‘, i.e. that reality is not merely what we see, think, say or what happens. It/ he arrives at this conclusion by inquiring upon the conditions of experimentation: If, so the argument goes, in an experimental setting we try as best we can to neutralise all effects of external factors but the one(s) we suspect of being causal to a phenomenon, we may indeed end up with identifying the causal factor. If, further, we then go on to assume that this causal factor is not only the valid explanation in our closed-system experiment, we can not assume that this factor is merely the regularity we observe there, but something (a mechanism) which we do not (since we can not in the open-system-complexity of the ‚real‘ world, or else we would not need experimenting). We need, thus, to relate observation to explanation, we do not ‚know‘ what we observe – we might interpret it variously. Science (hence called the transitive) and its object (the intransitive) are distinct. Thus, finally, our statements must be of the qualities (mechanisms) of objects and not just our impressions of them (or rather our impressions of the observed regularities). This is the transcendental part. If we did not assume this, experiments would be impossible or pointless; only if we assume that such mechanisms work both in induced regularity and in complexly determined reality and that reality is neither always regular nor obvious (explanation is needed of the part which is not – science), do we need to bother experimenting at all (Collier, 1994, pp. 32–35; Lindner, 2014, pp. 204–207; Mader, Lindner, & Pühretmayer, 2017, pp. 11–13).

It helps (in fact it is necessary following the above) to think of this world in stratified domains: the empirical domain contains everything we observe, the actual domain everything that happens (observed or not) and the real domain, well, everything really: all else plus the mechanisms introduced above, since they are not reduced to ‚what happens‘ and not they but their effects are what is observed. So what are these mechanisms and how do objects have them? Objects of science are taken to be entities (thus we pursue here an entity-ontology, not a relational one). Entities, however, which are relationally structured and are themselves parts of relational structures. In the entities’ structured relatedness, powers and liabilities emerge, this emergence constitutes the mechanism. In other words, if an entity ‚can do something‘ (or is liable to something happening to it), this is because of a mechanism – thus the centre-piece of explanation (Collier, 1994, p. 44; Mader et al., 2017, p. 15).

This immediately necessitates two qualifications. First, that explanation does not (usually) lie in identifying a single mechanism. Mechanisms work in concert, in open, complex systems. Thus their working (their causing certain events) is tendential, not deterministic. Second, Bhaskar wants to

avoid both structuralism/ holism (in which for instance ‘the world’ or society or capitalism is *the* entity to be explained/ from which all (relevant) mechanisms are derived) and micro-determination, i.e. that the *mere* sum of all parts forms the additive whole and only they are to be explained (e.g. ‘humanism’: only human action counts, ignore structure). Rather, he proposes a ‘transformation model of social activity’: actors transform structures, which structure/ determine their actions – but only ever incompletely (Collier, 1994, pp. 62, 141–145; Lindner, 2014, pp. 215–217, 227; Sayer, 2000, pp. 14–16). If explanation can be confined to neither ‘extreme’ (structure or agent),

“we need a system of mediating concepts, [...] of *positions* (places, functions, rules, tasks, duties, rights, etc.) occupied (filled, assumed, enacted, etc.) by individuals and [...] of *practices* (activities, etc.) in which, in virtue of their occupancy of these positions (and vice versa), they engage” (Bhaskar quoted in Collier, 1994, p. 149, emphasis RB).

Archer, focussing more on the temporal dimension, specifies this by highlighting that structures both precondition and survive action, but only insofar as they are either reproduced or transformed. Any structure is the product of action, but not necessarily (or even usually) action of the present (Archer, 1995, pp. 157–161).² What is of interest, thus, is the dynamic relation of structure and agency, keeping in mind that it is not ‘structure’ as such that is relevant, but entities’ structures (or structure as composed of entities), which is to say the activation and interaction of mechanisms. Though Sayer accordingly warns: „In answering these questions, much depends on how we conceptualize the objects [i.e., the entities]“ (2000, p. 17), he also notes that it is not enough to just conceptualise them – abstracting to structures must be accompanied by situating agency in them and in delimiting the extend to which each determined the other (Sayer, 1992, pp. 96–98, 103).

From this, two conclusions follow: First, we shall need to identify in concrete analysis the relevant position-practice-system(s) which allow us to relate structure and agency. Second, we shall need to explain each entity by itself (though of course not on its own), before we are able to relate them and talk about the mechanism-interaction – causation. But how to *explain* causation?

While transcendental arguments are retroductive arguments insofar as they inquire upon the possibility of an object, *transcendental*, in critical realism, is reserved for talking about science as above, while retroduction is used for arguments related to explaining phenomena. However, *retroduction* particularly refers to explaining the working of a specific mechanism (what must be to have mechanism x causing y), while *retrodiction* is explaining the interaction of several mechanisms and artefacts (as not everything is just (socially) mechanistic, there is a material world ‘as well’) in their

2 Though Archer calls her approach ‘morphogenetic/ -static’ as opposed to Bhaskar’s ‘transformational model’ (1995, pp. 137–141), the latter shall be used to refer to both, since our concern is delimitation from structuralism, micro-determination (‘humanism’) and structuration (on those: Archer, 1995, pp. 141–149; Collier, 1994, pp. 139–150).

genealogical production of a certain phenomenon (Collier, 1994, p. 22; Lindner, 2014, p. 213).

With this confusion cleared, we can proceed to explanatory strategies. Collier (1994, pp. 122, 162–164) combines two such strategies of Bhaskar's. In general it is necessary to first preliminarily/ intuitively understand a phenomenon 'with what one has', then to take it apart to identify the relevant mechanistic working and then to construct a more elaborate explanation of the phenomenon with knowledge of this working. Collier has a step-by-step approach: (1) the complex phenomenon (e.g. an event) is resolved into several components, (2) the components are described in their behaviour/ working, for which in (3) explanations are sought, (4) which are then interrogated as to whether they can be said to be the causes, (5) identifying, finally, the cause of the event, i.e. at the explanation of the phenomenon. Explanations in (3) are (at this stage) non-scientific, they are hypothetical, retroductive explanations (if *x* were true, the cause would be *y*), which need empirical testing. This testing (part of (4)) cannot always/ usually be experimental, since social systems are (almost) always complexly open. But analogues to experiments can be found e.g. in comparisons of (extreme) cases, or pathologies, i.e. when things go wrong and break, they may, similarly to extreme cases, make more obvious their functioning (Collier, 1994, pp. 165–167; Lawson, 1999, p. 38).³ Since mechanisms as causes never act alone, it is helpful to, in the final step (this is really what should happen also in Collier's (5), otherwise that would just reiterate a part of (4)), explain not just the mechanism involved, but *how* it was involved in the concrete case, that is pointing to the necessary in their interaction with the contingent conditions and how each affected the other (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002, pp. 110–111).

What it comes down to is this: A stratified reality is assumed, where unperceivable relational entity-structures are ascribed causal powers. Under specific conditions, in contingent conjuncture with other structures and agents' actions, mechanisms 'producing' these powers are activated. Since this happens in complex, open systems, causality is tendential. For social science the partly unperceivable and/ or unobvious complexity implies the need for theoretical abstraction, where, through testing intuitive models of hypothesized structures on empirical descriptions of events, argument moves to theoretical elaboration of the interaction of structures' mechanisms. Explanation, here, is identifying the involved entities' qualities and their necessary constellation (conjuncture) that 'must' have prevailed to cause observed events (Collier, 1994, pp. 62, 161–167; Sayer, 1992, pp. 105–117).

3 This rather doomy outlook is turned on its head by some (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, p. xiv, but cf. 176), who argue that theories need application and that actors' success in doing so then validates theory. – If only we had such theories, worthy of application (not that this deters people from trying; neither theory nor praxis has any clue, really).

2.2 Logical-historical reasoning

My intuition is that theories of class and state as proposed by Poulantzas could be (reasonably adapted) fruitful starting points for explaining the events in question.⁴ This intuition is detailed in section three. For now, it must be noted that there is next to nothing on general, systematic operationalisation for applying such theories;⁵ few people in this context seem to systematically bother with methodology. Specifically (or rather: generally; there really is very little) this refers to questions of “[w]ie etwa ‘Staat’ oder soziale Kräfteverhältnisse zu untersuchen sind, welche Daten warum als relevante ausgewählt werden [und] wie diese zu interpretieren sind”⁶ (Krieger, 2015, p. 50).

Krieger highlights that such methodology would need to be able to capture the *contradictory* (and as will be argued: *dynamic*) processes implied by above categories (2015, p. 53). One of the few systematisations of such ‘political analysis’, and a very useful one at that (even if it remains rather abstract and does not provide actual operationalisation), is by Buckel et al., who explicitly want to be able to explain with it such “herrschaftsstrukturierten Prozesse” (Buckel, Georgi, Kannankulam, & Wissel, 2014, p. 43; ‘rule-structured processes’ (transl. HF)).⁷ They (2014, p. 53) propose a three-step procedure, where firstly (to distinguish from Collier’s enumeration this will be called step ‘A’), the (polit-economic) *context* is outlined, then, secondly (B), an *actor analysis* identifies coalitions of actors via their respective strategies which are then, thirdly (C), dynamically related to the context-as-structure in terms of the strategic-relational (see section three) struggles unfolding in reaction to it – *process-analysis* (C). Not all of this needs to be pursued in full, as this text will be able to rely on relevant literature.

Separating step (A) and (B) allows to analyse the specificity of structure and agency in terms of their determination of the relevant phenomenon (as retroductive hypotheses). It will make necessary

4 Actually, in step three, we would need (claim Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002, p. 110) to weigh the explanatory potential of different class theories (for an overview, e.g. Wright, 2005; ProKla, 2014), or even query whether class is a relevant category at all. This being a MA thesis, I blame scope and ignore this necessity.

5 For an important exception cf. Wright (1985, pp. 136–191), who, unlike this text, focusses more on individual characteristics (offering no general methodological discussion as well). He also pointedly notes (1985, p. 142) that it is not just that ‘Marxists’ have too often ignored empirical investigation (and we should add methodology and operationalisation), but also theorisation of how micro-phenomena (such as the individual behaviour Wright is after) are ‘determined’ by macro-phenomena (or abstract relations). This is crucial for any methodology, not just micro-level empirical study, since, as will be shown below (with reference to Marx himself – mind you, ‘Marxism’!), analysis must be about understanding the abstract of the concrete and the concrete of the abstract, not only either on its own.

6 “how for instance ‘state’ or social relations of power are to be researched, which data is to be selected as relevant and why, [and] how it is to be interpreted” (translation HF).

7 Such analysis should, urges Gramsci (1999, p. 397), be “understood as a body of practical rules for research and of detailed observations useful for awakening an interest in effective reality and for stimulating more rigorous and more vigorous political insights.” Even, “that such analyses cannot and must not be ends in themselves [...], but acquire significance only if they serve to justify a particular practical activity, or initiative of will” (Gramsci, 1999, pp. 410–411).

to repeat in (A) and (B) steps (1), (2) and partly (3) of Collier's abstract methodical proposal (insofar as the steps can be neatly separated in the first place), while steps (3) to (5) are mainly to be found in the process-analysis (C), where the previous elaborations on structure and agents are dynamically related and thus retroactively explained: position-praxis-systems in motion.

Buckel et al. suppose, that "Strukturprinzipien" (2014, pp. 44, 54, i.e. 'structure-principles' (transl. HF)) do not appear unmediated in concrete conflicts, which is to say racism, capitalism, sexism and whatnot are present qua institutions (into which they have materialised; on all these theoretical assumptions see section 3). What is more, they do not do so universally and abstractly-determinately, but with historical variation. This variation is produced by actors acting in positions of structures, transforming and/ or reproducing themselves and the structure; thus we have here a transformation model. Step (A), the context-analysis, is thus supposed to make the present situation (as a context to and in which actors (*re*-)act) understandable as enabling/ constraining and tendentially 'incentivising' possible action, but also as itself a historical possibility, i.e. rule in 'given' relations of power appears as a conflictual and 'cultural' (that is, not natural or metaphysically ordained) phenomenon.

Since conflicts between actors cannot (always) be settled (they themselves are structural), they can only temporarily be resolved through rule. Now, Buckel et al. seem to assume that such rule is hegemonic in Gramsci's terms (whether or not this is a good idea will be discussed in 3.4). They thus look for hegemony projects: (more or less) compatible sets of strategies that aim to articulate the various societal conflicts coherently.⁸ This anticipation of theoretical discussions yet to come is meant to point out one thing: They propose to 'find', in (B), such strategies explicitly not in structural(-ist) positions, but in enunciations of the actors themselves, e.g. through discourse-analysis (Buckel et al., 2014, pp. 45–46, 56–58). While it is a truism that actors never consciously want something they do not consciously want, they may well (not) do something they do not know about, articulate something *of interest to them* they do not suspect (à la "Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es" (Marx, 1973, p. 88; 'they do not know it, but they do it' (transl. HF)), a realist point). This must remain dogma in the sense that it will not fundamentally be contrasted with critical positions, only Poulantzas' version is introduced, again, this being a MA thesis, blaming scope – all of Poulantzas would be inadmissible if we did not assume this, as for him, classes have a *crucial* dimension that is unaffected by the will of its 'members'. The rub obviously lies in delimiting which is just mystical interest-ascription and which real articulation.

Interest thus refers to class interest. For Poulantzian class analysis, we thus can not rely 'merely' on deriving from discourse the strategies of actors. One could object that structural positioning is a

8 They distinguish hegemony projects, aiming to establish hegemony, from hegemonic projects, which already have.

question of analysing the (structural) context, but then again, hegemony projects are construed based on strategy-coalitions derived from discourse alone – unless classes would act as ‘classes for themselves’, we would be unable to analyse class struggle. This is similar to Spash’s criticism of Brand’s operationalisation of *materialist* policy analysis (Brand, 2013), where Spash (2014, pp. 408–409) argues that it is not enough to understand what actors perceive as problematic, since e.g. climate change is a non-discursive phenomenon: if we want to understand real mechanisms as causes, we can not (always) rely on empirical observation alone.⁹ This is merely to point to the real-material *dimension* of class struggle, not to naturalise/ objectify it structuralistically.

It seems good tone these days (e.g. Chakrabarti & Dhar, 2017; Boos, 2017) to distance oneself from objectivist, determinist (etc.) class theory, where, in a caricature of Cardoso’s and Faletto’s point on applying theory, it dictates to actors ‘what they actually want’. While this certainly is a possibility actualised far too often in orthodox Marxism, it seems to be a possibility inherent not just in Marxism as such, but in realism, i.e. in probably any realist theory of politics. We should here simply rely on e.g. Jessop’s discussion of the method (for theory construction) of articulation (1982, pp. 213–220; similarly on class, see Poulantzas, 1976, pp. 199–200), which also relies on critical realism and takes mechanisms to be tendential, reality to be complex and phenomena to be multiply determined. Then, given finite space, time and intellect, any theory must focus on aspects of some whole, which means that explanation is to be judged with respect to explanandum. Just as mechanisms do not (necessarily/ always) actualise transparently (reality being stratified), different theoretical conceptions might entail various levels of abstraction, where, though explanation of each of them must be compatible to that of others, it must take as either over- or underdetermined the *sui generis* structure of the others respectively. For instance, conceptualising class as an entity does not necessitate a theory of caste, gender or whatever, but it must be able to allow for overdeterminations of these entities’ mechanisms or their co-determination within some entity-structure global to them, when such becomes the explanandum, argues Jessop. In analysis, we thus have to move between abstract and concrete as well as simple and complex, where for both dimensions, neither can be conflated to the other, but each needs explanation in terms of the other, necessitating a back-and-forth movement (ideally spiralling upwards (or somewhere) to better explanation). Jessop calls this movement from abstract-simple to concrete-complex and back (etc.) *logical-historical analysis* (Jessop, 2014, pp. 140–141, see also (for regulation theory) 2001, pp. 23–27). With this, class interest (more detailed discussion in section 3.1) should be taken to be an abstract, thus underdetermined concept, which

9 It should be noted that this is probably something Buckel et al. would not object to, in fact it might just be a (my) misunderstanding caused by vocabulary (Wittgenstein) or different research objects (migration policy vs. class analysis). And it must be added, that this does not absolve the postulated *real* to be *empirically* demonstrated, proven.

does not necessarily, and if, not immediately but overdeterminately, actualise in concrete politics.

The text will not be able to fully follow Buckel et al.'s guide for reasons of scope (as such it will not leave out steps, but rely on existing literature to have in detail worked them out), but also because the problematique is slightly different: This text is not so much interested in retracing concrete politics, but in understanding their mechanistic functioning. For this, some 'political analysis' will be unavoidable, but this will need to be superficial and brief. Poulantzas will provide a theoretical (abstract) concept of class (simple), which will guide *interpretation*¹⁰ of a rich literature of class and caste (struggles) in India (concrete, more complex). Such interpretation will then be related to existing discussions of polit-economic transformations during liberalisation and recent democratic contentions (concrete-complex). Hence, a *theoretical* reading of the conjuncture in the context-analysis (A), providing position-systems for class (and later caste), will inform an actor-analysis (B), which goes beyond such structural determination by articulating these different systems (and) adding (historically contingent) social relations, struggles, identities, etc. that are not given by a class analysis alone. Relating (A) and (B) in a process-analysis (C) thus need not refer only to concrete sequences of events, specific contentions or even transformations, but can also be found in (perhaps unconscious) reproductions of pre-existing structures – for all of which, abstract explanations are sought; (hopefully) arriving “diesmal aber nicht [...] bei einer chaotischen Vorstellung eines [konkreten] Ganzen, sondern [bei] einer reichen Totalität von vielen [,verstandenen'] Bestimmungen und Beziehungen[– einer] Reproduktion des Konkreten im Weg des Denkens”¹¹ (Marx, 1971, p. 631).

2.3 Outline

The following will briefly formulate abstract hypotheses for the analytical strategy proposed below. Above relating of (A) and (B) will be done by way of analytically (re-)constructing (aspects of) state projects (these, allow me to simplify here, focus on the statal dimension of hegemony projects), by looking at how subaltern actors in their struggles attempt to 'state' interests, while focusing on the articulation of class in such processes: on how the intersection of caste and class shapes the institutional mode of access to the state *as* (an aspect of the mode of) the articulation of class in such projects. Which is to say that the analysis will approach from the class side and try to 'locate' it by relating it to caste; that, however, will require taking seriously caste as an 'autonomous' cat-

10 This text thus neither methodically reads Poulantzas, nor does it then methodically interpret the literature on India (e.g. via content analysis). This is a methodological shortcoming, partly due to limited scope and corresponding focus, but also the lack of available guidelines for the given context (see above). The interpretation itself of course is situated in the methodological framework here presented, i.e. 'only' its 'sub-steps' are not methodically developed.

11 "this time not [...] at a chaotic conceptualisation of a [concrete] whole, but [at] a rich totality of many ['understood'] assertions and relations [– a] reproduction of the concrete in thought" (transl. HF).

egory (not derived from or simply at some point added on to class but existing in its own right, see on Althusser's overdetermination below). In concrete analysis, no preference (even in focus) must be given to either. Awaiting theorisation, the 'agency side' in all of this will be conceptualised as 'strategy' and 'interest', the structural side as 'selectivity' and 'interest' (and interest itself, often, as 'contradiction'). Selectivity, since not all strategies are equally effective: *agents* are taken to have (i.a. *structural*) *interests* which do not translate into, but which co-determine *strategies*, which are directed at specific *structures* (potentials/ limits and *interests* in them) (cf. Jessop, 2008, p. 41).

The argument to be substantiated and explained in more detail below is based on the contention that institutional modes of access to the Indian state consist of (inter alia and as the focus chosen by this text) representation by and/ or organisation through parties. For capturing this, two general themes of focus are proposed: First, one of the principle ways in which caste will be relevant is in the 'second democratic upsurge' (Yadav, 1996, p. 96) leading either to a proliferation of parties or at least to a complication of voting patterns and coalition strategies. Caste is certainly not the only causal mechanism of proliferation, but it will be the one focussed on here. Second, class and caste are said to be variously intertwined and the ambiguous realpolitik resulting from the meeting of a (ostensibly) liberal state and 'traditional' hierarchy (e.g. caste) is said to divide political from civil society or at least means that the institutional ('civil') modes of access to the state are contested over and not themselves accessible to anyone.

Other than for caste-groups (or de-facto even individual castes), there are few 'class parties' if we allow that 'even' the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) when ruling in (coalitions in) West Bengal or Kerala (and indirectly even at the centre) as per their actual policies is at times pursuing liberalisation very similarly to other parties less suspect of working class solidarity. And (unlike for caste) there certainly are no class-quotas for state employment (which is not to say that economic criteria are irrelevant, but not class in our sense, see below). So how can class be said to be articulated here? Since articulation cannot refer only to immediate expression (as e.g. in speeches by the CPI-M), it must be understood as the working of mechanisms of interest definition/ ascription, representation, mobilisation, contestation and realisation. Classes, then, cannot themselves have concrete, but can have abstract interests that are conjuncturally, contingently and complexly, either consciously or unconsciously actualised in politics. Classes also are not (necessarily/ usually/ probably ever) actual groups of agents, but positions in real position-praxis-systems. An actor analysis will thus not presume 'class actors', but will need to show, how, if at all, actors are 'classed', that is, how class is articulated in their struggles.

With this in mind and the overall research question being

*How has the articulation of class and caste in the subaltern's struggles on the strategic field of the Indian state, specifically as party politics, evolved since 1980?*¹²

and pursuing above themes, the following sub-questions are proposed:

- I. How are class and caste articulated in *party-politics*?
- II. How has access to and use of *institutional modes* in the state's strategic selectivity changed?

Collier's procedure is one of explanation, not necessarily one of presentation. From the combination with Buckel et al.'s framework, however, it showed necessary to first introduce theory as a lens through which context-analysis can then be done, in relation to which an actor analysis can be added. Thus immediately following is a discussion of a selection from the state of the art of materialist state theory, which mainly relies on Poulantzas with some adaptations and extensions by Jessop. His class theory (3.1) builds the basis for his state theory (3.2). Substantive qualifications are necessary in terms of the complexity of social relations which (may or may not) form the state and which Poulantzas, it is argued, too often neglects for the benefit of a class analysis (3.3). Building on this, Gramsci's conception of civil society is supplemented with some qualifications for the global south (3.4). Afterwards, the text can turn to India, starting with an overview of the development of its political economy since independence, giving some context to and then focussing on the liberalisation and democratisation since 1990 (section 4.1). Here, first, the conjuncture around 1980 is illustrated (4.1.1), followed by discussions of general developments since then (4.1.2). Based on these struggles over e.g. an accumulation regime (and other 'reinventions of India' (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003)), a more specific discussion of the development of the contention over the state (project) since the inception of neo-liberal reforms is given (section 4.2). 4.2.1 gives a historical overview over the 'second democratic upsurge' in two of the most prominent states in this regard: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, while 4.2.2 focusses on the processes of national party politics (e.g. how representation and access are organised by them) by discussing the two largest of them: Congress and the BJP, with a special focus on developments in the 2014 national elections. Before being able to discuss the characteristics and the shifts in the strategic selectivity with respect to transformative inscriptions into state institutions/ apparatuses and the 'classiness' of relevant actors (section 4.3), the intersection of class and caste is discussed concretely and for this, crucially, 4.2.3 discusses general

12 As this account is but an interpretation of existing literature, and one that relies on complex and abstract analyses at that, it can not claim to proceed further than the mid-, at most and only selectively until the later 2000s; though an exception is made for a glimpse at the general elections of 2014, since here interesting, contrasting shifts occurred. 'Evolution' is used to cover both transformations and reproductions, not to imply any principles of dynamics.

developments in class relations, union politics and political caste calculus. Before in conclusion (section 5) reflecting upon more general points, section 4.3 discusses the research question.

3. State of the art of theory of the state

Poulantzas offers a complex theory of both class and state, which, it is argued, can productively be adapted and amended to address many questions on state and social contestation. As such, the third sub-section discusses a glaring hole (or so it is argued in 3.3) in Poulantzas' theory: the relevance of non-class struggles. His state theory (3.2) is based upon his class theory (3.1), but was developed for (some) countries in the global north. The relevance of the context-shift needs discussion, though only a brief one is feasible. This is done in 3.4. The section ends with discussing conceptions of state-society relations with India in mind, preparing the empirical discussion after.

3.1 Class

Poulantzas' class theory is explicitly structural (though not structuralist, see below): it proposes two different 'aspects' of class: structural place and conjunctural position. The determination (used by Poulantzas not in a deterministic sense) of structural *place* refers to the effect of the articulation of the 'instances' of economy, politics and ideology (we shall substitute this dreadful term by 'culture') on the social division of labour. In this, the structural place is determined "principally but not exclusively" (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 14) by relations of production ('the economy'). The *position* of a class refers to the concrete conjunctural situation, it can shift determined not by economic, but political and cultural factors, beyond the objective place of the structural determination (albeit not arbitrarily), it can even re-articulate the structure and thus the place (Demirović, 2007, pp. 45, 55).

Both place and position however, always suppose a conflictual relation: classes only exist in class struggle.¹³ „Structures don't take to the streets“ (Collier, 1994, p. 142) and thus classes are also "groupings of social agents" (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 14).¹⁴ In so far as places are structurally conflictual relations, they imply class interests of such groups in their struggles (since struggles always are about something 'interesting') and in so far as positions can shift beyond them, they are not assumed to be necessarily realised in such politics (or culture). Further, in so far as class struggle takes place irrespective of the agents consciousness of it (since it is the articulation of structural in-

13 As Das puts it "class is a relationship of exploitation and power between *classes*" (2007, p. 415, emphasis HF).

14 If we pursue this further, we may discover this already to be where all (class) analysis explodes: "Social forces must work through the human agent, [... who] contemplates and thinks, rationalizes and maximizes, such that no social force is left entirely in its pristine form once it has undergone such active human mediations" (Gupta, 2000, p. 263). And explode it should, since as Jessop predicts: "Not even one's most abstract conceptual starting points remain unmodified in the movement from an abstract, simple account [...] to a concrete, complex analysis" (1990, p. 341).

stances, is 'real' as in realism) interests also are structural (real), i.e. they themselves are not dependent upon the will of the grouping of agents 'constituting' a class. Thus, as per their structural place, classes struggle, which is to say groupings of agents struggle, but not deterministically structured: positions shift and can determine places. Places, which are not to be derived from economic contemplation, but historical analysis (identification of the (changing) articulation of the instances of a given structure), and similarly for positions (Poulantzas, 1975, pp. 13–17).

The social division of labour refers to three dimensions: the division between manual and mental, between functions (e.g. occupations) and indeed between classes; all these determine each other, are closely interrelated. The social division of labour itself is constituted by the combination of the relations of production and the labour process. The labour process, the relating of humans to nature, is historically specific: it constitutes the social division of labour only in combination with relations of production. The relations of production, now, are where classes enter: in a class society, they are of two kinds: those between the direct producers to the means of production and those of the non-producers to the means of production. In any class society, (some) non-producers are owners of the means of production, whereas the relations of the direct producers to the means of production differ by mode of production (feudalism, capitalism, etc.). In feudalism for instance it is one of possession (control over the direct production process but not over use of the product (which would be ownership)), whereas in capitalism, workers are 'naked', as Marx said, free from possession of means of labour/ production. Unlike suggested by Marx' metaphor, such workers do not just happen to appear in natura, they need societal (re-)production – political and cultural questions. Thus the relations of production themselves and with them the constitution of classes are already politically and culturally overdetermined (Poulantzas, 1975, pp. 18–19, 2002, pp. 55–57; Demirović, 2007, pp. 54–55).

Poulantzas adds an important addition to a definition of 'the working class': it is not only defined by its dispossession of the means of production, but also by its being exploited (Poulantzas, 1975, pp. 20, 180–182). Which is (however valuey one should probably read it (Lindner, 2011, pp. 103–105)) a precise analytical term in Marx' theory, denoting the retaining of the product of the worker's work by the owner (capitalist), which is of higher value (added to it by the worker in production) than the value of the worker's labour power (which the worker sells and is paid for/ which the capitalist buys on the 'labour (power) market'). We shall not indulge in further discussion of the labour theory of value implied, but need only note that value here is added in production (and not e.g. in circulation (except for e.g. transportation, which also adds value)). Additionally we should note that since *capital* is the processing of value, value begetting surplus-value, and noting that it is the worker in production adding this surplus value, the fundamental class relation of *capitalism* is that

between the owner (both owning and possessing the means of production, see above) and the *productive* worker (neither owning nor possessing the means of production). Productivity is thus strictly defined when talking about capitalism (viz. the mode of production, *not* the social formation (the concrete place where (otherwise abstract) modes of production are articulated, ‘India’, for instance)) with reference to the direct production of surplus value (Marx, 1973, pp. 167–170, 188–190, 196, 532).

Roughly following critiques cited by Demirović (2007, pp. 52–53), it is proposed as not very coherent to then talk about different fractions of *one* capitalist class: e.g. banking, trading and ‘industrial’ (i.e. ‘producing’) and at the same time talk about ‘the working class’ and only (at least almost; see on exceptions like transportation above) refer to those exploited by industrial capital (declassifying the rest from it). A fraction is a differentiation within a class, based on economic criteria. A stratum would be a differentiation within a class (or even fraction), based on political/ cultural criteria (Poulantzas, 1973, pp. 24–25). Either the fractions of the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) should be classified, not fractioned, themselves, or, and this seems more useful, the working class should be fractioned and not classified. This can not be theoretically developed here (the usual disclaimers apply). It will simply be suggested to define the working class not with reference to productivity, but to the criterion, “daß sie für den Gesamtprozeß des Kapitals notwendige Aufgaben erfüllen und diesem gegenüber insgesamt polarisiert sind”¹⁵ (Demirović, 2007, p. 52, note that this refers to (individual) capital, not capitalism as such (here, reproduction of workers, state-bureaucratic enforcement of contracts, etc. would be relevant as well)). Agents are part of the (one should prepend ‘capitalist’) working class, when they work for capital. At least this goes for the economic criterion of class-definition – we shall see below that political and cultural factors can dominate economic ones in their articulation in the constitution of a class. This should also prove useful when discussing the articulation of various modes of production, where one needs to differentiate capitalist from non-capitalist classes (see section 3.4).

This brings us to the petty bourgeoisie, comprising of two fractions. There is the old petty bourgeoisie, e.g. artisans or comparable, smaller traders, who both own (and possess) the means of production and do the work in production themselves. These are understood as originating from pre-capitalist modes of production and to tendentially (and at this rather deterministically) wither away (cf. on the persistence of non-capitalistic modes of production: Alnasseri, 2004, pp. 85–87, and what applies to modes of production should apply to their classes as well). And there is the new

15 “that they fulfil tasks necessary for the overall process of capital and that they are polarised against it as a whole” (transl. HF).

petty bourgeoisie: for Poulantzas, this comprises e.g. unproductive wage earners (who thus also do not own or possess means of production) such as the state-bureaucracy (and as has been criticised above, also unproductive workers of e.g. banking capital or other services). We have here the curious situation that two ‘groupings’ with different economic places are different fractions of the same class. This is so because, argues Poulantzas, they have the same political and cultural places (*as determined by their economic places*): individualism, meritocracy, conservatism, neutralistic idea of and belief in the state, etc. (Poulantzas, 1973, pp. 23–24; Demirović, 2007, p. 56). Thus we have three classes: capitalists, workers, petty bourgeois.

Special attention is paid by Poulantzas to technicians (1975, pp. 194–195). They are argued to be part of the (new) petty bourgeoisie, because, although they may actively and directly be involved in production and thus also produce surplus-value, their work is not just this – production of surplus-value – but also control of the production process. This is understood as a political aspect, which thus dominates the economic aspect of the social division of labour (just as for the capitalists themselves, also (possibly) productively involved in production). As they thusly realise the ‘despotism’ of the capitalist relations of production in the production process, they are, just as capitalists, not workers in one sense and something else (capitalists/ petty bourgeois) in another, but strictly part of the (new) petty bourgeoisie (and analogously the capitalists strictly are capitalists).

What Poulantzas is not interested in is claims about the class place or position of individuals (which is why he only talks of ‘agents’, when talking about those actually ‘comprising’ a class), but about structural relations (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 17). He is interested in better understanding (*not comprehensively guiding*) strategic perspectives in class (or state) relations to avoid ‘unprincipled’ coalitions, i.e. those, where a common interest is assumed but later discovered as inexistent, leading to failures in political struggles (Poulantzas, 1973, pp. 17–19, 2002, p. 51). This is possible, precisely because classes do not deterministically pursue their interests. Class positions can shift from their place, which might e.g. lead to a workers aristocracy allying with bourgeois fractions. It might also lead to technicians allying with workers in strikes, for instance (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 15).

Here it gets tricky. Structural positions (class places and positions) are translated (or vice versa) into concrete conjunctural configurations, into actions of groups of (ultimately) individuals (even if Poulantzas calls them ‘groupings of agents’). There is no explanation of how this translation happens (as Wright already warned about in footnote 5), or why it should (aside from them, structurally, having certain interests and then, apparently, politically ‘articulating’ them). Especially, there is no reason this should happen to whole ‘groupings of agents’ – why (and how) should the grouping

of technicians position itself with the grouping of workers in a strike (why and how, indeed, should the grouping of workers strike)? This seems simply not to happen – whole groupings striking, positioning themselves in relation to a specific strike, etc. (actual general strikes being somewhat rare).

I would propose that what (at this point) could easily, realistically be retained is the idea (Poulantzas, 1975, pp. 16–17) that class struggle need not be conscious for it to happen, in the sense that, classes being antagonistic (‘interested’) structural positions (places and positions), their configuration at any point in time will ‘reflect’ a certain balance of power, a certain allocation of resources to such positions, etc. Two other things could in this sense be retained for now: first, class positions might be understood as the conjunctural articulation of the instances insofar as e.g. control in the production process might be organised variously (from flat to strictly hierarchical, for instance), which will have a certain (limited) effect on the (places in the) relations of production, e.g. worker’s participation in the production process might be affected. Whether or not this understanding of position is useful will depend on whether one analytically wants to distinguish such more conjunctural articulation from more long-term (in this sense ‘more structural’) articulation.

The third contention that could be retained (or in fact argued, this is not in Poulantzas) would be, that position (delimiting this contention from the second, one could say ‘positioning’) could refer not to whole ‘groupings of agents’ but to particular ‘groups of individuals’. This would be to say that a concrete group of ‘technicians’ in a concrete struggle could be positioned in relation to some other concrete group of individuals (perhaps a group of striking ‘workers’). The groups of individual ‘technicians’ and ‘workers’ would thus be positioned *as* technicians and workers (probably amongst other positionings). Positioning would then still happen in relation to certain places (since they are beyond the will of individuals), possibly also to position in the second sense, and would thus not ignore class analysis as introduced so far, but would need much more explanation, specific to the concrete situation.

3.2 State

Poulantzas, it should be clear by now, should not be read as having provided a comprehensive theory of social struggles. Just as his class theory is to be contextualised (and, perhaps, partly incomplete and contradictory itself), his state theory does not provide a theory of the state as such, but a general one of the capitalist state (Poulantzas, 2002, p. 48), and we shall question its generality and the latter’s meaning/ theoretical significance.

As was hinted at above, relations of production are ‘relations of power’, which is to say that, since

the relations of production are class relations, they are relations of power between classes. It is for this reason, that classes are *always* in struggle: they are conflictual relations of power asymmetrically articulated by rule. Power is to be found in “the capacity of each class to realize its specific interests in a relation of opposition to that capacity in other classes” (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 36, see also 147-149). And at the same time the economy, qua the thusly political and cultural character of the relations of production, is not a neutral field, to which class struggle would be added (or not), rather, it itself is constituted by class struggle (partly – there of course is a ‘technical’ side as well, the labour process being the relating of humans to material nature (ignoring its social aspect for an abstract second) for instance) (Poulantzas, 2002, pp. 55–57). To highlight that explanation is thus not to be found in pure deduction from abstract concepts/ structures, nor voluntaristically in the contingency of the sheer will of individuals/ groups, the term *relation of forces* is often used (Wissel, 2010, p. 1941). Though Gramsci warns that “abstractly, this formulation explains nothing, or almost nothing – since it merely repeats twice over the fact which needs to be explained, once as a fact and once as an abstract law and an explanation” (Gramsci, 1999, p. 404). So any argument that aims to go beyond the highly abstract contention that ‘the economy is also political’ and actually wants to explain political processes *themselves* and not *as such*, must be about “*die Art und Weise dieser Herrschaft, um die Analyse, wer die Akteure [sic] sind, welche Politiken und Strategien sie verfolgen, welche Kompromisse sie eingehen, welche Bündnispartner sie finden*”¹⁶ (Demirović, 2008, p. 42, emphasis HF).

Power as capacity, which is to say the capacity to shape the political dimension of the relations of production, which is to say class relations, is thus to be found in the ‘intervention’ of the political in the economic. This happens, argues Poulantzas, through materialisation in/ as apparatuses. Power is realised only qua apparatuses, but as such not founded in them. For instance, the economic apparatus of the firm provides positions filled by concrete individuals such that some (e.g. management) have the function, task and right (cf. Bhaskar above) to organise and control the production process performed by others. Here, the fundamental power relation between classes, which is the owners’ capacity to ‘dictate’ the use of the means of production and the possessors’ capacity to organise the production process, is ‘realised’ in the firm. The foundation of class power, however, is to be found in relations of production, not in the apparatus of the firm itself (Poulantzas, 2002, pp. 64–65, 74).

The relations of production are thus distinct, but not independent from the apparatuses. The political dimension (power relations) materialises in apparatuses and thusly not only realises itself, but *in it*

16 “the mode of this rule, about the analysis of who these actors are, which politics and strategies they pursue, which compromises they adopt, which allies they find” (transl. HF).

influences the relations of production, e.g. (re-)producing ‘free’ workers, ready and willing/ forced to sign contracts with ‘free’ capitalists. We are already talking of the state: Poulantzas argues (2002, pp. 88, 103, 121–122, 146) that in this relation of distinction-dependence, the state is neither to be derived from purely economic relations, nor can it be thought to be absolutely autonomous from them (where one would be added to the other). He sees it as “a relationship of forces, or more precisely, the material condensation of such relationship of forces among classes and class fractions such as expressed within the state in a necessarily specific form” (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 128–129).

Autonomy of the state can be said to be relative instead of inexistent or absolute. It is relative because of the materiality of the condensation of the relations of forces: There are multiple forces and multiple apparatuses and in and between each there is thus a struggle over domination as the temporary resolution-qua-rule of their conflicts, which will thus *materialise* in the apparatus(es) in question, which is to say specific personnel will be positioned, laws or directives enacted, decisions not taken, priorities determined etc. The ensemble of apparatuses is contradictory, as is each apparatus. If and when they are held together, this is through the hegemonic rule of one force (or rather a group: ‘the power bloc’) over others, which would be of one (or multiple) apparatuses over others. As these apparatuses thus have a certain material density, they are not mere reflections of struggles, but themselves involved in them qua being the strategic field of their operation. Since the structure of this ensemble delimits spheres, channels as well as stakes and limits of power struggles, the state can in this way be said to be the processual organisation (mind you: organisation as in *process*, *not institution*) of the dominant class (Poulantzas, 2002, pp. 162–169).

Here, Poulantzas seems to be inconsistent: He wants to avoid giving the idea that workers could just ‘take over’ the state and be done with capitalism. His argument (Poulantzas, 2002, pp. 172–176) for why this is not so, however, seems to be (mostly) empirical, not theoretical: It is unlikely, he says, that such a strategy would be successful, since capital would be able to shift the dominant apparatus around (which is to say ‘determine’ a new apparatus as dominant within the state-ensemble), away from one that might have been ‘overtaken’ by workers. Poulantzas even suggests that dominated classes do not have their own power in the state, as they would not ‘exist’ in the state qua apparatuses, but only as centres of opposition. However likely the former might be for a given conjuncture and period of time, this is still an empirical contention on an abstract theoretical model, which as such seems perfectly capable to allow for materialisation of any configuration of relations of forces into any state apparatus (or at least quite incapable to prohibit materialisation of specific configurations). It would also seem to absolutise the above theorem of power as capacity: power would be only the capacity to totally claim one’s interests. The workers’ interests would materialise in the

state, but only as constraints on the interests of capital. But this seems contradicting to Poulantzas' repeatedly pointing to the hegemonic (that is, compromising, see 3.4) nature of conflict resolution and to the materiality of the compromises (again, he merely claims that the 'core' of the *capitalist* state is not affected (viz. the 'fact' that it is capitalist), but why this should not be *possible*, he does not discuss). The absolute power dictum would only make sense, if the only interest of the workers would be the transcendence of capitalist class relations. Which would then lead, as above, to only capital's interest being used in explaining capitalist class struggles (i.e. struggles *in* capitalism), which seems an unnecessary reductionism and would contradict the relational definition of power (cf. Poulantzas, 2002, pp. 177–179). Not least, because it would only explain why the state is capitalist, saying nothing of how it is so, i.e. 'what happens while it is so'. Higher wages, better social security and more rights should be just as much in the workers' interest.¹⁷

Which leaves only one of the words of the above definition of the state as a 'material condensation of relations of forces' for discussion. *Condensation*, however, is not defined by Poulantzas. Even the secondary literature is a bit sketchy. Demirović (2007, pp. 123–126, 227–230, 235–239) suggests as one of the possible sources Freud's psychoanalytical interpretation of dreams, where condensation means that „[e]ine einzige Vorstellung vertritt für sich allein mehrere Assoziationsketten, an deren Kreuzungspunkt sie sich befindet“¹⁸ (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2012, p. 580). A condensation of relations of forces would then be the representation of several relations by one. As a second source, Demirović suggests Althusser's use of condensation, which would imply that the condensation leads to impurity of the condensing relations of forces (since, one would assume, they are not represented as such, but by something else, which itself is modulated by the representation).

But not everything condenses and materialises in the state. Determining what does, is a question of political contestation (Demirović, 2007, pp. 110–111, 186–187, 190–191). Jessop tries to capture this with the term 'strategic selectivity', which means that certain strategies more easily lead to inscriptions in structures (in this case, the state), than do others: „social structure can be studied in 'strategic relational' terms as involving *structurally inscribed strategic selectivity*; and action can likewise be analysed in terms of its performance by agents with *strategically calculating structural orientation*“ (Jessop, 2008, p. 41, emphasis HF). This is very similar to the transformation model introduced above. What it highlights is the strategic nature of the relations between structure and agents. Selectivity could thus be read as a mechanism of a given structure (e.g. Pühretmayer, 2012,

17 It should be noted that there is a theoretical aspect to this argument: Assuming that taking over the state is to end capitalism would be to neglect the contention that class power is founded in relations of forces and that these are the relations of production not their materialisation in statal apparatuses. But from this, absolutism does not follow.

18 "a single idea represents for itself several chains of association on whose intersection it is situated" (transl. HF).

p. 45).

In doing so, however, Jessop seems to go too far: he (1990, pp. 261–262) contends that structure is relative. It is relative in the sense that it is a point of strategic reference only in so far as it limits or enables, which it does differently for differently positioned and strategically oriented agents. We shall stick with the transformation model and understand structure as universal, but positions to be particular (e.g. in their endowment with resources, rights, duties, etc.) and thus not go so far as to relativise it (which, it seems to me, would make the relationality of positions a contradicting conception if it is really a different structure they would need to be part of, dissolving the position-praxis-system), but simply be content with focussing on the strategic relation of structure and agency.

What Jessop does provide us, furthermore, is an interesting perspective on interests: They are positionally specific, as are strategies, since opportunities are different in the face of different selectivities. Similarly to above criticism of Poulantzas' absolutised conception of power, actors are not only interested in all-or-nothing terms, but do calculate feasibility and desirability when determining their strategic outlook. At the same time, they weigh, combine, neglect and prioritise different interests of theirs. Concrete strategies thus are contingent (Jessop, 1990, p. 268, 2008, p. 30).

3.3 Etc.

Butler's "illimitable *et cetera*" (1999, p. 183, emphasis JB) 'embarrasses', 'exasperates' foundational identity theories, unable, posits Butler, to completely situate the agent in, in order to delimit her/him from, structure (an illusive feat for Butler, but a proclaimed necessity for us, see 2.1). While realism need not claim foundationalism (Sayer, 2000, p. 68), we shall nevertheless look at the embarrassment that is non-class struggle to Poulantzian analysis, while, of course, not only indulging in deconstruction and not being interested in class identities, but class interests, which is to say class struggles. However, from the heights of, say, Polanyi's vantage point (2001, pp. 158–170), overlooking *longue durée*/ great transformations, classes appear much less significant than they do if they are put centre-stage in class analyses. For him, classes (as in 'groups'), while certainly antagonistic, also reproduce society as a whole, something they can not be said to have a *class* interest in. Class struggle thus must be integrated into wider societal processes to be explained at all. He even claims that classes are given significance by processes external to them. We need not do so, but should note that "it is the relation of a class to society as a whole which maps out its part in the drama" (Polanyi, 2001, p. 163).¹⁹ Thus we shall attempt (in however narrow a way this is possible

19 As an illustration, consider for instance an extract from Hobsbawm's narrative of conflicts during the Industrial Re-

here) to, as Jessop would undoubtedly phrase it, ‘put class in its place’.

Just as Butler is concerned about attempts at uncovering pure agency, Marx (of all the alleged structuralists) is concerned about use of pure analytical categories, since, as he says (Marx, 1971, p. 632, emphasis KM), even

“die einfachste ökonomische Kategorie, sage z.B. Tauschwert, unterstellt Bevölkerung, Bevölkerung, produzierend in bestimmten Verhältnissen; auch gewisse Sorte[n] von Familien- oder Gemeinde- oder Staatswesen etc. Er kann nie existieren außer als abstrakte, *einseitige* Beziehung eines schon gegebenen konkreten, lebendigen Ganzen.”²⁰

That this is true for class as well, is Poulantzas’ whole point. To argue this, as we have already seen above, he uses the term ‘overdetermination’, which means that in a general sense, class is „die Resultante mehrerer Ursachen, so daß eine einzige nicht genügt, sie zu erklären“ (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2012, p. 544; ‘the resultant of multiple causes, such that a single one is not sufficient for explanation’ (transl. HF)). But this is just the psychoanalytical origin of the term. Poulantzas adopts it from Althusser, for whom it more specifically means “komplex-strukturell-ungleichmäßig-determiniert“ (2011, p. 266; ‘complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined’ (transl. HF)). This is meant to counter the impression that in *complexity* (misunderstood as pure chaos), articulation would happen spontaneously, as in some primordial soup. With Bhaskar and Archer we know that it is *structured* and determinate. But the latter only in the sense that it follows causal mechanisms: it is contingently (soup) necessary (causation). He also points to the way the different *determinations* are articulated: rule. As Alnasseri puts it, “Artikulation ist [...] *die Bewegungsform widersprüchlicher Einheiten* [...]. Da sich ihre Einheiten stets durch ein dominantes oder hegemoniales Verhältnis konstituieren, kann es weder eine abstrakte noch beliebige Artikulation geben”²¹ (2004, p. 218 emphasis SA). The articulation itself is thus dominated by a certain entity, because the entities themselves and in their relations to each other are *contradictory*, which is to say antagonistic (‘interested’). Which one dominates, is variable. Furthermore, overdetermination prohibits derivation of the dominated from

volution, inextricably mixing broader social and more narrow class categories (and demonstrating the utility of querying class positions in/ and struggles): “[L]abourers reacted to the new system by smashing the *machines* [...] and] a surprisingly large body of *local businessmen* and *farmers* sympathized profoundly [...], because they too saw themselves as victims of a diabolical minority of *selfish innovators*. Labour and the disgruntled *petty-bourgeois* on the verge of toppling over into the *unpropertied abyss*, therefore shared *common discontents*. These in turn united them in the *mass movements* of ‘*radicalism*’, ‘*democracy*’ or ‘*republicanism*’ of which the British Radicals, the French Republicans and the American Jacksonian Democracy were the most formidable between 1815 and 1848. From the point of view of the *capitalists*, however, these *social problems* were relevant to the progress of the *economy* only if, by some horrible accident, they were to overthrow the *social order*” (1996, p. 39, emphases HF).

20 “the simplest economic category, say e.g. exchange value, presupposes population, population producing in certain relations; also certain sort[s] of family- or community- state-systems etc. It never exists but as an abstract, *one-sided* relation of a pre-existing concrete, living whole” (transl. HF).

21 “articulation is [...] the form of movement of contradicting entities [...]. Since its entities are always constituted by a dominant or hegemonic relation, there can be no abstract or arbitrary articulation” (transl. HF).

the dominant entities, since this would fall back to a simplistic determinism and forbid looking at Marx' 'lebendiges Ganzes' ('living whole'). The entities are relatively autonomous from each other in their articulation and overdetermination (Althusser, 2011, pp. 251, 260–262, 271).

However, for both Althusser and Poulantzas the, if you want, 'whole' of the articulation is still 'in the last instance' determined by the economy, viz. capitalism (Poulantzas, 2002, p. 46). This they proclaim is what 'Marxism' analytically means (Poulantzas, 2008, pp. 396–397). Jessop is critical: He points out that theorising such an ultimate determination is a theoreticism; such dominance for him can only be explained empirically. Determining the determination in the last instance abstractly leads for instance to the relative neglect of non-class struggles in such frameworks (Jessop, 1990, pp. 69–70). To counter this, Jessop (2011, pp. 584–592) proposes the notion of ecological dominance, taken from systems theory. The 'capitalist system' is able to impose itself on other systems in a dominant way, and this can/ could be explained theoretically for a given conjuncture, but there is no necessity for this to be as it is, it could well change. He is thus interested in understanding the momentum of each system/ entity. The entities are then to be analysed vis-à-vis their concrete articulation. A Marxist²² analysis (to be used without quotes only in this sense) for Jessop is thus to be found not in proclaiming the dominance of capitalism (the mode of production), but more modestly in analysing "modes of production, their *dynamics*, their *conditions of existence* and their *effects on other phenomena*" (Jessop, 1990, p. 13, emphases HF). It is explicitly to be combined with other modes of analysis for complex explanation (similarly Sayer, 2000, p. 5; Kaviraj, 2010, p. 146).

Additionally, for Poulantzas, 'forces' primarily means 'classes'. With him and Althusser, Demirović (2007, p. 127) seems worried, that if too much contingency is allowed (too little class-determination assumed), the capitalist nature of e.g. the state and politics is missed (usually (Demirović, 2007, p. 127, 2009, pp. 83–85) blaming Laclau and Mouffe (2014, p. 97)). Both Poulantzas (2002, pp. 72–73) and Demirović (2017, pp. 64–65) do hint at non-class forces (e.g. of gender relations), but then only discuss that the capitalist state also 'translates' them into class relations, that they have a class character. This might be true and a useful contention, but it does not suffice. Similarly to what was argued above for the materialisation of the interests of the subaltern classes, non-class relations of forces should 'equally' (a (any) relation of dominance is to be expected) be understood as materialising in the state. Hence, relations of forces should be understood generically, not purely capitalistically (Wissel, 2010, pp. 1950–1951), and their concrete form, mode and content of articulation be seen as object of empirical study, to be concretely explained, not abstractly predicted.²³ Thus such

22 Maybe better 'Marxian'. Anyway: "moi, je ne suis pas Marxiste" (Marx quoted in Engels, 1971, p. 388; 'I myself am not a Marxist' (transl. HF)).

23 It should be noted that, to paraphrase Polanyi (2001, p. 159), if a system is stable, predictions are more easily made

explanations must focus on the modes and processes of domination (“die Art und Weise dieser Herrschaft“, as Demirović put it above), which is to say on the articulation of contradictions, which were theorised by Poulantzas as condensations. One of the modes of condensation could thus be Gramsci’s hegemony (Demirović, 2007, pp. 122–123): a generalisation of (one side of) one relation over others (Gramsci, 1999, pp. 691–692). This would imply that the relations of forces condense in civil society and then materialise in the state.

Gramsci (Barfuss & Jehle, 2014, pp. 119–125) understands society to be composed of particularistic egoists (at least in part), which is to say individuals and groups with their own and competing interests. *Domination* would then be the enforcement of particular interests upon others. *Hegemony*, on the other hand, suggests a partial cleansing of the egoism: cathartic compromises, which integrate subaltern groups into rule of the thusly hegemonic (‘fundamental’) group(s). Here, the subaltern consent to such rule, hegemony thus implies the ability to present the articulation of particular interests as general. Such consent and compromise must be organised, cannot be enforced, this is said (per definitionem) to happen in *civil society*, while *political society* refers to direct enforcement/ command – government. The state is famously construed as integrating “political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion” (Gramsci, 1999, p. 532). The two are not to be understood as actually existing places or mutually exclusive positions, but as distinct ‘dimensions’, e.g. ‘the integral state’ is both (Becker’s (2008, p. 19) note on the ‘political’/ statal nature of social policy is a good illustration). Somewhat similarly to Poulantzas (but cf. Demirović, 2017, pp. 58–61), Gramsci (1999, p. 202) also sees the state as the organisation (as in process) of the ruling groups, which implies a disorganisation of the subaltern, which translates into an analogous division between political and civil society. Thus (Gramsci, 1999, p. 406):

“the life of the State is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable [cathartic] equilibria [...] between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups – equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e. [partly incorporating the subaltern’s interests].”

Just as ‘condensation’ or ‘relations of forces’ are terms that are just as important as they are vague, ‘passive revolution’ is a key idea of Gramsci’s which he uses somewhat imprecisely (see e.g. Gramsci, 1999, pp. 288–311). As it turns out several of the interpreters of Indian political economy employ this concept (without necessarily defining it themselves). While we will not need dissect their

and claims of ‘class-determination’ (in a system where domination of capitalism is stable) might be right more often than if not. But, again, these are facts to be empirically determined, not abstract laws. Following this, it might also be added (Demirović, 2009, p. 85) that, unlike Butler suggested, antagonisms are not unlimited, there is a rather concrete set of them, and they may be transcended one (or more) at a time. – There seems to be a scientific desire, which in the face of chaos/ soups/ complexity takes refuge in abstract certainty of either uncertainty or determinism.

theoretical frameworks, we should note here the take on ‘passive revolution’ by Barfuss and Jehle (2014, pp. 158–160) which should cover the India-interpreters’ below use of the concept generally. They suggest it is to be differentiated from ‘active revolution’ via the respective role of the subalterns in it; partly quoting Gramsci, they state: “Heraustreten aus der Subalternität heißt dann, ‘»subjektiv« werden lassen, was »objektiv« gegeben ist”²⁴ (Barfuss & Jehle, 2014, p. 159). Which also means that subalternity is defined by the passivity vis-à-vis the ‘objectively given’ conjunctural social relations/ ‘relations of forces’; activation is subjectivation as liberation. Passivity would then be that part of hegemony, where ‘the interests of the dominant group prevail’, the partiality of the catharsis.

Now, if contradictions in such relations can only be (temporarily) resolved through hegemony or domination (which is to say continually politically, precariously and naturally highly context-dependent), then a “hegemonic project is a complex, multi-dimensional process, which encompasses the institutional selectivity of the state, the formation of class and non-class alliances, a national popular movement, a strategic platform (‘policy paradigm’), and its organic link to an accumulation strategy” (Alnasser, 2011, p. 128, also 2004, p. 111). ‘Project’ here is specifically used to refer to a contested and ambiguous strategy, i.e. political contingency. Thus we arrive at an ‘organic’ or complex perspective that can combine (otherwise) bloodless economics of politics with (potentially voluntaristic) political, strategic analysis into a truly strategic-relational framework.

Jessop distinguishes state- from hegemony-projects, since while hegemony projects may require state projects in so far as the state may provide the field, the means through which different ‘contradictions’ are ‘resolved’, ‘the state’ must first be constituted, is itself not given. And in so far as it itself is constituted by various relations with different interests in it, it may be constituted in different ways by, for, against and without different sections of society. Thus, finally, if we are interested in the in-/ exclusivity of institutional modes of access to the state, we will find that this is theoretically captured precisely by ‘state projects’ (Jessop, 1990, pp. 8, 268, 346).

Articulation of class, then, is *a* modus of the pursuit of such projects: If we are interested in the ‘inscription’²⁵ of class (struggles) into the state, we are faced with a multiplicity of struggles that are either class struggles themselves or intertwined with them or have an indirect significance for them (e.g. through their inscription into the state). We will have to ignore the latter. If we are interested in not only any inscription, but that of the subaltern classes in a way that allows for universalisation of

24 “Stepping out of subalternity, then means ‘making »subjective«, what is »objectively« given” (transl. HF).

25 Possibly to be called ‘materialisation’, this is to be determined (it might not be an immediate materialisation in the sense of Chatterjee’s political society (2004, p. 40, see also below), as this is precisely defined by the precarity of ‘uncivil’ engagement; though he does point to the fact that it still has shaping effects on the actual form of politics).

improvements of conditions of their struggle (see below) qua transformation of state apparatuses (i.e. the strategic field's materiality), we have to understand the strategic selectivity faced by such institutional inscriptions also as a struggle with(in) the present class landscape in and around the state and the dominant coalition in it. As such, we are then analysing the mode of articulation of class in struggles that form the strategic field that is the relational state.

In such an analysis, class can neither be thought of as the single determinant from which everything else follows. Nor is there in any way a stable and linear process of class-struggle, evolving in predictable patterns. This is significantly complicated by factors not subsumable under 'the class contradiction'. This is true to such an extent, that it becomes futile to analyse class without paying respect to the intersection²⁶ of class and caste (due to the limited scope of the thesis, still left out are other factors, often just as relevant, such as religion²⁷, gender, ethnicity, locality, coloniality, *etc.*) (Chakravarti, 2004, p. 52; Mohanty, 2004, p. 28). Thus the presence of caste in class (e.g. Mukherjee, 2000, though not going quite as far) must be looked at in order to say anything concretely of class in a given conjuncture. „Dabei bleibt die [meta-]theoretische Anforderung bestehen, die Spezifität der qualitativ verschiedenen Mechanismen [...] zu analysieren, um wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse der jeweiligen historisch-konkreten überdeterminierten Gesellschaftsformation produzieren zu können“²⁸ (Pühretmayer, 2017, p. 124).

3.4 South

Poulantzas is very clear: His theories are written with "the imperialist metropolises, and [with] Europe in particular" (1976, p. 9) in mind. Nevertheless, the more general points should, he presumes, also apply to countries further down the 'imperialist chain'. Krieger (2015, pp. 29–31, 43–45) concludes for Poulantzas' state theory, that this imperialistic character of the world system then needs to be more thoroughly reflected in an understanding of the state (that in fact this is not just reflection, but resonance: imperialism reconfigures the imperialists as well²⁹). And this not just concerning the economic dimension and states, but also political, military and cultural as well as non-statal materialisations (i.e. international organisations). Pimmer (2017, pp. 224–229) adds, that non-

26 The term 'intersection' will be used generally, whenever there are two or more relations or entities that are relevant; they are likely to be analysed in their overdetermination, but as we saw, this refers to the complexity of the constitution of such entities and is thus more specific in analytical scope.

27 It seems completely absurd to analyse the proposed issues without discussing Hindu nationalism, but I do not see a way around it given the setting this text is produced in (i.e. the limits of scope (and my time)).

28 "The [meta-]theoretical requirement remains, that the specificity of the qualitatively different mechanisms be analysed, so as to be able to produce scientific insights into the each time historically-concretely overdetermined societal formation" (transl. HF).

29 When analysing resonance, it might make sense to speak not of internalisation but more generally of articulation.

capitalistic relations of production (or non-bourgeois (in the sense of ‘bürgerlich’) relations of production, if we allow that capitalism might after all not absolutely require relations based on ‘free’ contracts, in fact often incorporates quite the opposite (Gerstenberger, 2017, p. 17)) need more attention, since these are more predominant in some countries of the global south.

Poulantzas provides somewhat of a theorisation of imperialism. He understands imperialism as the global articulation of social formations (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 23). Though Jessop (2017, p. 82) bemoans the simplicity of the metaphor of the chain (which should be read overdeterminately-complexly: Alnasseri, 2004, p. 64). Poulantzas points out that imperialism does not refer only to relations between social formations, but also to the whole (Wallerstein (2006) would say ‘world system’) and has effects ‘internal’ to the individual formations, which are not just inter-formational relations. To capture this, he introduces the concept of ‘internalisation’ (similarly Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, p. xvi), which proposes that the imperial relations (Poulantzas also refers to them as ‘contradictions’ and thusly points to the fact that dependent formations are disarticulated in this process) need reproduction *in* a given social formation, e.g. through articulating relations of forces there.³⁰ From this, Poulantzas even postulates a ‘primacy’ of such internal(ised) factors. For instance, Poulantzas presumes (1976, pp. 70–72) the existence of a national bourgeoisie (with an accumulation basis more or less autonomous from foreign capital), a comprador bourgeoisie (merely intermediating for foreign capital, with no own basis of accumulation) and an internal bourgeoisie (distinguished from the former by the fact that, though it is politically and culturally dependent upon foreign capital, it still has its own basis of accumulation). In general, each formation is determined by the chain, but not deterministically-completely, more emphasis is placed on the specificity of each, they do not all follow the same path (Jessop, 2017, pp. 82–84, 91–93).

Krieger (2015, pp. 45, 279) points out, however, that Poulantzas neglects a detailed analysis of internalisation vis-à-vis subaltern classes.³¹ For the purposes of this text, we shall adopt the definition of ‘subaltern’ as “a name for the general attribute of subordination in [...] society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (Ranajit Guha, 1982b, p. vii), which of course builds on Gramsci’s use of the term, which itself was specifically meant to

30 While the international dimension is beyond the scope of this text, Brand (2015, p. 99) interestingly notes that processes in civil society today are internationalised, even if ‘politics’ then mainly happens with reference to states. This seems to open avenues of inquiry beyond focussing primarily on global elite or production networks.

31 Heller makes the more general point that subaltern classes as agents of change have generally been neglected in many developmental analyses, producing, at best, a distorted picture of the processes of development and at worst have led to (falsely) ascribing solely to markets or elites the bringing about of, for instance, more democratic societies (1999, p. 1) – a narrative that is dangerous in its naivety. And others make the still more general point that class analysis as such must not be sidelined in development analyses (Campling, Miyamura, Pattenden, & Selwyn, 2016; for India: Herring & Agarwala, 2006).

transcend class-reductionism (Barfuss & Jehle, 2014, p. 101). A stronger focus on subaltern actors, however, should not lead to a shift to purely internal relations. This happened for instance in the failed-state debate, which tended to look for *internal* factors of ‘failure’ (Heigl, 2007, p. 276). Whatever importance is ascribed to internal factors and actors, they are always (partly) conditioned by and integrated into external relations (e.g. Schaffar showed that ostensible failure is positionally (as in conflictual relations) relative (some profit), at times rather stable and closely integrated into global (imperial) relations: 2008, pp. 56–57). The take-away is rather that, similarly to Poulantzas’ pointing to the politics of the economy, the (re-)production of such systems fundamentally relies on political struggle, that there is no simple imperial determinism and neither is there anything to historically be repeated³² by dependent formations, their development³³ is specific.

Imperialist relations are not just relations of exploitation, but of dependence, where “a system is dependent when the accumulation and expansion of capital cannot find its essential dynamic component inside the system” (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, p. xx). The economic side of this is variously proposed (Alnasser, 2004; Becker, 2008, pp. 11–15; Heigl, 2007, p. 278) to be captured by regulation theory, which suggests that conflicts over the articulation of various economic ‘parameters’ (export or import orientation, distribution of profits between capital fractions, mode of integration of workers into the production process, etc.) need to be settled for capital accumulation to function. Crucially this allows a more detailed understanding of how the internalisation of imperial relations might lead to a *disarticulation* and thus to obstacles to development and/ or growth of dependent economies/ formations. We will only sparsely refer to such matters in the general discussion of the development of the conjuncture and highlight here simply that this allows a theorisation of the concrete form of disarticulation and respective (structural) limits, opportunities for, effects on and fields of social struggles (Alnasser, 2004, p. 215).³⁴

32 In this context and text Marx’ infamous claim of the necessary evil of the imperial colonisation of India (allegedly preparing socialism) must be noted, which he, in probably one of the ‘highest’ expressions of the eloquent horror of ‘enlightened’ optimism, closed citing Goethe: “Sollte diese Qual uns quälen, / Da sie unsre Lust vermehrt; / Hat nicht Myriaden Seelen / Timurs Herrschaft aufgezehrt?” (in Marx, 1960, p. 133; ‘Should this agony torment us / Since it augments our delight / Have not myriads of souls / Been consumed by Timur’s reign?’ (transl. HF)). Goethe himself, of course, was of the very same mind: “Daß Moskau verbrannt ist, tut mir gar nichts. Die Weltgeschichte will künftig auch was zu erzählen haben” (in Fetscher, 2006, p. 81, for Goethe, Napoleon’s Russian campaign was a historic necessity; ‘That Moscow was burned down does not affect me. World history wants to have something to tell in the future.’ (transl. HF)).

33 Given my intellectual socialisation, I feel the need to justify my use of this term. In the few instances where it refers not to ‘historical process’, I would claim that the argument presented here is agnostic to further clarification of a vague, general definition: “Development [...] means, essentially, meeting basic needs: sufficient food to maintain good health; a safe, healthy place in which to live; affordable services available to everyone; and being treated with dignity and respect” (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 1). For the dimensional focus of this text, see footnote 34.

34 “Development always alters the social system of domination as it changes the organization of production and consumption. It cannot be reduced to changes at the institutional level or to the analysis of actors’ value orientation. This view of the problem encourages us to analyze the political behaviour of social classes that maintain control at the structural level and those that oppose such control” (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979, p. 16). More pointedly: “As a dy-

More important for the matters at hand is the immediate context of political struggles. A very common proposition here, though variously explained, is a ‘divided society’: between elite and peoples’/ subaltern politics (Ranajit Guha, 1982a, pp. 4–5; or similarly between political and civil society: Chatterjee, 2004, p. 38), as the racial-colonial exclusion of i.a. Indigenous peoples from the white, ‘seigniorial’ nation (Quijano, 2000, pp. 565–568; or similarly Zavaleta’s motley society: Ortega, 2015, p. 109), between pre- (or at least non-) capitalist and capitalist modes of production with their own dynamics and classes (classically: Alavi, 1982, pp. 296–297; Evers, 1977, pp. 27–29; currently: Amin-Khan, 2012, pp. 96, 107; Alnasseri, 2004, pp. 89–90).

Where a division (or rather: separation) is sometimes explicitly not assumed (or significantly qualified, especially in the role of the state) for the periphery, but is assumed for the centre, is between the political and the economic (e.g. Amin-Khan, 2012, pp. 102–103; Alavi, 1982, p. 303; Brand, 2015, p. 93). This separation is said (Poulantzas, 2002, p. 47) to be a central feature of the capitalist state. While it can not be discussed (but is assumed) here, it should be considered whether this might not be a division, but a mode of separation similarly to the increasing economic role of the central, ‘fordist’ state (and the role of the economy in the state) diagnosed, then, by Poulantzas (2002, pp. 195–198; this would also necessitate a discussion of relative autonomy of the state as in Pimmer, 2017).

What we are interested in is the politics of one of the modes of this separation: class struggle. In this, Becker (2008, pp. 21–22) points to the central role of political parties, which, he suggests, can become vehicles of accumulation, as they allow access to the ‘interventionist’ state (i.e. the state, so it is assumed, that is not as ‘distinct’ from the economy as are those in the global north). What is more, parties are then said to represent constituents mainly on the basis of criteria such as religion, ethnicity or regionality. While we need not share what seems to be implicit, namely the understanding of a universalist capitalist market economy and its ‘other’ in the form of a pre-capitalist, particularist ‘politics’, we have arrived at the central problem of this text: the nexus of caste and class in its articulation of modes of access to the state with respect to party politics.

More specifically, this raises the question of hegemony and/ or civil society in the periphery. Here, Becker (2008, pp. 19–22, 27) posits a limited capacity for hegemony in peripheral formations. This is so, he argues, because first, they tend to have limited material resources that could be distributed as compensation or incentive for submission under the rule of a hegemonic bloc. And second, be-

namic social process, development is driven by the conflicts among organized social actors” (Heller, 1999, p. 22), because “[d]evelopment, however it is defined, requires the production and distribution of a surplus” (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 1).

cause of the ‘structural heterogeneity’ in these formations. This refers back to the various divisions cited above. Civil society is said to be weaker in the periphery (Costilla & Pimmer, 2015, pp. 53–54; similarly Heigl, 2007, p. 281), not least because in this heterogeneity are elements that are organised politically qua clientelism (or sheer exclusion) and not ‘free’ and universal representation.³⁵ At least we have to assume the latter, since it is clientelism that Becker contrasts to hegemony and mere rule by force. Thus we would have a third political modus. Brand (2015, pp. 98–99), however, suggests that hegemony should not be taken as absent in the face of force. This should be understood in light of the dimensionality of political and civil society mentioned above: They are not mutually exclusive spaces or relations. Brand understands hegemony as the consent to rule organised in civil society and he is more interested in the modus of hegemony, how it is (attempted to be) organised concretely, not only in if it absolutely exists or not. This seems to allow for more nuanced analysis, where civil society and hegemony do not have to be abandoned once politics (or rather, the relating of the particular and the universal qua rule as organised in the state; in contrast to other forms of rule) happens in terms other than those Gramsci claimed to have found in the western Europe and northern America of a century ago, and which subsequently seems to be assumed to be there and everywhere else the sole content of civil society.

This is a rather useful generalisation because it would then be able to integrate into civil society clientelism, which we will encounter again in discussions of caste politics. Thus this does not argue against understanding peripheral (in fact also central) formations as being variously divided or heterogeneously structured, but wants to point to the overlapping and interaction of the ‘spheres’ (for precisely such nuanced takes on peripheral civil society, see e.g.: Corbridge, Harriss, & Jeffrey, 2013, pp. 221–238; Kaviraj, 2010; Nilsen & Roy, 2015; Oliver, 2010; Witsoe, 2013). They present different registers between which agents may shift strategically and which might be open to agents in terms of strategic selectivity. Only hearing their cacophony is to reject political analysis, the more interesting point is to decipher their ensemble. For Witsoe, “recogni[sing] that democracy emerges in specific forms in post-colonial contexts, therefore, has to go beyond an emphasis on the constraints that this imposes. A positive theorization of postcolonial democracy is needed” (2013, p. 7).

This somewhat detailed theoretical discussion was meant to carefully open up Poulantzas’ framework for integration of non-class relations. The resulting multi-relational approach to understanding class and state allows for a processual look at overdetermination and materialisation in/ of various struggles on the strategic and selective field of the state, while avoiding simplistic conceptions à la

35 Similarly to Gramsci’s assessment (1999, p. 494), for whom in pre-1917 Russia: “the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society.”

‘the state vs. the economy/ people’. Likewise the complexity of the above class theory will allow avoiding absolutist idea(l)s of class-for-itself struggles and invite inquiries into the concrete mode of class’ relevance in a given conjuncture. For the global south in particular, we saw general applicability of such theories, with specific attention to selectivity in terms of exclusion of wide sections of society, especially along lines of institutional access to the state. Such modes, as we noted, surface in the processing of political hegemony projects which Gramsci construed to require the relating of ‘objective’ conditions and ‘subjective’, strategic reactions in struggles situated in and (re-)producing specific relations of forces. Democratisation, for instance, is then a liberation from subalternity qua transformation of such relations.

4. India

“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man [sic] one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which [th]is [Constituent] Assembly has [s]o laboriously built up.” (Ambedkar, 1949)

A curious prophecy by Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the ‘father of India’s constitution’, issued in his closing speech to the Constituent Assembly. That neither has really happened, the removing (in the definite sense implied; there have been great changes, not seldom for the better) of socio-economic contradictions or the blowing up of democracy, Ramachandra Guha (2007) is at pains to point out. Part of what makes India so fascinating for him (and much more so than Europe; that was interesting in the 19th, India is in the 20th century, he says (2007, p. xx)), is indeed how this has worked out.

After an very rough overview over key developments in India’s post-independence history, a still crude, but somewhat less so, narrative of some aspects of caste, class and party politics up until, and then again somewhat more detailed since 1980 is presented below. Based upon this, the research questions can at last be discussed in the concluding, final sections.

4.1 India's political economy around 1980

4.1.1 Getting there

Life expectancy at independence was at an average of 36 years (and a whole ten years less than that only a quarter century earlier) (Zijdeman & Ribeira da Silva, 2015) – the most damning indictment of colonialism, as Bardhan rightly notes (he even gives a number seven years below this one, as cited by Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 30). However, as figure 2 shows, several indicators have developed decisively to the better over the decades, though the picture is far from rosy.³⁶

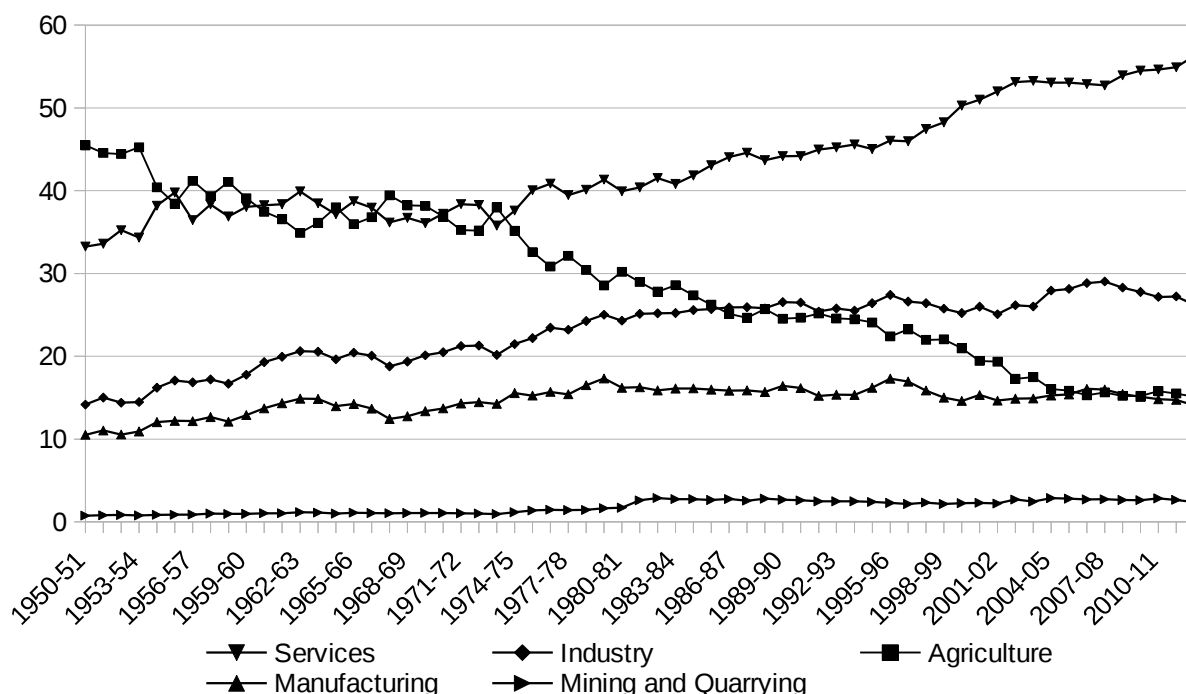


Figure 1: Sector share (%) of GDP, 1950-2013.

Compiled from (Planning Commission, 2014, pp. 2–3).

The figure obviously neglects any variation in caste, wealth, gender, between rural and urban areas, as well as across states, etc. The general trend, nevertheless, is usually similar (in the sense that few are absolutely and completely left behind), however modified its extent and development (the next section will take a closer look at the exclusiveness of recent economic growth and poverty reduction). Besides continuous improvements in life expectancy and literacy, what catches the eye is the beginning of the trend in the reduction of the poverty headcount index (percentage of the population below the poverty line) in the late 60s/ early 70s with some stagnation in the 90s (the significant drop (here 12 points) in 2000 is statistically contentious – though Datt and Ravallion controlled for the underlying problem of the respective sample in the above data, some still suggest the actual

³⁶ Beginning this narrative with Indian independence is somewhat arbitrary (to give just one example: the Congress has a just as long pre-independence history (since 1885)), but, alas, scope dictates we cut history off somewhere.

value is closer to five points instead; in addition, the official poverty line is considered very harsh in general at around only one USD per day (based on the physiological subsistence level), which excludes between 100 and 150 million people from being counted as poor as compared to variously proposed alternative poverty lines (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 53–55)). The increase of GDP (gross domestic product) per capita since the mid 80s is initially slow, but accelerating since the 2000s. The Gini index can be higher by as much as 10 to 20 points (!), depending on the source; such outliers have been neglected in the above graph, the source is mainly the official National Sample Survey – in any case, it is visible that the index decreased roughly from around 35 to 30 in the 1950s, then stagnated in the lower 30-values until it began to increase again from the early 90s to values it had right after independence.

We should be careful, caution Corbridge et al. (2013, pp. 30–33), not to draw too stark a contrast between the ‘Hindu rate of growth’ (of GDP), a phrase often used to indicate the more-or-less-stagnation (in per capita terms) up until liberalisation, before the 80s and that after: neither is there really such a thing as a particularly ‘Hindu’ rate of growth after Indian independence (it being average compared to the rest of the world in that period), nor is there a clean break between the two roughly 30-year periods: policy has certainly shifted, but that this was growth-effective was due to developments initiated and building up during the previous decades (not to speak of the political conditions for such a shift). As such developments, Corbridge et al. (2013, pp. 33–41; similarly Kohli, 2006a, p. 1255) mention inter alia the very fact of India’s unity (i.e. its continued existence), steadily rising saving and investment rates, capital accumulation (human and physical) as well as the rule of law and avenues of conflict resolution. And as per figure 1, the sector-distribution of India’s GDP also began to shift around 1975 (with the share of agriculture declining and that of services rising, as well as industry ‘growing’ again after a decade of (relative) stagnation), at a time when liberalisation was not yet (effectively) on its way.

This massive structural transformation of the economy is, as we shall discover, at the core of several of the developments that interest us in this text. This “agrarian question” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 63) of ‘how to feed the nation and generate savings to invest in industrialisation’³⁷, answers itself through “the dispossession of many peasant producers – they loose control of their own land and other assets – and those affected by dispossession move into dependence upon wage labour for others” (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 81; Chatterjee, 2008, p. 54; though the general relevance of agriculture for industrial development in India is questioned by Lerche, Shah, & Harriss-White, 2013,

37 Though for a more ‘classy’ reading, see Lerche et al. (Lerche, Shah, & Harriss-White, 2013, pp. 338–339).

p. 344).³⁸ This comes in various forms. There is (more or less) simple dispossession, e.g. of the Adivasis (the ‘indigenous Indians’), who happen to live “in the most resource rich areas of India – with the best forests, the most valuable minerals, and the freest flowing rivers” (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 620; also Lerche, 2010, pp. 76–77). But there also is the re-articulation of the agricultural relations of production, i.e. class relations/ struggles. After independence, the abolition of the zamindari system (local, native, colonial tax collectors with significant autonomy regarding the means of collection, first payable to the British East India Company, later the Crown; for our purposes we may liken them to jagirdars, who in some regions had similar functions) benefited mostly the intermediate castes in terms of the ensuing land redistribution. In fact, agricultural interests were so powerful, that in the first decades there possibly was a net transfer into rural, not urban economies (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 64; Witsoe, 2013, p. 27). And further land reforms (the “self-evident” answer to ‘the’ agrarian question (Senghaas, 2003, pp. 7–8)) were variously promised by the Indian National Congress (INC), but only actually implemented by the less compromising Communists in Kerala and West Bengal (Heller, 1999, pp. 10–11, 40; and by the even less compromising Naxalites, if one dare say so: Lerche, 2010, p. 77).³⁹ When the Green Revolution came (to parts of India), it was the richer peasants who profited primarily. While it is a contentious issue whether these farmers’ politics ought to be analysed primarily from a class or caste perspective, what seems undeniable is that their political assertion (beginning at the state level in the 60s and e.g. leading to 36% of the 1977 Lok Sabha (the lower house) being composed of ,farmers‘, up from 22% in 1952) both paved the way for capitalist transformation of the countryside (concentration of capital) and strengthened calls for lower-caste reservations (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 82, 105, 235; Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 220, 289, 532–533; Harriss, 2013, p. 355; cf. McCartney & Harriss-White, 2000, p. 14 on the farmers’ share). These claims of lower castes were paralleled, if not reacted to, by those of Dalits (formerly ‘Untouchables’, see immediately below), often leading to (violent) conflicts between the two, since “it was the former who mostly owned the land, and the latter who laboured on it” (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 534; 616). And against all of these ,subaltern assertions‘, the elite revolted (as Corbridge and Harris (2003) put it) in the form of liberalisation and Hindu nationalism.⁴⁰ But we should not get ahead of ourselves – suffice to note here, that what

38 “Just what does modernization mean for the peasantry beyond the simple and brutal fact that sooner or later they are its victims?” (Barrington Moore cited by Heller, 1999, p. 51).

39 However, as Gupta (2005, p. 752) bitterly notes: “What land reforms and land redistribution could not do, demography and subdivision of holdings have done to land ownership. Where are the big landlords? There are some, but they are few and far between. But does this make the village an egalitarian utopia? Far from it!”

40 Or to put it more eloquently: “India has seen two transfers of power, one from the British to the Indians and the second from the upper castes/classes to the middle ranks, but not a third transfer: power sharing with the bottom half of society. This will come about, but it will take a long time. Meanwhile, as the bottom cried ‘upward’ and those above cry ‘back’, there will be turmoil and some violence as elements within society test both the goals and the institutions of the constitution” (Granville Austin cited in Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 200; emphasis removed)

seem like gradual progressions of curves along abstract scales are in fact the basis for and outcome of highly contentious (and often bloody) political processes. To understand these developments better, first, consider caste.

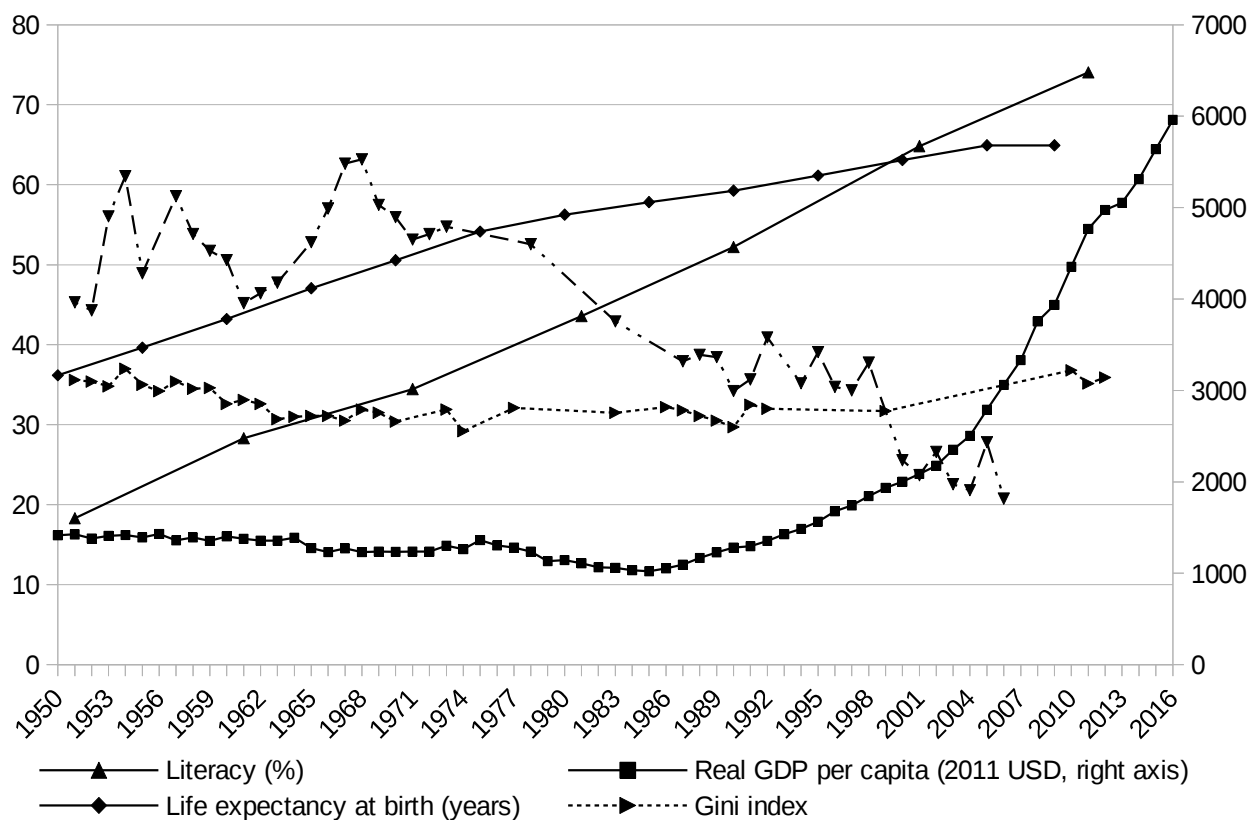


Figure 2: Various social indicators for all India, 1950-2016.

Compiled from (for GDP: Bolt, Inklaar, Jong, & Zanden, 2018; for poverty headcount: Datt & Ravallion, 2010, p. 60; for literacy: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2014, p. 3; for Gini: UNU-WIDER, 2017; for life expectancy: Zijdeman & Ribeira da Silva, 2015).

4.1.1.1 Caste

Within ‘the’ caste ‘system’, one can differentiate between varna, which “refers to the four subdivisions [...]: Brahmins, who were traditionally priests; Kshatriyas (warriors); Vaishyas (merchants); and Sudras [more or less equivalent to the OBCs, see below], who performed a broad range of other tasks” and jati, which means “caste ‘groups’ that were until recently linked to a specialist occupation” (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 239).⁴¹ Each jati belongs to a varna, see below. This text uses caste to refer to both jati and varna, the referent being contextually specific. This being said, it is usually the jati that will be immediately relevant (as it is in today’s politics more generally). The ‘Other

HF). This is precisely what is said to happen since the 1980s and 90s (Jodhka, 2011, p. 162).

41 Though the link between jati and occupation is receding, at the extremes it is still noticeable (Vaid, 2012, p. 402; similarly Harriss-White, 2003, p. 177).

Backward Classes [Castes]' (OBCs)⁴² are, as defined by India's constitution and identified by various administrative reports, the 'lower castes'; i.e. they are, in this sense, below the high castes, but above the Dalits (formerly called 'Untouchables' or now, by the Indian state, 'Scheduled Castes' (SC)). Other than for Dalits and 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST), whom we called Adivasis above, state-employment-reservations for OBCs were not implemented immediately after independence. Despite the wide variation across India of the significance and distribution of caste(s) (and in fact the locality or at most regionality (currently forceful at the state-level (Yadav, 1996, p. 103)) of matters of specific, individual jatis (or jati-groupings unrelated to varna)), there can be said to be some general trends of the (re-) articulation of caste(s)'s role in society unfolding over the last decades, however unevenly and asynchronously; and that the whole of 'the caste system' has transformed tremendously since independence, keeping in mind that caste is much more resilient than modernists would have expected/ liked it to be (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 240; Jodhka, 2011, pp. 158, 164).

The caste system, as Gupta sees it, has a hierarchical and a differential component. Difference, here, means that a set of entities are logically equivalent and thus cannot be ranked (amounts of money, for instance, could; languages as such, cannot); hierarchy, however, means that they are – this paradox can only be solved by a third element: power. This is to say that differences (castes) are politically hierarchised (Gupta, 2000, pp. 21, 40). Yet, caste is not only thought of (by the systems' 'ideal' adherents) as being a purely imagined, enforced ideology. Rather, it is naturalised through claiming persons from each caste to consist of different substances (and their purity is to be maintained, it is proclaimed). This explicitly prohibits individual mobility. But it cannot totally prevent systematic mobility: The system is not static, but dynamics happen at a "glacial pace of change" (Gupta, 2000, p. 27), as they require shifts in the hierarchical standing of whole groups (which thus requires highly contentious political processes). This implies that the caste system as such needs not be questioned for mobility to happen in it and politics to happen through it. Which is precisely to not say that the lower castes do not believe in the caste system since it oppresses them, nor that they believe to deserve their lowly places – Gupta contends that the usual story told by the lower castes is that, though they may be in a lower position now, this was not always the case (but is now due to some assumed catastrophe) and that they thus rightfully should be re-established into their higher position (politics). And likewise amongst the higher castes there is contention over who is actually in the

42 That it is officially 'class', not 'caste' is ascribed by Jaffrelot (2003, p. 220) to "the leftist inspiration of Nehru and others and a widespread idea that India had to move away from caste-like social organisations". Caste, however, has always been a key criterion, though never the only (in fact the constitution provided it must not be the sole criterion (economic and political ones are therefore added), just as it was ruled unconstitutional to discriminate on economic grounds alone), when identifying a caste as belonging to the OBCs (this is thus a worldly and not a divine order). In such identification, they are largely but not completely equivalent to the Sudra varna. The criteria though have always been highly contentious, often needing Supreme Court ruling (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 222, 246, 348; for an overview over both commissions' criteria, see Shah, 1990, pp. 265–266).

highest positions in the first place and why so. What is more, such claims may sometimes even be ‘correct’ in so far as some of those castes now claiming to be at the apex (or bemoaning their place somewhere else) were previously to be found elsewhere in ‘the’ hierarchy (Gupta, 2000, pp. 19, 27, 31, 46, 68). This possibility of demanding higher caste status was made use of predominantly during colonial government (but ‘sanskritisation’ is still relevant, see footnote 60), after independence it was the entitlement, rather than the elevation of status, of individual castes (also caste-groups, as in OBC) that became the dominant modus of caste politics (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 34–36).

There thus is no forever-fixed and universally adhered-to caste system, rather, the latter is intricately linked with the socio-economic history of the various Indian societies over several millennia. Gupta (2000, pp. 202–223) shows how the increasing differentiation of society (particularly in the form of the increasing distance, which is to say exploitation, between producers and owners which made differentiation possible in the first place) continuously re-articulated the caste system, adding and shuffling castes in it and introducing and modifying protocols for their interaction over time. As such it was ‘always’ *also* an ideology meant to legitimise class relations and it has changed with them. In fact, “[f]or castes to survive as part of a system, and not just as a number of substantiated isolated identities, a feudal-like social structure is a paramount requisite” (Gupta, 2000, p. 8; similarly Chakravarti, 2004, p. 50; Mohanty, 2004, p. 34). Saying this, he refers to the occupational differentiation along jati lines and the related jajmani system, which i.a. established protocols for duties of jatis towards each other. This only developed from 200 CE onwards (especially between 700 and 1200) with the emergence of feudal-like social structures and thus was an addition to ‘the’ caste system (the varna differentiation dates back to the Vedic age, roughly 1500-500 BCE), in fact constituting today’s common referent of caste: jati (Gupta, 2000, pp. 130, 221).

The colonial administration had endeavoured, once it realised that pure outsourcing of local government to zamindars (and alike) was insufficient for colonial governance, to make their population legible to them, i.a. by meticulously (though perhaps not very wisely) enumerating and scheduling castes. In the process, “Government’s passion for labels” (British census-official quoted by Witsoe, 2013, p. 29) fixed administratively and centrally what were before more fluid, localised ethnicities – and such “state simplifications”, Scott (2008, pp. 65, 83) reminds us, are of course “not merely means [for states] to make their environment legible; they are an authoritative tune to which most of the population must dance”. And danced they have; though it was not only the colonial state that began to ‘see’ castes in this way, their constituents did so as well and this provided them with identities as rallying points for regional, even national political alliances and associations. Such identit-

ies should then survive the British Raj (rule) (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 28–30).⁴³

All this has come into significant flux since independence. While one should not neglect the impact education and the media had on re-shaping discourses on caste (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 247–248), we shall focus on more immediate political representation and organisation (parties) and the re-articulation of class (relations) in a transforming society. We already hinted at one of the key developments after independence: the abolition of the zamindari system (which had previously contributed to a hardening of caste hierarchies in the sense Gupta introduced above) and land redistribution both countered the upper-caste, local elites, however limited the redistribution was in the event. This began to loosen the rigidities of caste lines (Jodhka, 2011, p. 160; Vaid, 2012, p. 420; Witsoe, 2013, p. 41). While Guha is right that in this respect “more progress had probably been made in the first seventeen years of Indian independence than in the previous seventeen hundred” (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 384), it would be foolish to assume that just because taxes were now payable directly to the (Indian) government this also abolished the class-cum-caste rule of the former zamindars or their successors. In fact, we several times hinted at the watering down of land reforms. But not just in the 50s and 60s could such hierarchies be held (however much they at any given time were indeed effectively challenged), even today the Dalits, Adivasis or smaller (and poorer) farmers in general are still dependent upon local elites. The latter are not ‘feudal’ lords any more and the dependence has shifted in quality and extend, but nevertheless are caste and class still major reasons for inequalities and exploitative relations (Chakravarti, 2004, pp. 71, 78; Harriss, 2013, p. 354; Lerche, 2010, p. 78; Lerche et al., 2013, p. 342; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 371).

4.1.1.2 Capital

Before we can combine the two narratives of caste and class later, we will now briefly consider interpretations of class alliances between 1950 and the mid 80s. We will focus on elite classes and discuss the subaltern and intermediaries when talking about Congress and country below.

In India, it is widely fielded as a basis for further argument (Bardhan, 1984, p. 79; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 32–33; Heller, 1999, p. 5; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 218; Ruparelia, 2015, p. 331), democracy came before an industrial revolution. This lead, so it is argued, to some peculiarities when compared to Europe for instance. One of them is the initially rather weak bourgeoisie facing a strong landlord class. The proprietary classes are hence often divided into industrial and land-

43 As Yadav looks back from the 90s: “The expression ‘OBCs’ has indeed travelled a long way from a rather careless bureaucratic nomenclature in the document of the Constitution to a vibrant and subjectively experienced political community” (1996, p. 102); OBC, of course, being derived from the 1870s’ ‘backward classes’ (Guru & Chakravarty, 2005, p. 139).

owning. The latter is generic for both capitalist and (semi-) feudal-like land-owners (the latter term being highly contested, but they are considered to be largely (though not completely/ everywhere) irrelevant today, see 4.2.3.3). Capitalist agriculture is dominant and often, the urban bourgeoisie owns land itself, so fraction-lines are not always neat. A contentious issue is the treatment of the state bureaucracy with some denying it class status and others constructing one around it (Das, 2007, pp. 411–415), with yet others suggesting the lower level bureaucracy is *de facto* self-employed (corruption) and thus part of the intermediate class (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 45), on this, see below. Bardhan (1984, p. 51) throws both the state bureaucracy and non-state (higher-up, white-collar) ‘professionals’ into the ‘professional class’ (without denying their respective distinctiveness).

The Nehru era’s political project has been ably described as an “attempt at bringing about social transformation by bureaucratic means, in the context of a parliamentary democracy established in a state in which there had been no bourgeois revolution” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 92). Nehru’s high modernism aimed at secularisation (directed both at the abolition of caste discrimination and the equal integration of Muslims and Hindus (amongst other denominations) into Indian society), industrialisation and not least the maintenance of the unity of India itself.⁴⁴ The developmental state he attempted at erecting (after side-lining the more business-friendly, less ‘socialist’ Patelites) was, as the industrialists’ ‘Bombay Plan’ exemplified, initially still very much welcomed by capital – development lay in the air, and the state was its obvious guarantor (Chibber, 2011, p. 14; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 30, 38, 43, 49; Mukherji, 2009, pp. 84–85). This, however, should not gloss over the very different interests the bureaucracy and capital had regarding the actual developmental role of the state, or so argues Chibber (2011, pp. 29–30): capital was mainly interested in subsidies, and doing with them as it pleased, the state-professionals, on the other hand, were keen on directing the former’s every conduct (or so capital felt), if they did not flat-out nationalise a given industry. Neither side, however, was able to strong-arm the other, not least also because of the active dis-organisation of labour in its incorporation into the developmentalist state-project (Bhowmik, 2004; Chibber, 2005; but cf. Teitelbaum, 2006, and our discussion in 4.2.3.3); just as had happened to e.g. the women’s movement (Ray & Katzenstein, 2005, p. 14).

While the Rudolfs claim it was the state that thusly ultimately triumphed over capital, labour and other social movements (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, pp. 14, 23), Bardhan (1984, pp. 40–41, 60–61, 66–67; similarly, though granting ‘domination’ to capital: Kaviraj, 2010, p. 107) believes it to have resulted more in a ‘deadlock’ between bureaucracy and capital, where both more or less acquiesced

44 Or less sympathetically: the Nehruvian project “imposed upon the Indian people a nationalism that rode roughshod over all other identities, a secularism that was incompatible with the importance of religion in India, and a socialism which, in its focus on industrial development, excluded most of rural India” (Ray & Katzenstein, 2005, p. 5).

to the ‘licence-permit-quota Raj’, i.e. the corrupted developmental state, distributing the spoils amongst them. What is more, it is not just a deadlock between ‘the proprietary classes’ and ‘the state’, but both are internally highly fragmented, much more so than its counterparts in Europe (where an industrial/ bourgeois revolution over centuries resolved some of these fragmentations into relations of dominance), claims Bardhan. For the proprietors, the divisions mainly lay between agricultural and industrial elites (later mercantile elites are increasingly added to the picture). And this heterogeneity increases the costs of ‘closing the ranks’.⁴⁵ In between them all are the politicians, which for a long time primarily meant the INC. And the more workers, intermediary classes (see below) and other societal groups’ “demand politics” (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 212) came increasingly to the fore, the more costly closure got and the more precarious the political/ party interlocution became (Bardhan, 1984, pp. 79–80, 2009, p. 34).

4.1.1.3 Congress

Since the key to Guha’s riddle of how India was able to navigate the striking contradictions it found itself confronted with clearly lies in the way such more or less ‘public’ alliances, or in the above terminology hegemony projects, were achieved (Bardhan, 1984, pp. 77–78), it is worthwhile examining the fate of one of their main protagonists: Congress.⁴⁶ In fact, Corbridge and Harris (2003, p. 82; similarly, but from a social-movements perspective: Ray & Katzenstein, 2005, p. 6) suggest as a periodisation of post-independence Indian politics the following: first the years of Nehru and Congress ‘hegemony’ (not necessarily in a Gramscian sense), which they extend by three years after his death to the next general elections from 1950 to 1967; the second phase (1967–1990) then grapples with the contradictions of Nehru’s project (the missing bourgeois revolution, the bureaucratic-corrupt management of social contradictions), where the Congress’ previous hegemony is being challenged mostly regionally; and finally the present period, with strong roots in the 80s, where national Congress hegemony and the “founding myths” of the Nehruvian project are being openly challenged: democracy, federalism, socialism and secularism.

Missing out on the bourgeois revolution, does not mean that India was not revolutionised, just that

45 And this not only troubled coalitional architects but also analysts: “[t]he size, diversity and the particularly segmented nature of Indian society and economy splinter the forms of articulation of these conflicts, and it is a complex task to trace their manifold refractions in the making and implementation of state policy” (Bardhan, 1984, p. 54).

46 Though, as Ram Guha observes: “In India the choice could never be between chaos and stability, but between manageable and unmanageable chaos, between humane and inhuman anarchy, and between tolerable and intolerable disorder” (2007, p. 575); or more tongue-in-cheek: “You British believe in fair play. You have left India in the same condition of chaos as you found it” (unnamed Punjabi official cited in Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 34). But this, of course, should not exoticise India as the scene of eternal chaos – it just shows that, here as everywhere, given the magnitude of change and the breadth of heterogeneity, with its inherent, deeply contradicting-conflicting interests, order is not just control and control never order; rather, it lies in the exuberance of blustering, yet subtle dynamics.

this happened passively (though the term probably lacks a bit of purchase then), argues Kaviraj (2010, pp. 146–147), referring to Gramsci’s terminology. Since the bourgeoisie did not get around to it, the bureaucracy was set about transforming society. But where fiat replaces class struggle, things get lost along the way: the articulation of societal instances is not politically organic but bureaucratically idiosyncratic: “Where the agents of change in Europe saw a mission to transform the world, the bureaucracy sees a tiring daily chore” (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 155). And thus when Nehru, initially somewhat isolated in his socialist ambitions in the INC, reverted to the bureaucracy (into whose upper echelons the British had instilled a modernist rationale⁴⁷) to circumvent less sympathetic parts of Congress, he bought into both its internal contradictions and its ambivalent role as the supposed bearer of modernity. As Kaviraj argues famously: “Many of these colossal structures of colonial ‘rationalism’ had feet of vernacular clay” (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 149). This literally high-modernism thus needed translation (often indeed from English) that not seldom significantly shifted implementation from design and intent from effect, and the analogous asynchronicity between head and feet should catch up to ‘the tall men’s’ (Nehru et al.) heirs (Kaviraj, 2010, pp. 117, 154–157).

However much this project might have been contradictory, it was very effective so long as it ‘worked’. The ‘Congress system’ that was established alongside it, which is to say the channelling of most relevant social conflicts through the Indian National Congress (we were hinted at the incorporation of the labour- and women’s movement above), tended to aim for production of consensus (at least broadly if not for individual cases) (Manor, 1990, pp. 64–65). Even if we allow for patchiness and ugly political bickering in such processes, and for only passive inclusion of subaltern voices (and such striving for consensus never really is fully ‘democratically political’ in the sense of *open* contestation), we can see, argue Yadav and Palshikar (2003, pp. 11–13), how this system contributed to supporting the first steps of the new democracy, precisely because it was ‘hegemonic’ in its articulation-integration of broad, contradicting interest groups.

Nehru’s modernist project, on the other hand, died with him, at least in the sense that the “distributional coalition” (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 125) was fostered and allocation of spoils became more central a political rationale than ‘socialist’ development. Nehru’s main heir (if we skip over the brief tenure of Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister between 1964-1966) was his daughter Indira Gandhi (no relation to the Mahatma). She did not become Prime Minister because of her great popular support (which she lacked at the time), but because Congress leadership thought itself able to control her (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 404). For building her own, independent base of support, Indira

47 As Evans puts it: “The stereotypical IAS [Indian Administrative Service] veteran was an Anglophile Brahman of Fabian socialist ideological leanings” (1995, p. 68).

directly appealed to the people. This meant circumvention of the Congress' local 'translators', i.e. local high-caste interlocutors who organised votes for Congress in return for inclusion in its ample patronage network (dealing yet another decisive blow to the local systems of domination) as well as moves against intra-party opposition. The latter mainly implied disempowering state governors (now centrally appointed). Where previously Nehru had promised that "India is the Congress, the Congress is India" (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 87), now it was said that "Indira is India and India is Indira" (as Congress president D. K. Barooah proclaimed around 1974, cited by Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 467). She thus centralised and personalised government and in 1971 called for early elections, where she de-coupled national from state polls. The concurrence of the state and national elections had previously "meant that parochial considerations of caste and ethnicity got mixed up with wider national questions" (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 446), but now, fatefully, the two would no longer mix and check each other. She thusly significantly weakened the INC in both internal democracy (until today: Manor, 2011) and its general ability to translate its politics 'on the ground' (in fact, paradoxically, when her goal was a direct link to the people, the weakening increased the 'passivity' with which Indira had to proceed), in short she made the Congress a much less effective political party. At the same time, the centralisation of rule (and de-central weakening of Congress) opened spaces for political opposition to form in the states (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 50, 71–77, 233; Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 142; Kaviraj, 2010, pp. 127–128).

But this should not distract from the very 'effective' authoritarianism ('the emergency') between 1975 and '77, which Mrs. Ghandi both proclaimed and then, one day two years later, decided to end and to return the country to the kind of democracy it had enjoyed before. While her reasons for proclaiming a state of emergency are readily apparent (her lack of political aptitude in the face of severe systemic crises/ 'contradictions' (of 'her father's project')), her reasons for revoking it are entirely unclear (just as are her general ideological outlooks). She, at this juncture, seems to have been more of a democrat than some sections of 'the middle class' or the state-bureaucracy, who largely acquiesced, hoping (often in vain) for stability in authoritarianism (and for capital, we might prominently quote J. R. D. Tata, who found that "[t]he parliamentary system is not suited to our needs" (quoted in Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 504, 503, 520; though such enthusiasm for the 'Empress of India' seems to have waned rather quickly, Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 87)).

Kaviraj suggests that what happened since 1967 was actually a radical shift in the relation of state and society. Where previously the state had sought to bring modernity top-down to India, now

"[t]he relation between the political level and the social structures of traditionalism were reversed in those years of political instability. Political structures lost their capacity of re-

ordering social relations; these latter, on the contrary, reasserted themselves over, and soon through, the political system” (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 159).

These relations *are*, as we saw above, what Gramsci calls ‘civil society’. And accordingly, their lack is what Kaviraj blames for “the deformities of capitalist development in India” (2010, p. 167): The de-ideologisation of Congress and general politics (also, crucially, in the sense of claims for more long-term societal design, instead of opportunistic short-term gain), argues Kaviraj (2010, pp. 137–142), has blocked the translation of class conflict into (party) politics – a crucial prerequisite for regulating capitalism (similarly Harriss, 2011, p. 139; or Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, p. 6; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, pp. 219, 259; Herring & Agarwala, 2006, p. 328).⁴⁸ And this not only holds for class representation, but for other social issues as well (Manor, 1990, p. 70; Ray & Katzenstein, 2005, p. 17). Thus, capitalism ‘develops’, while politics is increasingly unable to regulate societal conflicts that are exacerbated by capitalist development. But neither, he highlights, is this a *necessary* outcome of capitalist development, nor is it due to want of it. Ambedkar seems frightfully justified in his warnings – so far.⁴⁹

4.1.1.4 Country

Since we skipped him above, we should note here that it was under Shastri’s cabinet that the shift in agricultural policy occurred that led to the green revolution. In addition to new seed varieties, this brought with it higher input costs for fertilizers and irrigation, needed for the intensification of production.⁵⁰ This led to a privileging of those better able to afford such inputs, despite the government’s attempt to facilitate investments through price subsidies. In fact it was the richer farmers as well, who were at the helm of such price-politics throughout the coming decades, effectively “mobiliz[ing] support across rural classes because of the connection of kinship, caste and patronage” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 82). But even where caste was the vehicle of mobilisation, the ‘de-

48 Which implies “the danger of a ‘Bonapartist’ solution, a style of functioning that combines the ad hoc with the arbitrary in mediating between conflicting interests, a solution which gives the political elite more power but weakens the political order against other instances of the social form” (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 163).

49 Indeed, with such analysis in mind, we can already glimpse at where this text’s argument is headed, since “[u]nderstanding new state-society relations under conditions of globalization will depend on better class analytics, encompassing strategic choice as a fundamental element, with attention to variable political opportunity structures created by party systems and states and new modes of integration with the global economy” (Herring & Agarwala, 2006, p. 345, though such analytics are obviously not only pertinent since globalisation; Chatterjee, 2008).

50 It also brought with it increasing inequalities in the country. This in turn provided the grounds for some of the green revolution to turn red – politically as well as martially: the violent, Maoist ‘Naxalites’ (who have been active in various parts throughout India and with varying levels of ‘success’ in guerilla-fighting the Indian state since the mid-60s) would provide an obvious referent for class politics. They will, however, be mostly side-lined in this text for one because we are not after class-for-itself struggles but generally class struggles (the Naxalites being far more prominent in the first than the second) and also because their violence and the ensuing strategic dictates very often trump their ideological moorings in determining their actions, which is to say their complexity is too much for this text to capture (Corbridge, Harriss, & Jeffrey, 2013, pp. 211–215).

cline of dominance' described above meant that means of co-option were more favourable to the 'lower' castes (mainly, they came from their upper sections (Jodhka, 2011, p. 161)) than they might have been otherwise (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 70, 81–83).

The unity of the ephemeral, heterogeneous alliance that was the Janata government (making Morarji Desai Prime Minister), which came into office after the emergency, can only be explained by its being a reaction against Congress (i.e. the 'emergency'; and measures such as Indira Gandhi's son Sanjay's hugely unpopular slum-clearance and forced sterilisation measures in particular). But as was already hinted at above, it was also a show of strength of agricultural interests. Nehru's alliance between urban and rural elites came to an end with the agricultural mobilisations of the late 70s, especially the general election of 1977 (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, pp. 51, 355). And it was this split that tore the post-Nehruvian 'distributional alliance' apart, as agricultural capital demanded too much of a share for urban/ industrial capital to condone.⁵¹ In doing so, it rallied much of the left behind it. The left however, was unable to articulate a coherent programmatic platform, leaving the space wide open for Hindu nationalists. Neither did Congress more generally, but this should only cost it its grip on government in the elections of 1989, until then, it was 'reinstated' in 1980, following the break-up of the Janata coalition (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 88–93). In fact, Corbridge and Harris (2003, p. 99) go so far as to say that "[t]here was a complete lack of political direction when, on 31 October 1984, Mrs Gandhi was assassinated".

Such was the importance of this '(rich) farmers' politics' that some construe a whole regime around it. While the analytical merit of such proposals can not be judged here yet, we need nevertheless introduce it, for it will help understand just how much class-politics has shifted in the following decades. This regime and its class are called 'intermediate' precisely because they are neither capital nor labour: Intermediate classes are understood as not being constituted by the contradiction between capital and labour but by the contradictory relationship to the contradictory relation between capital and labour (allegedly, this makes them classes in a different sense than used in 'Marxism'). They are made up of small agricultural capitalists (as above for Harriss-White also low-level bureaucrats). Their power derives from their roots in non-market relations: they use civil society organisations (here, the distinction between civil and political society seems not to be made) based on kin, caste or local networks against political parties (where other classes organise) and for

51 Though the Rudolph's observe that "the 'new agrarianism' of the seventies and eighties is indeed an important part of national politics, but it is more sectoral than class based" (1987, pp. 22–23), it seems clear that in this case sector and class lines overlap. But 'clear' only if we do not attempt (unlike Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 20) to relate 'class (for itself) struggle' to such as we know it from Western Europe or North America, where the Industrial Revolution had set the stage rather differently for potential rural-industrial alliances in their later democracies' class struggles (see e.g. Lerche et al., 2013).

the restriction of markets, the carving-out of niches in them, the keeping out of big-capital and the exploitation of labour (e.g. in relying on social norms instead of state law for the regulation of labour contracts/ relations). They do not form large-scale interests group organisations, but rely “instead on particularistic tactics. But the mass reliance by this class coalition [the intermediate classes] on such tactics *is* a generalised characteristic of their politics” (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 53, emphasis BHW). They thrive in and co-create (or rather, did so) an ‘intermediate regime’ comprised of a developmental state, which was internationally non-aligned (allowing some autonomy from international capital) and situated in an incomplete land reform favouring these very middle peasants (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 44–52; McCartney, 2013; McCartney & Harriss-White, 2000, pp. 6–7).

At this point in the argument, we introduced the caste system as being intricately linked to politico-economic developments and conjunctures – but without construing either side to strictly determine the other. We have begun to see the rise of middle castes (later to be joined by middle classes) with the ‘development’ of the agricultural sector in the form of the green revolution and in the specific (‘intermediate’) modus this was politically and economically articulated in the relations of forces of the post-independence governance system. This we saw to be characterised by a stalemate between industrial and agricultural capital and ‘the state’. Contradictions are striking: not only did we see earlier the continuous decline in the relative share of agriculture in GDP, but we also saw the increasing difficulty of accommodating proliferating demands on the distribution of societal resources in general. How this played out will be discussed shortly. Before we proceed, we may note how ‘caste’, up until now, was mainly relevant with respect to the structure of the Congress system; lower castes were only passively integrated. This also is about to change significantly.

4.1.2 Development since

4.1.2.1 Liberalisation

The intermediate regime came to an end from the 80s onwards, especially since the 90s (Corbridge, 2010, pp. 310–314; Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 59–60). But first, to achieve this, since intermediate classes protected some markets, but also for technical reasons, all in order to satisfy its hunger for continued accumulation, capital would have needed to coordinate itself to weaken the formers’ power-base, which would have meant taking a stronger role in the developmental state, shifting it towards export-orientation.⁵² This, capital was not able to do. The other option was to subvert the

52 This seems to be only part of the answer – and a dangerous part to quote exclusively, given that we set out to avoid capitalocentrism in our explanations; we shall, however, here not go into the details of the various other parts of explanations proposed for why liberalisation got on the agenda of which ‘interest groups’ in the first place and why it then proceeded, or not, the way it did (for an overview: Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 122–124, 130–132, 137–139). We will come across some of them more in passing in the following discussion.

state: liberalisation. This meant becoming junior-partner with international capital (not uncontended within industrial capital itself), but supported culturally (ideologically) by top-level bureaucracy, called-for by the growing demand for luxury import-goods from the also growing, consumerist ‘middle classes’⁵³ as well as export-minded agricultural fractions (Patnaik, Chandrasekhar, & Ghosh, 2004, pp. 90–96; Bardhan, 1984, pp. 65–69, 72–73; Kohli, 2006b, pp. 1362–1363). What did this mean?

Liberalisation was begun already under the Indira Gandhi of the early 80s (having shed, apparently, her former socialist populism) (Kohli, 2006a, p. 1255; though with some precursors dating back to 1975: Mukherji, 2009, pp. 88–89). Its beginnings are, however, more connected to the figure of her son Rajiv (who became prime minister after her death in 1984, promising to “do a Korea” (cited by Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 151); he reluctantly substituted for his brother Sanjay, who had died in a plane crash of his own making four years earlier). But liberalisation is mostly accredited to ‘the reforms’ of the 1990s, which were more far-reaching/ radical. Thus, as per Guha’s (2007, p. 601) thirty-year rule, we must now brace ourselves and begin to engage in “historically informed journalism”, writing about events too close to the present to be ‘historically’ (read: ‘really’) understood.

Kohli argues, that the reforms have not been a pro-market, but a pro-business liberalisation. The distinction, for him, is that the attempt was not at setting free textbook-like markets, but at growth of big, established Indian businesses. As he sees it, this meant that capital became the state’s “main ruling ally”, which goes along with the “abandonment of left-leaning, anti-capitalist rhetoric and policies” (Kohli, 2006a, p. 1252). He likens this development to that of other East Asian developmental states, but highlights that the Indian state lacked the capacity to relate to neither capital nor labour in a comprehensively, ‘developmentally’ controlling manner to the extent Japan, South Korea or Taiwan could some decades earlier. Similarly to Vietnam in the 80s and 90s, India lacked a geopolitical threat (or some other analogue situation) that would have united capital and state as ‘ruthlessly’ as had happened in the former three countries.⁵⁴ But this also means that liberalisation could, tendentially, not proceed quite as ‘freely’ as it might have otherwise: the “shift [from] ‘socialist India’ into ‘India incorporated’ [...] is, and, mercifully, is likely to remain partial” (Kohli, 2006a, pp. 1254, 1253; Evans, 1995, pp. 68–70; Masina, 2006, pp. 35–37).

53 A term which is utterly imprecise, especially considering Poulantzas’ framework, not least because the term is quite carelessly used in some texts (at times even remaining undefined); referring variously to self-descriptions, life-styles, income brackets, political outlooks, etc. (Poulantzas would probably call it ‘middle stratum’, indeed the German ‘Mittelschicht’ seems more precise here). We shall use it in this wonderfully generic way in quotations only.

54 And the fact that both authoritarian Vietnam and democratic India face this ‘issue’ highlights that in this regard it is not (only) democracy standing in the way of capitalist ‘development’.

Kohli also reminds us, that it was already under Indira Gandhi⁵⁵, that the contradiction between introducing inequality-increasing liberalisation in a country where large parts of the constituency are (very) poor was tentatively addressed through Hindu chauvinism (Kohli, 2006a, p. 1257).⁵⁶ Another strategy to address this was stealth, e.g. implementing parts of the reforms as executive directives rather than laws (even the Congress' biggest electoral victory ever in 1984 required it to proceed cautiously, when technically it could have easily legislated on liberalisation) – though, of course, it was not just the poor that the government tried to hide from, it was also less liberalisation-friendly parts of capital and intermediate classes. Since there was such contention, the government, for example, just like it had done in 1983, in 1994 once again ceased its business of trading austerity for foreign currency with the International Monetary Fund, which it had recently taken up in response to a national financial crisis in 1991 (Kohli, 2006b, p. 1363, 2006a, p. 1257; Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 124–125).

In 1991, after the demise of the Janata Dal government (on this, see below), Congress was again in government, this time under P. V. Narasimha Rao and for a full term until 1996. Like social-democracy elsewhere in the world, Rao's Congress attempted to tame the liberalisation it enacted and the economic growth it expected from it, to its redistributive aspirations. And these were not just ideological: In the face of a rising Hindu nationalism (on this, below) Rao intended to use the hoped-for increase in government revenue to address social and economic issues that might win the electorate away from the Hindu right. Given the political mine-field that liberalisation posed, the rather weak Congress organisation (see above) and his distaste for 'loud' and confrontational politics, he proceeded not only by stealth but at times outright esoterically – even Congress(wo)men were not quite sure of what he was really up to in terms of economic policy. Until it happened; piece-meal and directed at (or against) one constituency at a time. Interestingly, the CPI-M and Janata Dal supported the INC in the reforms: The horror of a BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party; the rising Hindu nationalist party) government loomed over a breaking of the INC coalition, after all (Manor, 2011, pp. 205–207; Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 132; Kaviraj, 2010, pp. 256–260).

55 She really is not presented in the best of lights in this text. As Corbridge (2010, p. 309) cautions, Mrs. Gandhi should not be blamed too easily, for she presided over massive social transformations, which she (and others) very often happened to represent/ articulate (in the more immediate sense), but did of course not solely govern (for vastly contrasting views cf. e.g. Manor, 1990, pp. 66–91; and Frankel, 2005, pp. 631–677; whereas for Frankel Mrs. Gandhi largely (though not only) struggled against the odds of severe societal ruptures, Manor credits even the colonial British Raj more wisdom in governing India).

56 It should be noted that these communalist moves by Congress seem rather opportunistic (and not ideological), since Rajiv Gandhi some years later "literally adopted the provisions of the shariat into the secular law" (Brass cited by Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 115), when he saw through a bill on Muslim divorce regulation to appease the 'Muslim vote' (Nehru had shied away from a unified civil code, leaving each denomination with specific regulation). Likewise, he also turned, electorally exploiting the tragedy of Indira Gandhi's death, towards anti-Sikh agitation in the 1984 election campaign after his mother's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards (itself in turn following her sacrilegious commanding of the Indian Army into the Golden Temple in Amritsar) (Manor, 1990, pp. 80–82).

And the overall effect was quite significant: Licensing was severely restricted already by 1992, monopoly policies were relaxed, state-run industries were opened up to private capital, (non-) tariff barriers were slashed from 87% in 1990 to 25% in 1996, the share of trade in GDP doubled from previously roughly 21% to 40% in the 2000s and the banking sector, which had been nationalised in 1969, was increasingly opened. These were all changes that did not have immediate effect on the lives and livelihoods of ‘the poor’ (as severe cuts in price subsidies on food or fuel would) – another dimension of the stealthiness of the reforms. In fact, parts of the population (especially the poorer) were not even aware of the reforms taking place well into the 90s (they were, by contrast, acutely aware of a riotous, though orchestrated, mob’s taking down of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya in 1992; a central event in the rise of Hindu nationalism in this time) (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 152–155; Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 37–38, 129–130; Ruparelia, 2015, pp. 193–194).

4.1.2.2 *Exclusion*

“While it may not be accurate to speak of the reforms in India as being ‘anti-poor’ in some crass or intentional sense, it would not be inaccurate to describe their effects thus far as ‘pro-rich’; nor [...] to suggest that the reforms have promoted a further concentration of incomes and assets” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 165–166). This is a careful formulation of a central problem (Mukherji, 2009, p. 102; Kohli, 2006b, p. 1368; Corbridge, 2010, p. 317) of the reforms: their insufficient effectiveness in poverty reduction.⁵⁷ As we saw in figure 2 poverty reduction during liberalisation partly is a statistical effect (at least as compared to some claims of its magnitude) and we also saw that inequality increased since then. For the poorest, incomes did not improve and in rural areas that liberalised (as compared to those which did not), poverty actually increased. Since 1993-4 (up until the late 2000s, where data ended), real consumption and wages grew above average only for the top 20%. While Corbridge et al. warn that this does not necessarily mean that ‘the reforms’ were not poverty effective at all, that such effects might still be out there in the long-run, we shall discuss later how the long-run, also analytically/ theoretically, can be a problematic horizon for such speculation (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 58–60, 67–70; Das, 2007, pp. 428–430; Pattenden, 2016, p. 7).

As for ‘the country(side)’, the per capita incomes of the agriculturally dependent population have stagnated between 1994-5 and 2003-4, while indebtedness is increasing. Rural labour in general is feminising and dalitising and livelihoods are diversifying from agriculture since land holdings are

57 In fact, it might not be accurate to speak of rich vs. poor at all (besides in polemical-ideological political slogans). If one aims at a careful assessment of liberalisation’s impact, maybe class is a more analytical category: “The Market design of politics did not aim at producing a class cleavage [see Rao’s intentions]. However, the project of letting loose the ‘middle class’ consumerist ambition and developing unbridled capitalism ended up institutionalising class cleavage” (Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, p. 30). The tragic dilemma of social democracy.

fragmenting into marginality (70% are below self-sufficiency levels). But non-farm employment (often implying migration to towns and other states and countries, mostly of men) can only partly offset the earnings lost in agriculture (thus despite the decline of agriculture's share in GDP, here lies another disappointment for the disciples of modernisation (after the modulated continuation of caste politics) (Vakulabharanem & Motiram, 2011, p. 108; Lerche, 2010, pp. 66–67)). And all this is in addition to the cuts in subsidies for inputs and prices, the withdrawal of banks (due to the retreat of public banks) from more remote rural areas (and thus increased informal lending), and the exposure to world-markets that liberalisation did bring, even with the significant opposition of 'intermediate' interests to such reforms, as well as other problems of the sector relating to more profane issues such as irrigation and soil degradation, not so much related to the commandments of the creed in 'free' or otherwise too capital/business-centred markets (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 82–91; Pattenden, 2016, pp. 41–42), if you allow such heresy. Such agricultural distress is then said to be related (Harriss, 2011, p. 146; Herring & Agarwala, 2006, p. 342) to the decline in relative importance of rich farmers (formerly a significant constituent of e.g. Bardhan's ruling-class-coalition, see above); pace the Rudolphs' (1987, p. 264) contention, that India would see agricultural interests as central in the politics of the(ir) future (Bardhan, 2009, p. 31).

Since, as Vakulabharanem and Motiram drily remark, "the phenomenon of farmer suicides does not present an alluring image to the international investors" (2011, p. 122), and also because of the political resistance and protest against deteriorating conditions in agriculture, some subsidies that were earlier abandoned have been reintroduced in select states and 'rural distress' is higher up the political agenda again. However in just as dry a tone they remark on state attempts to use NGOs' work as ameliorative social measures: "NGO developmental activity seems somewhat scattered, democratically unaccountable and idiosyncratic. It seems as if the extensive Indian developmental state cannot be substituted easily" (Vakulabharanem & Motiram, 2011, p. 126). Here seems to be a structural (more precisely a political) limit to (neo-)liberalisation (what is otherwise therefore described as a counter-move to primitive accumulation: Chatterjee, 2008, p. 55).

Corbridge (2010, p. 317) concludes it to be good that liberalisation even if it did not do away with at least significantly weakened the 'licence-permit-quota Raj'. For him (and other prominent voices, e.g. Mukherji, 2009, p. 102) the task is now to integrate the poor in the resulting accumulation strategy (i.e. neo-liberalism). A noble goal. To put it mildly, this strategy and its state project (if there is such) have come into somewhat of a legitimisation crisis. Das (2007, pp. 428–430) contends this, because the post-independence state still had nationalism and modernist-developmentalism as the basis for its legitimacy, but the neo-liberal state does not (in fact neocolonialism is very visible

in the internationalisation of markets and the ensuing ‘repatriation’ of profits) and neither does it have too much (or maybe: enough) to show for in terms of reduction of poverty and social justice (cf. the Gini’s development). This tends to foster authoritarian and/ or (Hindu) nationalist tendencies and, again, corruption (Patnaik et al., 2004, p. 98), and then some more authoritarianism to get away with corruption and/ or protect its spoils. This is one of the two ways forward already sketched out by Bardhan (1984, pp. 80–83; and Kohli, 1990b, p. 315; more currently McCartney, 2013, p. 137), the other being indeed a more integrative strategy towards the subaltern.

Thus, liberalisation did not deliver to all as promised (or ‘silently’ hoped for): rural distress has been increasing and even ‘middle classes’ (more on those later) have been affected, e.g. by the “world recession” (Patnaik et al., 2004, pp. 101–104). Not to speak of ‘the poor’, those increasingly informalised, de-unionised, exploited (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 37–41; Pattenden, 2016, pp. 42, 48–49; though liberalisation should not be credited with all the repression of labour, this being a general trend since the mid ’70s: Lerche, 2010, p. 68). It seems the class coalition around it is rather precarious. But that this is a meaningful statement to make is itself noteworthy: liberalisation appears not as a technical policy, but as politics – and politics that was not simply forced upon ‘India’, but actively pursued even by actors which in doing so weighed (conscious or not) class interests against other considerations (such as subverting a corrupt state or checking Hindu nationalism). The result is highly contingent upon the specific strategic-relational context and processes in it. The resulting reconfigurations of the relations of forces of classes (and, as we shall discover, castes (etc.)) and the shifted, yet continuing, contradictions in them in turn determine future developments.

4.2 Evolution of the state project

Given this general setting, we shall therefore look more closely at how politics in it played out. We will focus on caste politics and attempt to relate them to class struggles. We will frame this in its context of the evolution of the state project more generally. Accordingly, after a brief overview, we discuss two examples of caste-for-itself-politics, then look at the (nationally) ruling coalitions, mainly around Congress and the BJP, before finally dissecting caste and class struggles.

There have been calls for, just as there has been criticism of (and outright hostility towards), OBC reservations since independence. Nehru did not dare table the issue of such reservations (after a first ‘Backward Classes Commission’ had recommended it (though even its lead author himself was not supportive of this)) out of fear of the turmoil it might entail, given his preoccupation with the maintenance of Indian political unity, and instead delegated the issue to the states. Select (southern) states had then adopted measures in this direction in the ensuing decades. It was the Janata govern-

ment that put it on the national agenda again, though it did only survive long enough to commission another report on it (prepared by the Mandal Commission (after B. P. Mandal)). Congress went on to bury this report as well, which resurfaced again only in the early 1990s under Vishwanath Pratap Singh's (and some months later Chandra Shekhar's) brief Janata Dal (JD) government, in power between 1989-1991, that implemented (some of) its recommendations, namely a reservation for (national) public employment of 27% for OBCs (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 127, 219).

In many ways the JD was a continuation of the Janata Party (less the Hindu nationalists, who were now, together with the CPI-M's 'Left Front', only outside supporters of the governmental coalition around the JD). The farmer's politics of the Janata were certainly pursued by it as well, but they lost in relative importance to 'quota politics'. However much this may have been due to the genuine convictions of its members, it was also a product of more banal political calculations: since middle peasants were the basis of support of two of the JD's constituent parties (two instances of the Lok Dal (Charan Singh's middle peasant based party)), but not V. P. Singh's own, he chose to more strongly cater to 'the OBC vote' (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 337–338; Ruparelia, 2011, pp. 189–190).⁵⁸

When the Supreme Court decided that the implementation of the Mandal report by V. P. Singh was in fact constitutional, it added that the government was to introduce criteria for exclusion of such groups as were not in need positive discrimination measures – the so called 'creamy layer'. A commission was duly established, whose recommendation was subsequently lobbied by middle peasant Yadavs (a jati) so as to be excluded from this exclusion, mainly with reference to the size of land holdings. A telling hint at what OBC assertion was a vehicle of after all (i.e. middle peasants as upper-OBC castes): In northern India, specifically 'the Hindi belt' (ranging from as far as Assam, via West Bengal and Bihar, Odisha (earlier: Orissa) and Madhya Pradesh, up to Uttar Pradesh and even Jammu and Kashmir), the primary beneficiaries of Mandalisation was the Yadav caste, middle peasants. Other (upper-) middle peasants such as the Jats (jati) had a more precarious stance, being mostly excluded from OBC classification, much to 'their'⁵⁹ discontent.⁶⁰ For instance, even inside the JD, the Lok Dal were opposed to the exclusion of Jats and they subsequently seceded from the JD. Jaffrelot thus questions the idea of OBCs as a 'political community' – too much has it been to

58 One wonders where the issue would stand had the INC or BJP (opposed, so long as that mattered (i.e., not any more), to reservations) formed government and not the rather unlikely and hence short-lived coalitions that formed the Janata Party and later the Janata Dal (this, as mentioned, a minority government with external support of the CPI-M and the BJP, just to illustrate its precarity).

59 For linguistic simplicity the text gives castes agency and generality, which is not assumed argumentatively though (but since no claims are made to such matters, respective complications would not run counter to the argument).

60 Both Yadavs and Jats thus struggle for OBC-status and have historically (or may still) also struggled for Kshatriya varna-status; reservation, in this sense, seems to counter sanskritisation (a process whereby, through telling of appropriate tales of origin, adoption of higher-caste rituals and ways of life (e.g. vegetarianism), (members of a caste as) a caste claim(s) higher varna-status) (Frankel, 2005, p. 6; see also Gupta above).

the disproportional benefit of certain jatis, mainly the Yadavs (and Kurmis) (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 249, 340–343, 366, 371, 384; questioning the ‘political community’ of Dalits: Bathran, 2016).

Further, from figure 3, we may see that there has been remarkably little change in the composition of the Lok Sabha in terms of the caste profile of its membership. This is with the clear exception of the rise of OBCs since 1989 (a result also of the regionalisation of the Lok Sabha (on which see below), Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2015) and the decline of Brahmins since 1971. Comprehensive data from more recent elections elude me, but Jaffrelot and Verniers (2015) point to the significant rise in Brahmin share (at 17% in 2014, with the OBCs down 5%). These dynamics will be briefly touched upon later. Now, if we accept “that the Lok Sabha election is nothing but an aggregation of state level elections” (Yadav & Palshikar, 2008), we can see that the national arena still is quite different (emergent not (always) merely summative) from states due to their manifold individual politics (see also Yadav & Palshikar, 2003). When we turn next to two states where caste assertion has been quite prominent, we need to keep their specificity vis-à-vis other states’ and central politics in mind.

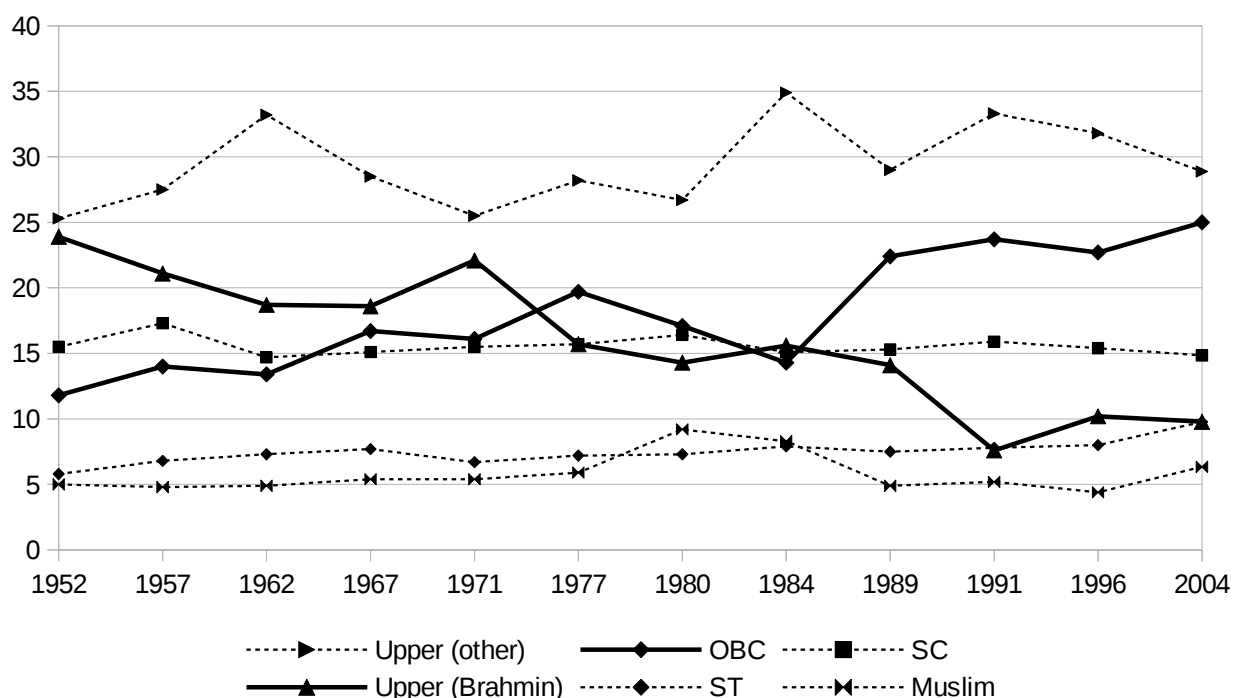


Figure 3: Caste and religious composition (%) of the Lok Sabha, 1952-2004.

Compiled from (Shankar & Rodrigues, 2011); the categories for ‘other religions’ and non-religionists were excluded.

4.2.1 Bihar & Uttar Pradesh

The two states where the ‘second democratic upsurge’ in its caste-dimension has found its starkest expression are surely Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. A brief look at the political dynamics that brought either Dalit- or OBC parties into government and/ or (precarious) alliance with each other will

provide an idea of what ‘caste politics’ can be. It will then be necessary to contrast this with a politics that does not put caste centre-stage and yet still is heavily influenced by those who do (4.2.2).

In both states, and in ‘northern India in general’ there was much less lower caste assertion than in ‘the south’ after independence. While in the latter, non-Brahmin movements (i.e. such as were directed against Brahmin rule) were forceful as ethnic movements (e.g. based on Dravidian identity). In the north, upper castes could hold on for longer, suppressing the effects of the first Backward Classes Commission (despite it having some mobilisational effect) (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 246, 253).

4.2.1.1 *Lalu*

Whereas the Janata Dal was rather quickly out of power again nationally, in Bihar it, since the election of 1990, remains there until today (though later in its split-reincarnation as Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and still later in its other split-reincarnation (opposing the first) of Janata Dal (United)), with three brief intermissions of President’s Rule and 8 days under the Samata Party. In the Legislative Assembly, the OBC share increased from 22.77% (1985) to 36.11% (1990) and further to 49.69% (1995; 27 percentage points of whom were Yadavs), while the share of upper castes declined from 36.41% (1985) to 17.28% (1995). Lalu Prasad Yadav’s (sometimes, *nomen est omen*) cabinet likewise saw an increase in OBC members (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 58–59, 65; Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 357–358).

The very B. P. Mandal mentioned above was in fact the first OBC Chief Minister of Bihar back in the 1960s, but ‘Lalu Raj’ nevertheless was a very symbolic undertaking. Witsoe relates a telling story of meeting Lalu in his office, when the latter described the situation as follows: “Look at my foot. See, I am missing a toenail... *This is democracy*. [...] I lost [it] when I was a poor boy [...] when] a buffalo that I was herding stepped on my foot” (cited by Witsoe, 2013, p. 61, emphasis JW). Others of the stories he liked to tell about himself for instance revolved around eating rats (a practice related to poorer sections of the population, and specific castes) and he held cabinet meetings for a time in front of his modest home. But he was not only the ‘man of the people’ (though primarily ‘Yadav people’) in the fight against upper caste domination, he also took up the emerging Hindu nationalists and thus secured (at least at first) the Muslim vote. All the while thusly replacing the developmental discourse that in one way or another used to prevail earlier, e.g. through Nehru’s ‘modernisation’ or Indira Gandhi’s ‘garibi hatao’ (eliminate poverty), with that of caste struggle (Lalu’s slogan: ‘bhurabal hatao’ (eliminate the upper castes)) (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 56–63).

But ‘development’ was problematic in another way as well: Though he had gained political office, the administration and other power networks were still dominated by upper castes, preventing ef-

fective policy implementation. But then again, the upper castes were not necessarily the ones who opposed the notorious issue of India's 'great transformation' already several times hinted at above: land reforms. Opposition to these came from within the OBCs themselves, namely from Lalu's fellow JD Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA; the state parliament), not seldom large landowners. He tentatively proposed such reform, but was quickly ushered back. However, since he relied very much on the 'popular' political support of poorer sections, he and his government could also not rule for the (relatively) rich exclusively. Witsoe thus comes to the conclusion that though "[t]he 'passive revolution' policy agenda of the Congress era was overturned, [...] it was not replaced with anything," not even neo-liberalism as pursued by other states at the time (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 66–67).⁶¹

While Pandit Nehru had employed the bureaucracy for his governance, Lalu Yadav now re-channelled the avenues of governance into his own networks of influence (and these were really his own and not of the (R)JD), transferred 'disloyal' IAS personnel⁶², centralised decision making (with Lalu at the top) – in a way he thus 're-politicised politics' (but did not necessarily make it more democratic or less corrupt in doing so). These moves were thus very much against the state (bureaucracy), in an inverted way reminiscent of Indira Gandhi's earlier politics. In 1996 corruption allegations were raised against him and he jailed, but not before installing his wife, Rabri Devi, as Chief Minister (and for a time 'governing' via cellphone from prison (yes: 'Cellphone Raj')). Objections to such style of government came not only from the opposition but also from within the JD itself (in fact, the central JD threatened President's Rule on him at one time); and this split the party in 1995, with key Dalit 'representatives' breaking with Lalu. Such alienation of lower castes (including from among OBCs) from the (R)JD government continued over the years, culminating in its ousting in the elections of 2005 in favour of Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), see above (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 68–69, 73–77).

This, however, should not gloss over the fact that poverty did decline during (R)JD rule and many people did feel and did get empowered (especially in lower vs. upper caste form). Institutionalisation, let alone democratisation (in the more formal sense), of empowerment, however, was precarious and, as we saw, uneven. As Witsoe summarises: "This [all ...] occurred despite very low rates of economic growth, a flight of capital, the departure of much of the educated population, almost no

61 "So the contradictions of development in Bihar, in fact, reflected the specificities of postcolonial democracy – they resulted from an electoral democracy with universal franchise operating within institutional contexts shaped by colonial processes of state formation [i.e. an upper-caste dominated state]" (Witsoe, 2013, p. 50).

62 Which could simply mean 'non-OBC': "the state government has transferred 12 out of 13 divisional commissioners and 250 of the 324 returning officers, in order to have lower caste people at the helm of local office" (Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 380).

corporate investment [...], the general collapse of state-directed development, and a surge of criminality” (2013, pp. 187–188). Quite a verdict.

Kumar seems to have turned this around: The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank gladly loaned him (unlike his predecessor) billions, he moved against corruption and crime and his developmental investments were propped by increasingly affluent central transfers (something he was not responsible for, of course). While his party relied heavily on low-caste and some Dalit support (he promised and delivered a 20% reservation scheme for ‘Extremely Backward Castes’), it also had some of upper castes and it allied with the ascendant (upper-caste) Hindu nationalist BJP (itself hoping for political accreditation through such an alliance, not least amongst the OBCs and Dalits). Poverty, though, did not decrease. Under the JD-U, Yadav representation amongst MLAs declined from 27% to 16% in 2010, that of upper-castes increased again (from 18% to 32%) and notably Kumar’s own Kurmi caste (OBC) almost doubled its share between 1995 and 2010 from 4% to 7.4%). Though Kumar also centralised rule on him, he began to revert the shift from bureaucracy to politicians. This, though, also meant a shift in corruption from politicians to administrators and some detriment to politicisation, since links between party and people were weakened (Witsoe, 2013, pp. 186–187, 194–198).

4.2.1.2 *Mayawati*

In Uttar Pradesh (UP), there was a similar, though not quite as pointed, rise in OBC MLAs as in Bihar: from 13.7% in 1980 to 29.9% in 1993 (and then 24% in 1996), while, save for 1993, the upper-caste share was relatively stable and that of Muslims declined by a quarter from 12% to 9% in 1996. Here, Mulayam Singh Yadav tried combining peasant and quota politics. He became Chief Minister in 1989 for the JD (previously he had been a member of the Lok Dal), yet splitting from the JD, he formed the Samajwadi Janata Dal which was to become the Samajwadi Party (SP) in 1992. This was Yadav dominated with 22% of the 1995 national executive being Yadav, all other (individual) OBCs were represented marginally (though the total OBC share was at 42.4%), only Muslims had somewhat larger representation at 13.6%, Brahmins were at 10.2%. The JD-SJD/SP secession followed a Yadav-Jat fall out, inclusion of whom in the OBC category would have meant competition for Yadavs (and other OBCs of course) (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 262, 368–373).

Having been replaced by the BJP as governing party in 1991, after the 1993 elections the SP allied with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP, a Dalit and low-caste party; except the period from 1997–2002 and the present since 2017 (both BJP), UP saw alterations of BSP and SP forming government, with two times of President’s Rule). The BSP (roughly translates to ‘Majority People’s Party’) has its ori-

gins in the BAMCEF (All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation); 'backward' here specifically refers to Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs. It was founded in 1978 by Kanshi Ram, an Ambedkarite who believed in the joint struggle of all oppressed sections of Indian society. BAMCEF was transformed from an organisation meant to empower employees to a more general party in 1981 which was renamed in 1984 into BSP. However, this broadening across caste (-group) lines was only partially successful. The BSP had difficulty garnering the OBC vote (albeit representation in government has not reflected this) and amongst the Dalit castes it was tendentially the Chamars who had the relatively largest share (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 372, 390–391, 403–408).

In June 1995, the BSP withdrew its support for the SP due to increasing atrocities against Dalits (especially by upper-caste Rajputs but also by Yadavs), devastating panchayat (local councils) elections and because of a welcoming stance towards BSP-defectors by the SP. In the event, the BSP then sided with the BJP in an opportunistic move to attain Chief Ministership (to be filled by Mayawati Das – for the first time, this post was thus taken up by a Dalit). And it was also about checking the upper OBCs' (namely Yadavs and Kurmis) assertion of M. S. Yadav, a concern for both upper (BJP) and lower castes/ Dalits (BSP). And hers was in a different way also a very symbolic governing: Agra University became Ambedkar University, completely new districts were formed so that they could likewise be re-named and Ambedkar statues were erected. But she also set in motion more material (albeit still rather limited) measures to benefit (primarily) the Dalits and reservations for Muslims. While she then was only in office for 136 days, she (or rather her government) enacted 1,500 administrative transfers (Guru & Chakravarty, 2005, p. 151; Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 411–413).

In October 1995 this was getting too much for the BJP, which stepped out of the coalition. The BSP's policies and perhaps even more than that the fact that it was in government in the first place were so 'influential' that it could increase its votes in the 1996 elections to 27.8% (over 11.1% in 1993). After inconclusive results, however, "[t]he BSP leaders immediately announced that they would form a coalition government with any political force willing and able to allocate the Chief Ministership to Mayawati. After six months of President's Rule, the BJP accepted their conditions" (Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 418). This time, Mayawati transferred 1,350 bureaucrats in a matter of 6 months. After that, it was the BSP's turn to step out of the coalition, but the BJP could retain power by incorporating defectors from both INC and BSP (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 399, 417–420). Power was thus the primary (though, to be fair, certainly not the only) objective of the BSP; a strategy that indeed provided it with a numerically strong representation in the legislature. Just as in Bihar, its more general policy agenda seems to have suffered somewhat, though; some even say power, and maybe building statues and transferring administrators, was its (entire) agenda (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003,

p. 215; Sarkar & Sarkar, 2016, p. 15; or individual greed, adds Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 427).

The 2002 alliance between the BSP and the BJP was subsequently based on BSP dominance. In 2007 it even claimed single majority. For the latter election it tried to gain upper-caste votes by promising inclusion in its cabinet, in an effort to subvert INC and BJP and erect a 'coalition of extremes', as once the Congress had, between upper and lower/ Dalit castes.⁶³ In 2012 it then lost a whole five percentage points (but was still at 25.91%), which Pai credits to its difficulties in balancing the extremes and catering to both their demands. As a 'side-effect', such electoral/ coalitional politics might also be seen as de-radicalising Dalit politics, since they need to be accommodated into a common politics with upper-castes as in UP (and Tamil Nadu). The single majority in 2012 instead went to the SP and in 2017 to the BJP (a remarkable streak of electoral decisiveness for UP); all of these majorities were notably won by parties offering a more broadly inclusive set of candidates⁶⁴ (in addition to otherwise personalised campaigns; and with the BJP obviously excluding Muslims) (Guru & Chakravarty, 2005, pp. 150–151; Pai, 2013, pp. 24–25, 102, 105; Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 154; Verniers, 2018, pp. 68–69).

This is the second democratic upsurge, then. Caste politics for the sake of caste politics. Various limited by the encompassing polity, but also by the populist-communalist strategies of the respective parties themselves. Nevertheless highly effectual even if few of the shifts are set in stone: administrators can be re-transferred, politicians anyway get re-elected (or not). Names are a bit more sticky and general discursive shifts, just as the 'new normal' of addressing openly and centrally issues of lower castes as well. Caste populism was not accompanied by a coherent, broad set of policies (it was also a coherent, broad set of politics, but, as we saw, moves to include other castes (even upper ones) did begin to address this, however precariously). The single issue of (specific/ communalist) caste empowerment was ill-articulated with other issues, including those of class struggles. It thus needs contextualisation to understand these limitations. Accordingly we shall now look at how two parties with a somewhat broader agenda fared: Congress and the BJP.

63 This it could not translate at the national level, though it tried impressively by contesting in 503 constituencies (the most of any party in the 2009 general election); its 'failure' (it still got 21 seats) Ruparelia credits to its personalised campaign and difficulties in extending its reach both among Muslims and upper-castes (2015, p. 312).

64 However, this broadening is at a same time a localisation, in which the former actually reflects caste calculations of local electoral prospect rather than a true cross-caste broadening for the whole state (Verniers, 2018, p. 70).

4.2.2 Congress & the BJP

Figure 4 shows two of the four “important changes in Indian politics” (Manor, 2011, p. 204) since the 1990s, namely the rise of Hindu nationalism and of regional parties (the other two being the assertion of OBCs and Dalits respectively) against a decline in Congress vote share and national parties’ seat share (the latter not in the figure, but logically implied). Several aspects need noting: participation is neither comparatively low/ high, nor particularly volatile and it is not declining (if anything there is a very slight upward trend). We therefore see that the rise in participation that was

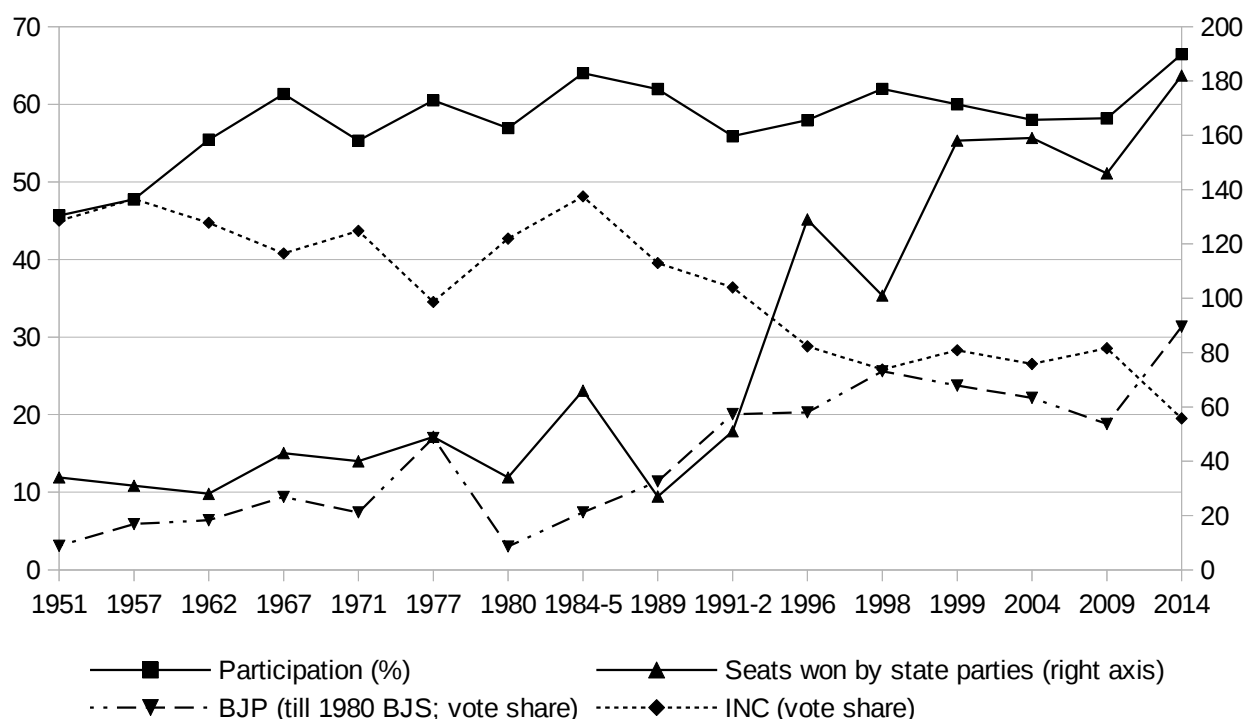


Figure 4: Various Lok Sabha election statistics, 1951-2014.

Compiled from (for INC, participation and state parties: Election Commission of India, 2017, pp. 41, 43, 45; for BJP additionally: Jaffrelot, 1999, pp. 282, 558; Sethi & Chawla, 1980).

the basis for Yadav’s assertion of the “second democratic upsurge” in the state-assembly elections of 1993-1995 (Yadav, 1996, p. 96) is not given nationally (at least in this aggregate, and even Yadav’s figures do not really see that much of an increase); which is not to say that some upsurge did not occur, just that it might have a different character in this respect.⁶⁵ The INC faces declining vote-shares since 1984 with some stabilisation in the 2000s. This, however, has not necessarily always led to a decline in the seat-share in the Lok Sabha (but it did especially in 2014), since India

⁶⁵ For instance in the number of candidates we can see a rising trend since the elections of 1980, with the average of before and after this election now more than tripling. The number of participating parties increased even more starkly, with a rising trend since a decade later (the 1989 election): the average before was at approx. 35 and is currently at approx. 234, with 464 parties competing in 2014 (Election Commission of India, 2017, pp. 41–42). This makes it more similar to Yadav’s numbers for (mainly) state assembly elections again.

follows a first-past-the-post system. We shall turn in some more detail to the 2014 elections later and will just note here that the INC's multiplier (of vote share to seat share) has declined by more than a whole point (from above 1.5 to below 0.5) between 1984 and 2014, with the exception of the rather favourable 2009 elections, where Congress amassed 206 seats (of 545) with 28.55% of the votes (compare this to the 114 seats and 28.3% of 1999) (Palshikar, 2014, p. 58).

The BJP emerged out of the BJS (Bharatiya Jana Sangh) in 1980, after this itself was briefly incorporated into the Janata Party (as even just the seat share of the BJS during its Janata phase between 1977 and 1980 is somewhat tricky to come by, not to mention its vote share, only the former is given above for the two respective elections; it is thus not strictly speaking comparable to the other data points in the curve, but should give an idea of the significant increase and then fall in the two elections respectively). In all elections save for 1977 (Janata), 1996-1999 and 2014 (BJP), the INC had the most seats in the Lok Sabha (and indeed it in these cases also formed the government, except for the brief intermission of the Janata Dal minority government between 1989-1991). For interpreting the rise in the number of seats won by state parties since 1996, it should be noted that the number of seats for national parties (such that are present in at least four states) was oscillating between 420-480 until it dropped in 1996 to 400 and is since declining (with 342 in 2014)⁶⁶ (Election Commission of India, 2017, p. 43).

4.2.2.1 *Rise and fall (and rise again)*

“The year 1989 marks a watershed in Indian political history. Before that date, the Congress was a mighty colossus; after that date, single-party dominance gave way to a multi-polar system”, says Guha (2007, p. 664). And Congress certainly had it coming: The (upper) OBCs, as we saw them emerging from the middle peasants' politics of the Janata (Dal), first got political power (against the Congress), which they then sought to translate into administrative power as well (against the reluctance of the Congress, as was evident from its sheer ignorance or avoidance of the matter of reservations). The Dalits, on the other hand, first got administrative power ('granted to them by Congress'), which they then sought to translate into political power (having been only rather passively integrated into Congress' power networks), as manifested in the rise of the BSP or (R)JD in UP and Bihar. They were, thus, until the 80s very much 'part of' the INC. The Congress thus lost the OBCs, if one can even say that since it relied very much on an alliance of upper castes and Dalits/ ST/ Muslims, the 'coalition of extremes'. And it also lost some of the minority voting, which increasingly did not go to Congress, but to local/ regional parties instead since 1977 (Ramachandra Guha,

⁶⁶ We have the great fortune of being able to ignore, in this analysis, other bureaucratic categories of 'seats' related to the registration status of the parties holding them; these then fill up the remaining seats of the Lok Sabha.

2007, pp. 427, 612–614; Witsoe, 2013, p. 45; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 97; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 427).⁶⁷

But while Congress seems to have been in somewhat of a political slumber during Mandalisation, the BJP was in fact (though seldom openly after V. P. Singh's reservation-announcement) opposed to it – at least at first. Its Hindutva ('Hinduness') ideology relies on a harmonious conception of society, naturalising the caste order as a distinct achievement and necessity of Hindu society. Accommodation of lower castes into this world-view is by way of sanskritisation (see footnote 60). Such sanskritisation is even extended to Dalits, whose claims to justice are appeased with charity by the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh; *the* Hindu nationalist civil society organisation (actually, *the* civil society organisation in India, if one considers size and influence)), or more specifically one of its departments, the Sewa Barthi. This strategy, however, seems to have limits in the level of the politicisation of, particularly, upper Dalits, who tend to defy such charitable wooing. The RSS, always more radical than the BJP, was in fact openly opposed to reservations. The BJP on the other hand, especially after the 1993 state elections in UP (and Madhya Pradesh; see above), began to re-think its stance towards the OBCs. It began to contemplate what it called 'social engineering', by which was meant the inclusion of *some* OBC and Dalit persons amongst its candidates (though not necessarily in the party itself). Likewise, it acquiesced to reservations, but not without highlighting economic criteria. It also began to enter coalitions with parties that had an easier relation with 'Mandal', such as the BSP, as we saw above (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 454–455, 462–464, 490–491; Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, p. 29).

We had interrupted Congress' tale with N. S. Rao in government. In the 1996 elections, however, the Congress suffered a heavy defeat, winning only 140 seats (down from 232 in 1991), with the BJP at 161 (up from 120). It could perhaps be said that fractional voting deepened: Congress had always relied on a broad, national campaign, but voters now were more favourable towards state parties (and governments) and were wooed by more narrow, sectional parties. Neither the Congress, nor the BJP (and its coalition partners (the Congress' did not make it into parliament)) had a majority. And neither had the United Front, the rival coalition constituted by the JD, SP, CPI-M and 12 other parties. In the event, the BJP, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as designated Prime Minister, was invited to form a government, which put before it, for the first time, the formidable tasks of building a coalition government without upsetting either its more radical supporters (the RSS) or the potentially more careful/ even secular allies. They failed this time. Instead, the United Front, with H. D.

67 There are of course interesting exceptions, such as in Madhya Pradesh, where Congress did manage quite well (Jaffrelot, 2003, pp. 435–452), but such 'optimism' is certainly out of our scope.

Deve Gowda as Prime Minister formed a government with the outside support of Congress (Ruparelia, 2015, pp. 148–149, 153, 169–170, 252–253).

Gowda was to be replaced by Inder Kumar Gujral in 1997, after ‘internal’ squabbles with Congress. And another year later, Congress reclin ed its support for the United Front government in general, leading to new elections in 1998. This time, the BJP actually managed to form a coalition government which lasted for a year (ending in rather banal inter-party conflicts) and after yet another general election in 1999, yet another BJP government even lasted a whole term. General dissatisfaction with liberalisation and with the watering down of its Hindutva agenda in its coalition politics are credited for the defeat of the BJP coalition in the 2004 elections, where Congress seems to have gotten a better grasp at state politics and was so lucky as to win more seats (145 over 114 five years earlier) despite a declining vote share and thus it now was Manmohan Singh’s turn as Prime Minister until 2014 (on the 2009 elections, see above) (Ruparelia, 2015, pp. 252–253, 275, 290, 299–300).

Above, we glossed over the social democratic aspirations of Congress rather crudely. In fact government revenues did rise in the 2000s (falling in the previous decade). And, if we follow Ruparelia’s narrative, together with the combined effect of the social-movement agitation (itself increasing since the 80s) and a more vigilant judiciary (primarily the Supreme Court’s ruling on the enforceability of the social responsibilities of the state since 1992) this resulted in new state programmes aimed at poverty reduction or civic empowerment (e.g. the Right to Information Act, rural employment guarantees, an act on ‘forest rights’ for Adivasis or the ‘Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act’ and the ‘National Food Security Bill’; all between 2005 and 2012), and in doing so in fact began to usher in a new welfare paradigm. Which is not to claim that such formal rights automatically also mean substantive changes. Interestingly he adds to this the stronger anchoring of concerns for social justice in political strategies following the second democratic upsurge. Similarly to Chatterjee (2008, p. 55), this might be read as a counter-move against the imposition of the market on society, but differently from Chatterjee, Ruparelia argues that these new obligations of the state work against the former’s distinction of political and civil society, because key subaltern issues are now directly, and qua Supreme Court ruling constitutionally, related to state institutions (Ruparelia, 2013, pp. 570–571, 577–580; Pattenden, 2016, pp. 57–60; actual implementation of these programs thus becomes a key arena of contention: Lerche, 2010, pp. 76, 79).⁶⁸

68 Chatterjee (2004, pp. 37–41) distinguishes civil society (in the liberal, ‘*Gesellschaft*’ sense, with legal and formalised representation of interests, their struggles’ resolutions to be codified in law) from political society where the subaltern’s raise their claims (ad hoc, precarious political bargaining, no universal rights, ‘*Gemeinschaft*’). He thus also associates with political society confrontational politics and with civil society “institution building and legal expertise” (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 232) – integrative co-operation.

4.2.2.2 2014

In the 2014 elections⁶⁹, the BJP again deepened its ‘social engineering’ strategy (and it helped that their presidential candidate and now Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was of low caste background), while at the same time those parties traditionally associated with caste politics (SP, RJD, JD-U, etc.) were increasingly perceived as being single-caste centred. But ‘just’ caste politics alone seems to not be a sufficient strategy any more: The key to the rise of the BJP (so far as our research interest is concerned, i.e. ignoring the religious/ ideological dimensions), seems to lie just as much with the ‘middle class’ (and/ or the ‘neo-middle-class’, a term conveyed upon us by the analytical mind of the BJP itself, referring, apparently, to the newly/ lower middle class and/ or the aspiring upper lower class). To them it offered development as liberalisation (and again, Modi’s credentials as former Chief Minister of Gujarat, renowned for its economic growth, certainly helped) (Jaffrelot, 2015, pp. 25–26; Palshikar & Suri, 2014, pp. 42–45, 48).

Faith in the state had been lost i.a. through Congress’ corruption (a problem because it was, in fact, in power; it seems unlikely that others would not equally have been perceived as corrupt)⁷⁰, people’s unawareness of their beneficence from central-government-run schemes (or their non-beneficence), Congress’ own attempts at ‘playing the caste card’ (e.g. inclusion of Jats (cf. above) into reservations for education and state employment just prior to the elections), general dissatisfaction with the incumbent party (in the centre, for ten years) as well as dissatisfaction with state governments run by Congress (but comparatively higher satisfaction with BJP-run state governments). It was particularly the marginal sections of society amongst whom the BJP could attract the largest increases in its vote. To this we may then add the ‘Modi effect/ wave’, the image of an experienced, successful leader (for the lower castes: conscious of caste injustices because of his background; for the upper castes: not suspect of ‘Mandal-politics’), as hinted at above and especially if compared to the as of then comparatively inexperienced Rahul Gandhi (great-grandson of Nehru) of the INC (Chhibber & Verma, 2014, pp. 51–55; Jaffrelot, 2015, p. 23; Palshikar & Suri, 2014, pp. 41–42).

In 2014 also, the BJP overcame its state-specific mobilisation of earlier election campaigns (not endemic only to the BJP). At the same time, there has been a significant loss of regional parties, at least of those opposed to the BJP: The only exceptions are in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Telangana and Punjab; namely the BSP is not even represented in the Lok Sabha any more (before,

69 We briefly skip to the 2014 elections (somewhat out of the proclaimed scope of the text (cf. footnote 12)), because here, significant shifts with respect to caste and class occurred (or rather, showed), which offer a nice contrast to earlier developments.

70 And it was not just corruption, but the general predicament of governing the contradictions that came progressively to the fore as discussed above. As Manor put it: “India became increasingly democratic and increasingly difficult to govern”; accordingly he adds that faith in the state was already receding since the 1980s (Manor, 1990, pp. 72–73).

with 21 seats). Thus, despite the continuing rise of seats for state parties (see figure 4), we may see here some qualification of the regionalisation of national politics. And this national character of its appeal was not just geographic, in fact, support came from (almost, Muslims being excluded for obvious reasons, but also Dalits, for ideological ones (speculates Jaffrelot)) sections of society (both in terms of caste and class). And the national gained importance in yet another way: ideologically (as in ‘world-view’), the BJP managed the conflation of Hindutva and nationalism/ nationality. The BJP’s nationalism combines Hindutva and development, with the latter referring both to (promises of) economic prosperity and a rise in the international standing of India. In general, and for the BJP in particular, there is less of a ‘pro-poor attitude’ prevailing in political discourse, in the sense that there is less emphasis on poverty reduction or support for the poor as the main policy objective;⁷¹ this eases the way for liberalisation (capitalism, claims Bardhan (2009, p. 32), generally got a better discursive standing in recent decades). As Palshikar puts it, this allows a shift from ‘redistribution’/ ‘welfare’ to ‘opportunity’/ ‘achievement’ (Lodha, Palshikar, & Kumar, 2017, p. 4; Palshikar, 2018, pp. 37–38; Palshikar & Suri, 2017, pp. 296–297; Jaffrelot, 2015, p. 33; Fernandes, 2004, pp. 2416, 2425–2428; Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, p. 32; that this has precedents since the Nehru period and is reflected in social movements alike is highlighted by Ray & Katzenstein, 2005, pp. 25–26) – the BJP thus presents itself as being ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, just and market-efficient, all at the same time. Palshikar (2018, pp. 40–42) therefore suggests that there may be a new hegemony forming in Indian politics (that of the BJP). India, he claims, has not seen hegemony since the beginnings of the decline of Congress after 1971 (not as measured in votes/ seats, but in the faltering of the ‘Congress system’, as described above).

Thus it was of course not the ‘genius’ of Modi that one day brought India such a remarkable shift of politics. Those of the aspiring middle class who in the ‘80s would perhaps have flocked to Rajiv Gandhi and his “whizz-kid technocrats or managers” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 101), already switched sides from the ‘90s onwards to the BJP, (for them) “the sole proponent of a political project” (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 124): First, parts of the ‘middle class’ abandoned the Janata Dal for its Mandalisation (the former often having an upper-caste or ‘creamy-layer’ background) and then also the Congress, and on top of that, they (to some, perhaps limited and selective, but certainly not inconsequential degree) abandoned ‘politics’ altogether, finding refuge in private hospitals and schools and, generally, civil society organisations rather than parties (and even exclusive geographical spaces as shown by Fernandes, 2004; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 125, 137; Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 166–167; Harriss, 2011, p. 150; Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, pp. 27–28).

71 The evidence on whether this is a backlash against ‘the poor’ or a more general one against minorities (which the poor are themselves destined to become, see figure 2) is mixed (cf. Jaffrelot, 2015, p. 24; Sridharan, 2014, p. 75).

Congress lost across the board in 2014, the only constituency that did not see a decline in its vote share for the INC were the Muslims (Palshikar, 2014, p. 60). The BJP, on the other hand, seems to have gained very broadly, as already hinted at above. Though generally, the richer the voters, the more likely that they vote BJP; except for Bihar and UP, where the BJP gained much from mobilising poorer sections (Jaffrelot, 2015, pp. 20–21). Reservation politics (i.e. caste politics of entities such as ‘the OBCs’, not of more individual jatis) on the other hand has reached a “saturation point” since 2000, claims Jaffrelot. Crucially, for castes such as the Yadavs of Bihar and UP, this does not hold, since they are to defend their status (Jaffrelot, 2015, pp. 26, 29–30; Pai, 2013, p. xxi; similarly Verniers, 2018, p. 72, though he adds that Jats still fight caste politics for inclusion into the OBC category, which, as we saw above, Congress granted them, at least nationally, before the 2014 elections). Though Verma (2014, p. 94), generally confirming this analysis, suggests that should another party, say the INC, succeed in also claiming ‘development’ for itself, caste may once again become a decisive factor for the electorate.

Both the BJP and the INC can be said to have an upper-caste bias: the INC, because it already started out as a party dominated by upper caste sections and relying on local upper castes to organise ‘vote banks’ for it – part of the Congress system; the BJP, because of its Hindutva ideology, affirmative of the caste system as such, but also because of the high prevalence of upper caste personnel (thus the focus on sanscritisation; but all this is checked, to a degree, by its social-engineering base-broadening). While the INC simply ‘missed’ to OBCs in its coalitions of extremes, the BJP was rather successful with its integrative strategies. The state-level second democratic upsurge only occasionally, and then only briefly, penetrated the national arena. Congress, to an extent, seems to be in free fall. But only to an extent, since its losses in seat numbers are more dramatic than its losses in vote share and, additionally, it was in government for a decade between 2004 and 2014. It is thus not simply subject to governance transformations but a subject of them. So how might all these actors and their politics be framed in the broader polit-economic context?

4.2.3 Articulating class and caste

4.2.3.1 Intermediates

The BJP’s own proclamation, that it serves the (neo-) ‘middle class’, might not be far off the mark, if we consider McCartney’s and Harriss-White’s reading of them mobilising the ‘intermediate classes’ (they use the plural, just to be safe) against the liberalising elites. The latter they construe as being the result of a ‘middle-class’-melting-pot which is said to have merged Bardhan’s class-triumvirate (agriculture, industry, professionals; see above) in their shared consumerist desires. As intro-

duced above, it was they who thus moved against the state (the ‘means of accumulation’ of the intermediates) via liberalisation/ ‘globalisation’. They add to this the BJP’s earlier call for a more autarchic (more, not completely) economy and thus summarise the intermediates’ stance as being “aligned against the forces of globalisation, international capital and unorganised or poorly organised domestic wage labour and ambivalently against national corporate capital” (McCartney & Harriss-White, 2000, p. 49; Harriss-White, 2003, p. 61).⁷²

This is somewhat in line with Corbridge’s and Harriss’ concept of an ‘elite revolt’, where liberalisation is a counter-move against subaltern assertions ranging from the rise of middle-peasants to that of lower classes in general. However, they include in the elite both (i.e. distinctly) ‘middle classes’ and upper classes (they even state that “the intermediate regime has become less intermediate” (Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 138)) and they would claim that both are joined in their turning to Hindutva and the BJP as instrument and platform for their revolt. Additionally, the autarchic economic ideology of the BJP already fell victim to its first burden of governmental responsibility after 1998 and it now is much more open to liberalisation and ‘globalisation’, much to the delight of its electorate as it turns out (Palshikar & Suri, 2014, p. 44). Nevertheless, balancing policies for the upper and the *entire* ‘middle class’ (to put it crudely: for big capital and the intermediates and the consumerists and whatever ‘neo’-fragments there might indeed be in it) is still a precarious act (McCartney & Harriss-White, 2000, pp. 34, 46–49; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 137, 145, 175; Jaffrelot, 2015, pp. 26–27; McCartney, 2013, p. 253; Kaviraj, 2010, p. 269).

What we witness here, in any case, is a broadening of the dominant coalition (or classes, when they are not in alignment), with middle elements pushing in and being variously accommodated or repulsed. All the while noting, that what the BJP attempts to bind politically, is in fact structurally different (and perhaps contradictory, the rationale of intermediaries after all being protection from infringement from above). Intermediate classes have not disappeared with liberalisation, in fact they are a crucial part of it; labour being more easily controlled/ suppressed by small capital than big, exemplified by the large amount of thusly profitable sub-contracting. Accordingly, the intermediates seem to have ‘survived’ at the local level, their regime, however, being replaced (as in ongoing, contested and incomplete (Bardhan, 2009, p. 35)) by a more liberal one as we noted above. This, however, also means that implementation of a new regime faces significant ‘local’ hurdles (cf. Nehru’s troubles) (Jha, 2016, p. 75; McCartney, 2013, pp. 249–256; Bhowmik, 2004, p. 126).⁷³

72 There thus are striking similarities to Alnasseri’s ‘neo-national bourgeoisie’ (Alnasseri, 2011), though the BJP’s integrative ‘hegemony’ seems to partially subvert these, as does its economic-policy do-over (on that momentarily).

73 For Jha (2016) I only had access to the e-book, page numbers refer to the result of a conversion into an A4-sized PDF with the default options of the software Calibre (version 3.21.0+dfsg-1build1 on Ubuntu 18.04).

4.2.3.2 *Caste chemistry*

We saw above that the BSP had its origins in the BAMCEF, an organisation, arguably, of the more privileged of the ‘backwards and minorities’: the employees. And similarly, we saw the upper-OBC Yadavs at the helm of the ‘second democratic upsurge’ in Bihar. Though both times this did of course not mean that the movements were necessarily strictly elitist in this sense. But especially in the case of the (R)JD, we saw how there has been significant contention over the definition of the ‘creamy layer’ and how the Yadavs excluded themselves from it but did include the Jats (who were thus positioned at the business end of the formers’ political assertion). And we also hinted at the predominance of Yadav personnel in (R)JD governments and the party itself. This is a tendency not only actualised in Bihar alone, in fact Yadav and Palshikar generalise that “[t]he dominant middle castes [have] become both the harbingers of democracy and the bottlenecks in the progress of democracy” (2008). And this is not merely a struggle between castes as castes: “The new contradiction in rural India seems to be between the more numerous and labor-power hiring (at least to a certain extent) OBCs and the labor-power providing SCs (and STs)” (Vakulabharanem & Motiram, 2011, p. 122; similarly Pai, 2013, p. 158). And, with the afore-mentioned, we should add, this contradiction also extends to caste relations inside the OBC or Dalit spectrum (on that, more below).

Gupta cautions that there is no determinism from caste to vote, where for instance the proportion of a caste of a given electorate would translate into the vote share of a specific party catering to this caste.⁷⁴ And yet, mobilisation on caste lines is possible and as we saw above, caste is a relevant electoral dimension, but this requires political articulation, not seldom epitomised by leader-figures such as Lalu or Mayawati (or to a more limited extent Modi) (Gupta, 2000, pp. 136–137, 171–172; Jodhka, 2011, pp. 164–165). Since, as we saw above, the religious varna hierarchy of caste differences has secularised and, additionally, categories such as OBC are indeed profane constructs, jatis tendentially stand in a potentially competitive relationship to each other, or at least there can not be assumed (as some might have) to be any certainty of a united rising of lower castes (as attempted with the concept of the ‘bahujan samaj’). It is in this sense, that Gupta concludes:

“Caste alliances thus appear to emanate from secular and political factors and do not spring full blown from primordial loyalties. [...] What brings about such horizontal solidarity between castes then is the extent to which their secular interests coincide, which in turn depends on their structural locations in the society. [...] What needs to be appreciated is that these interests must really be powerful enough for castes to overcome their natural

74 While there may only seldom be a numerical majority of a specific caste, there is, claims Pai (2013, p. 58), often a “dominant [Dalit] sub-caste” in many regions (the Chamars of UP for instance), which then also tend to dominate politically/ economically (at least amongst the Dalits). – And for a more elaborate argument on how numbers might be decisive after all (in a first-past-the-post system, limited information coupled with the expectation of beneficence (only) from leaders of one’s caste and if that is likely to succeed, people vote caste) (Chandra, 2004, pp. 13–15).

[sic; he means 'systematic', see the 'competitive relationship' above] repulsion towards each other and form united fronts. It is therefore caste chemistry and not caste arithmetic that one should pay attention to" (Gupta, 2000, pp. 174–175).

Accordingly, he also warns that since there is no necessary link between caste and class, strategically relying on merging specific caste identities with class struggle can be problematic, for such coalitions are necessarily contingent (viz. political) and thus dependent upon conjunctural developments and strategic shifts (Gupta, 2000, p. 140). This is an analytical/ strategic distinction of caste and class. Empirically, Vaid (2012, p. 420) finds that there seems to be a stronger statistical link between the extremes of the caste hierarchy and those of classes (for his classification schema, see Vaid, 2012, pp. 406–407). Since there tend to be upper castes in more medial classes and likewise for lower castes, Vaid finds the clearest correlation between upper castes and mental- and lower castes and manual-labour.

Since the late '90s, a new Dalit 'middle class' has emerged, who add to the previous demands of reservations in public employment either such in private employment as well, or (and these are often alternative proposals) focus on a "democratisation of capital" (Pai, 2013, p. 117), for instance general quotas for procurement from Dalit companies. The latter, it should be pointed out, thus moves beyond employment towards ownership positions of Dalits in the economy. Pai distinguishes such strategies from earlier Dalit mobilisation, more coming from concerns with justice and dignity, and argues that this newer form has roots in a 'middle class', economic, meritocratic background of its members. And they do not (yet) form parties but are more involved in (civil society) lobbying. In fact such demands are sometimes posed in explicit distance from parties like the BSP, who are credited with having improved the political, but not the economic situation of Dalits. Procurement from Dalit companies or easier credit for Dalit entrepreneurs, however, is obviously going to subsidise the 'upper' (educated, employed, perhaps already proprietary) Dalits much more than the rest (Pai, 2013, pp. 116–121, 125, 141, 147).

This thus tends to shift the class component of Dalit mobilisation. Beginning, generally (there have, of course, also been (colonial) precursors, especially in the South), in the 1970s with organisations such as the Dalit Panthers, it used to have a strong class focus. Dalit, in fact, was understood by the Panthers not as caste but as literally 'the oppressed', whatever the source or form of oppression. They also were not usually party-based movements ('Ambedkar's' Republican Party of India is one obvious exception). This only really came in the '80s and meant, as we saw above, a gradual integration into electoral dynamics, including the strategy of visibly gaining power above all else and, later, to this end allying with broader coalitions of even upper castes, that have, arguably, somewhat

dented the radicality of the assertion of the lower and Dalit castes (Guru & Chakravarty, 2005, pp. 141, 147; Pai, 2013, pp. xviii, 159–161).

4.2.3.3 *Labour*

We have already discussed the many forms in which classes are relevant for party and caste politics just as we have discussed the class dimension of general policies and the shifts in relations of production and what these implied for political projects. Adding to that we shall briefly look at union struggles and specify ‘labour’s’ position in the economy.

Unionisation in India is largely a formal-sector phenomenon. In addition, it is said to be fragmented and often aligned to political parties or castes, with insufficient coordination between the various entities. And it is under heavy state control, or so argues Chibber, since independence; with the system of (often state-channelled) conflict resolution tilted in capital’s favour. For instance, while unions are free to form, there is no compulsory recognition of them for management and additionally, any union can bring an issue in front of state arbitration bodies. This fosters inter-union competition and makes sowing division amongst unions much easier for management (Bhowmik, 2004, pp. 114–115, 123–124; Chibber, 2005, pp. 38–43, 52–53; Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 38–39, 192; Jha, 2016, p. 22).

This dark picture is partly qualified by Teitelbaum (2006, pp. 398, 404–405, 408), who suggests that rather than looking at the total number of unions and bemoaning fragmentation, one should appreciate that the number of unions per firm (where negotiations take place) is comparatively small (though he admits the field still is competitive, but seems to think this would instil a ‘service-rationale’ amongst unions towards their members), and also that unions are organised in a decreasing number of national federations. He also questions the political interference based on interviews he conducted (with firms only, it seems), though he grants that in the first decades after independence this might have been stronger (and related to Congress’ concern for national unity, which is to say its co-optation of both labour and capital, not least through its ‘own’ union federation). On top of that, the volume of industrial disputes is said to be around average since the mid-80s by international standards (though it is not clear whether he disaggregates strikes and lockouts), for this, see figure 5. Lastly, he suggests that the rather strict labour laws would indicate a favourable position for workers, which is in some contrast to Harriss-White’s contention that “loopholes are big enough for the proverbial bus to be driven through them” (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 37, 67).

From figure 5 we can see the development of the level of strike and lockout activity. Crucially, this

seems to be untouched by the ‘second democratic upsurge’ we are after, if anything it has slightly declined with it and certainly in very recent years. Significant is the relative ‘industrial peace’ of the Nehru era and the massive railway strike of 1974 that was one of the societal ‘ruptures’ mentioned earlier as having upset Indira Gandhi into later proclaiming the emergency. To the very large spike in the early ‘80s, the Bombay textile worker’s strike certainly contributed quite a bit, which brought the whole (regional) industry to a halt for 15 months (Bhowmik, 2004, pp. 120–121), to give just two examples. Nevertheless, in general, large strikes are the exception to the rule of localised small-scale protests (often plant-based) (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 38–39). After a decade of some significant fluctuation (‘74 - ‘85), the trend seems to have smoothed somewhat, with levels approaching those of Nehru’s industrial peace.

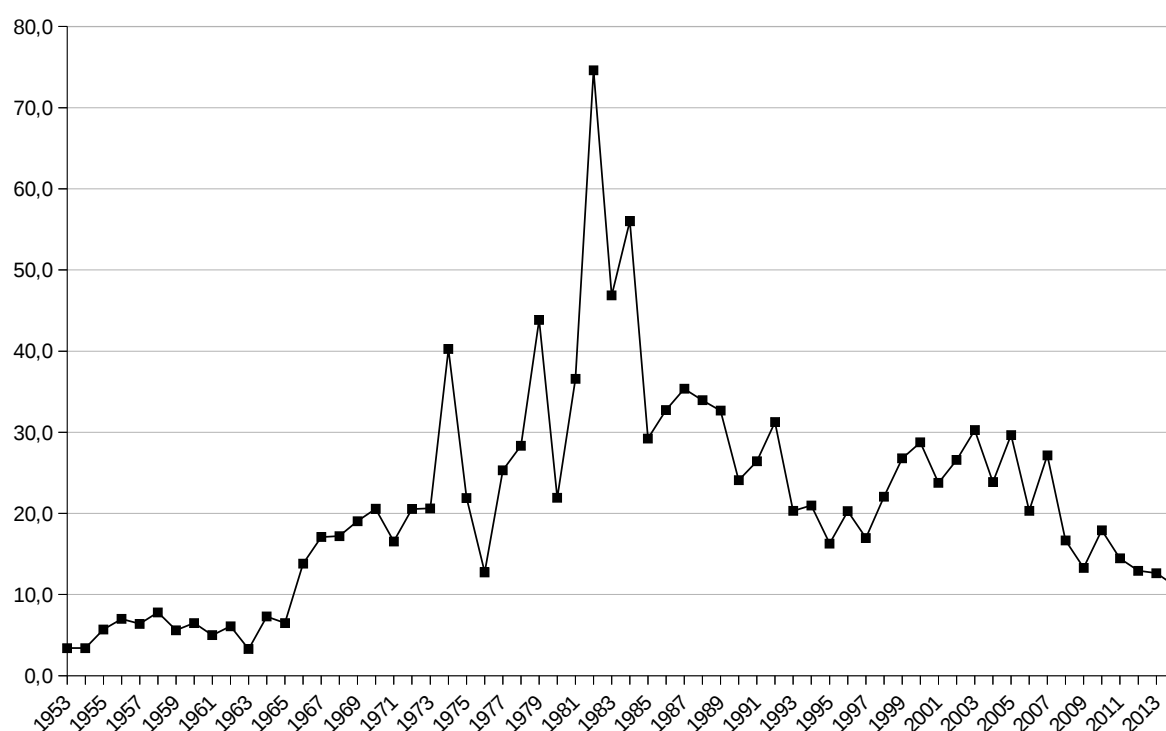


Figure 5: Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts (in million), 1953-2014.

Compiled from (International Labour Organization, 2018; Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016, p. 88; Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 227); data excludes ‘political strikes’ and those involving less than ten workers.

If we said above that most organisation of labour takes place in the formal sector, we need to appreciate that this only constitutes 8% of the economy (in total, about the same fraction of the workforce is unionised), with 92% being informal, a share that has recently grown with liberalisation. Besides the loopholes in the regulation of the formal sector, there can be often very repressive (and sometimes militarily organised) violence against any form of labour organisation or simply avoidance of the regulated sector. Though the formal sector is small in proportion, it accounts for a third of all

wages paid-out (in stark contrast to this, the informal sector provides for 90% of livelihoods). And roughly two thirds of it are constituted by government employment. About half the employed population works in agriculture (down from more than 70%; cf. figure 1 for its much faster declining share in GDP) and 88% of all Indians are non-metropolitan (i.e. rural or living in towns below 200,000 inhabitants). The 2000s have seen a stark decline in the wage-share of total value added and an accompanying rise in that of profits; but while therefore productivity has increased, real wages did not and neither did employment (proportionally) (Bhowmik, 2010, pp. 283–284; Corbridge et al., 2013, p. 84; Harriss-White, 2003, p. 1; Jha, 2016, p. 92; Lerche et al., 2013, p. 341; Pattenden, 2016, pp. 43–44).

Agrarian relations of production are no longer feudal or semi-feudal and neither are landlords of primary importance any more, the latter having shifted to other occupations such as investing in urban areas and/ or playing gatekeepers (on these, immediately below) (Lerche et al., 2013, pp. 341–342; although, whatever we take from that, the Communist Party of India (including its Marxist and its Maoist instances) would object: Harriss, 2013, p. 351; as would Das, 2007, p. 415). In accordance with this, there is a declining importance of land as a basis of power or as obstacle/ vehicle of social mobility for the locally dominant. Harriss adds, however, that since, as we saw above, the subalterns' farming is often on marginal landholdings, complemented by variously precarious non-agricultural employment (or as agricultural hired labour), land distribution is in fact still important, though in a different, more complex way than it was before. Land reform, since the relevant amount of land per capita that could be redistributed is a mere 0.14 hectare, is off the table as a serious, effective redistributive policy aimed at 'development' of the agricultural sector (cf. Senghaas' enthusiasm for it above). This is similar to Chakravarti's analysis, who allows that the importance of land is inversely proportional to the 'level of development', which i.a. implies other economic opportunities outside agriculture and, crucially, a permissive state (cf. on gatekeepers below). He suggests (in 2004) this may not yet be the case generally, or that there are significant exceptions, especially for the poorest sections (Chakravarti, 2004, p. 54; Harriss, 2011, pp. 145–146, 2013, pp. 358, 362–363; though cf. Lerche et al., 2013, p. 347).

The gatekeepers that were mentioned above sit at the interfaces of the state's resource channels and control their local use and distribution, but can also control access to government certifications (of e.g. caste or land titles) or services. For Pattenden this means that local domination is now more indirect, but still present. And, crucially, gatekeeping seems to become a significant part in both the securing of the political position of the locally dominant classes and castes (co-optational patronage networks subverting class-based opposition) and of economic accumulation (rather than agriculture)

and hence upward mobility in general. The decentralisation that accompanied participative local-governance reforms (see Heller, 2011) thus has fostered this gatekeeping-mode of local domination and not (yet) led to empowerment as more simplistic liberalist accounts might have promised (Pattenden, 2011, pp. 165, 173, 186–193).

At the same time it must be noted that the increase in the relevance (and opportunity) of non-agricultural employment (but also of education, cash economy and the increase in importance of qualification-based employment) is a possibly empowering trend for rural workers. Additionally, we noted that the locally dominant are increasingly oriented to the cities, though their roots in rural areas might still be strong, as we saw. Taken together with the elbowing into the state of lower castes (or their engineered inclusion), this presents at least tendentially a need for greater accountability of state policies and administration, not least because of the rise in consciousness of the lower castes vis-à-vis other castes and political power in general. – And yet, we also hinted above at the fragmented nature of this democratic upsurge: competition among OBC and Dalit jatis and a (sometimes violent) backlash by upper castes, especially pronounced at the local level, dampens this trend. And as if that were not yet enough, Shah adds that rural non-party, which is to say ‘social movement’, (economic) struggles mostly remain localised and are often centred on specific jatis, which prevents generalisation and scale-up, while party-mediated struggles do provide this, but at the cost of integrating into the struggle middle or even upper strata (caste and class), which then leads to such struggles benefiting mostly the middle and rich peasants (Chakravarti, 2004, p. 53; Jodhka, 2011, p. 162; Pai, 2013, pp. 59, 64, 155, 166; Pattenden, 2016, pp. 4, 56; Shah, 1990, p. 301).

4.2.3.4 Class alchemy

Indeed, caste variously compartmentalises the labour market (in the form of exclusions of other castes), but may also serve as a vehicle for worker’s mobilisation against exploitation just as it does as a means of suppressing it (the evocation of caste solidarity by capital) – abstractly, it thus allows for everything and determines nothing. Since caste associations often are very broad in the scope of their societal engagements, ranging from cultural and religious matters to, importantly, economic and political dealings (including collective tax evasion and bribery or the provision of physical security for its members), they in their cross-class nature tend to conceal class cleavages. The latter trend seems to prevail more generally and Harriss-White even goes so far as to say that a form of corporatism is evolving in India, with caste and not class as its central momentum: business associations and trade unions are in fact often caste associations – not exclusively caste, of course, but

prominently and any way not contradicting capitalist development, as modernists would suppose it might. She stresses that caste and class thus are not ‘false consciousnesses’ of each other; or as Gupta illustrates: “The stigma of tradition sits incubus like on social relations even if the prescriptions of tradition cannot be followed with equal facility these days” (Gupta, 2005, p. 752; Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 32–33, 184–188, 197–199; Kaviraj, 2010, p. 109; Bardhan, 1984, p. 50).⁷⁵

However, that the majority of workers (and the economy in general, for that matter) are not reached by state-provided rights or regulation does not mean they are not regulated, but that this happens unstately (in the direct sense; with Poulantzas we might immediately interject that the state is present in its absence, but that aspect is not what is of import here), materialising through civil society in caste associations, for instance. Cut-backs in state capacity will result in a ‘shadow state’ (as Harriss-White puts it) taking over, which, considering the above, empowers intermediate classes and capital more generally (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 241, 244; Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, pp. 169, 171).

Unions are beginning to address the informal sector and their own fragmentation, but as of yet more in words than in deeds, claims Jha. This is in line with a general broadening of unions since the ‘70s, expanding sectorally from factories to e.g. mines and households. This might, alongside a broadening of issues with the stronger rise of social movements (ecological, feminist, civil rights, *etc.*; which thus took on issues neglected by earlier class-centred movements of peasants and workers) and of course the second democratic upsurge be interpreted as a de-centring of politics in general. This is a rather massive transformation of the political: at the same time we see party-fragmentation and a higher governmental turnover (that is, in the ‘90s), ideologies being increasingly abandoned for profit-maximisation and higher social movement assertiveness (Bhowmik, 2010, pp. 298–299; Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 542–545; Jha, 2016, p. 99; Lerche, 2010, pp. 73–74).

However, in general, holds Jha (2016, p. 98), the exclusion of/ into the informal sector happened without a comprehensive social strategy towards it (by neither unions nor the state). This exclusion, it should be stressed, is from the formal sector, not (necessarily) from capitalism. And it is a very dangerous game, considering that, for instance, the militant Naxalites thrive in conditions of social neglect (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 85, 98–99, 102). While some thus call for stronger ‘state-intervention’ in the form of a rights-based social agenda, see above, Lerche (2010, p. 76) warns that this is somewhat limited: It ameliorates the conditions of informality (e.g. through variously limited employment guarantees), but does not address the issue of informality as such.

⁷⁵ Or, if you wish: “While religion still acts in part as an opiate, caste corporatism anaesthetises labour and thereby helps sustain accumulation” (Harriss-White, 2003, p. 199).

But it would be wrong to therefore neglect the role of the state in these dynamics. In fact, given the weak unions and the ‘class-subverting’ ‘informal’/ civil society organisation such as caste associations, the state is a key point of reference in such class struggles. Indeed “[t]he [direct] struggle against employers has been replaced by a struggle to secure improvements from government” (Lerche, 2010, p. 74; Herring & Agarwala, 2006, p. 346). And this in turn means that the lower/ rising castes have a clear interest in the state and do not wish to see it wither into liberalist utopia. In this sense, we can see how it is the state that is (seen as) the guarantor of lower class ‘development’, while for upper classes (and/ or castes), the market-liberalisation provided (or less ideologically (Kaviraj, 2010, p. 237): the market and the state provided) both the economic resources that made some of them more affluent (join the middle class for instance) and also provided the employment necessary to make them acquiesce (in so far as they did) to Mandal’s reservations (Bardhan, 2009, p. 34; Harriss-White, 2003, p. 195; Jaffrelot, 2003, p. 367).

So it turns out (on page 72, finally) that, in light of the transformative potential of state policy in the present conjuncture, and given the weakness of unions and the general locality of non-party struggles, it might indeed be worthwhile understanding subaltern party-politics, or more generally the institutional integration of subalterns into the state (in the hope that this may satisfy Gramsci, see footnote 7). To the many observations that were already made on this issue, we might add a more general one: that of the division between socialists and communists, or to put it differently between caste and class. Respective exemplars are the JD(s) and the CPI-M: While the former (the JD-universe, and we may include in it the BSP) stands to exemplify the strategy of putting caste assertion centre-stage and in doing so pursuing state-power (for all the reasons and ‘unreasons’ detailed above), joining in coalitions even with sworn enemies (the BJP); the latter (CPI-M) stands for a zero-sum conception of power and was never in government (nationally). It came close sometimes, once even being offered Prime Ministership (!), but it declined, preferring to support ruling coalitions from the outside out of fear of smearing its (purportedly) clean image of a principled agent of the working class, unsullied by the dilemmata of capitalist governance. And what is more, if the socialists believed that caste had to be abandoned before other issues could meaningfully be addressed, the communists believed all social contestation (or at least that which they saw as promising ‘progress’) to revolve around class (just as the initially reluctant BJP and INC, the CPI-M also warmed up to Mandalisation, but only after a while). And in good orthodox manner it was thus to be the only party capable of allying all the left behind it (while the JD actually came quite close to this in its ruling coalitions) (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, p. 611; Ruparelia, 2015, pp. 332–333, 339–340).

Just as we highlighted the many achievements of the caste-party-wing of the second democratic up-

surge (besides its corruption, opportunism and short-sightedness), we should note that CPI-M was for instance actively involved in designing the 2004-onwards Congress-led coalition government's '(National) Common Minimum [Social] Programme', just as it is often credited for its well-organised party apparatus with little corruption in times of outright criminals being in parliament. And it helped pass (together with other left parties of course) the social, rights-based programmes mentioned above (Ruparelia, 2015, pp. 302–304). And yet we can see how the unswerving search for the universal elixir that would bind and convert all struggles into the gold of liberatory class struggle, how such class alchemy has hindered 'concrete' politics (not to be reduced to the often dismissively fielded 'realpolitik', cf. Bloch's 'concrete utopia': 2013, pp. 164, 257–258). It is in this sense that Ruparelia (2015, p. 341) wistfully concludes: "A more imaginative grasp of the real possibilities available at the time, a determination to identify political opportunities amidst structural constraints, would have enabled like-minded allies amongst the socialists and the communists to advance the cause of a third force [next to INC and BJP, see also footnote 76] to a greater degree".

We can thus see that it is really both caste and class struggles as such that need to be analysed in their particular confluence; rather than striving to derive one from the other, or neglect one in favour of the other. Caste fragments class and class caste. Chemistry is complicated. The state and parties are potential avenues for generalisation-articulation in contrast to more particularist, singular forms and sites of struggle. And indeed this turned out to be a central point of contention: to state or not to state. Institutionalised access is something to be fought for, claimed. And this happens in a context, where, potentially, everybody is pitted against everybody – coalitions are contingent political constructs, not structural guarantees.

4.3 Strategic selectivity of the state

4.3.1 *Reinventing the state*

Given the above discussion, it seems rather curious, when the Rudolphs ask "[w]hy, in a country with significant objective class differences in its industrial and agricultural sector are India's national parties centrist and pluralist rather than left or right class parties" (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1987, p. 19). They of course start from different assumptions (see footnote 51) in what they would consider as 'class politics' (though, again, one wonders where these were ever met, except perhaps on the pages of Pravda). Chhibber and Verma (2014, p. 51) have a telling figure, where they plot the social and economic ideology on scales from 'conservative' to 'progressive' and find that the BJP and Congress cluster nicely (with almost all their different caste- and class-disaggregated constituencies even) to the right and left respectively. They also find that economic ideologies (related to

workers rights and the role of the state) are more similar than social ideologies (related to caste and religious matters). Now, that the economic divide is not as big is certainly suspicious. Part of the reason may be, following Yadav and Palshikar (2003, p. 22), the dictates of global, neo-liberal capitalism; another part may indeed be, as the Rudolphys contended, that 'labour' is rather weak; a further part may be the inability of socialist and communist parties to form a coherent political project, as Ruparelia holds; and yet another is certainly to be found in the many 'competing' cleavages (religious and caste, primarily) concealing class articulations.

But maybe that is not the central point to ponder when class analysis is concerned (whether or not parties claim to be representatives of this or that class). Maybe the more fundamental question should inquire the 'significant objective class differences' that the Rudolphys acknowledged, and how they developed. This was our realist starting point after all. Harriss (2011, p. 149) notes that what the Rudolphys miss in terms of class (for itself) politics is actually not an absence of class, but a result of the power relations of classes and their deadlock (as Bardhan holds) in which none could supersede the other and all were more or less tightly integrated into the licence-permit-quota Raj. And regarding liberalisation, one may come to the conclusion that it is "a political project which is broadly consistent with certain class interests and not with others. (Only the most wooden of Marxists would look for greater consistency.)" (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 161). And we should certainly not leave class analysis only to 'the most wooden of Marxists'.

For liberalisation, Chatterjee (2008, pp. 57, 61; similarly Bardhan, 2009) argues that what we are confronted with is in fact a new form of passive revolution with corporate capital dominating (as exemplified by even the CPI-M's liberalisation moves in West Bengal), a re-articulation of Bardhan's post-independence proprietary triumvirate (industry, agriculture, professionals). This breaks the deadlock. He then suggests (and this is where Bardhan departs from him) that corporate capital is hegemonic in civil society and in political society non-corporate is (on his distinction of the two 'societies', see footnote 68), where non-corporate capital is such that does not seek profits but simple reproduction of its 'agents' (a rather un-Marxian definition since it would then cease being capital (cf. Marx, 1973, pp. 164–170)). The passivity for him now lies in the marginalisation/ exclusion of political society; its organisations simply do not possess the power to challenge those of civil society. He then closes the circle by suggesting that "[t]he unity of the state system as a whole is now maintained by relating civil society to political society through the logic of reversal of the effects of primitive accumulation" (Chatterjee, 2008, p. 61). The excluded inhabitants of political society are granted some charity, so that they may stay out of civil society.

This would suggest that exclusion is along the lines of institutionalised access to the state. But this is not all there is to it, as we amply saw above: “Although it can be asked whether the ‘subaltern can speak’ [...] within democratic discourses, she can, and most certainly does, vote. [...] It is the act of voting, then – or, more broadly, the party politics and the electoral process – wherein equal citizenship becomes a meaningful reality for most people” (Witsoe, 2013, p. 15; similarly Kaviraj, 2010, p. 265). Corbridge et al. remind us, that “[p]oor people increasingly imagine themselves as citizens capable of critiquing the state, and much of their mobilization occurs via legal channels, and with reference to abstract notions of rights” (2013, p. 237). And Roy (2016, pp. 101, 103) demonstrates empirically how ‘universality’ does not emanate solely from (capitalist) economy, but just as much from subaltern discourse itself.

In fact it might turn out that those who were previously attempted to be ‘modernised’ by upper-caste elites in an upper-class passive revolution (see above) are now the bearers of these very ideals of secularism, rationalism and democracy; they are the ones ‘reinventing India’, as Corbridge and Harris (2003, pp. 222, 229–230, 237–239) put it, against a competing reinvention in the form of undemocratic anti-secular Hindu nationalism, strongly anchored in middle and upper caste/ class sections (with some broadening in the 2014 elections, as we saw). The issue of religious-communalism and secularity aside (scope), we saw it to be the subaltern who claim state action against an otherwise significantly caste-controlled market, against local gatekeepers (and Bardhan (2009, p. 34) would add, just as corrupt ‘middle classes’, bending the market to their needs; there are limits to their civility) and against a liberalisation project from which the subaltern profit disproportionately little (cf. discussions of the exclusivity for a more nuanced formulation), or into which they are integrated (after being banished into informality) mainly through charitable social programmes (or ideologies as in the case of the RSS’ sanskritisation). But we also saw their political projects being mired by corruption and populism. And yet this is no hallmark of subaltern politics, it is in fact a general conclusion of Guha’s recollection of India’s recent history: Nehru’s India was a constitutional democracy (with ‘rational’ parliamentary debate, democratic parties), which has progressively shifted to a populist democracy (with leader-focussed parties, identity politics of both religion and caste) (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 589–691; for a more detailed analysis of that populism coming to the same conclusion: Gopal Jayal, 2016). A tendency apparently prevalent in both reinvention projects.

4.3.2 Middling

This is not meant to dissolve everything in a shrug of ambivalence ('the subaltern are democratic but also populist', etc.), but to shift the analytical focus. We will certainly come across many evocations of inter-caste solidarity in struggles for the overthrow of hierarchies (as did Roy in his interviews, as we saw in the concept of the 'bahujan samaj' or in the Dalit Panthers' agitations) if we were to look more closely at the grass-roots, or at larger social movements or smaller parties, or fractions of larger ones; and we may then despair at their marginality or claim their moral and political desirability. But that was not the point: we saw that the institutional integration runs crucially through political parties and their, to some extent, 'middle class' interlocutors but also through their coalitional rationales and tactics. If that is so, the articulation of such ambivalence (after the shedding of simplistic-determinist intellectual and polit-strategic heritage) should become *an* explanandum in the pursuit to understand the democratisation (in Ambedkar's sense above) of Indian society.

In a way, some such development was expected (again, cf. Ambedkar's warning), and indeed Kohli observed at the onset of liberalisation:

"The longer democracy has been practiced in India, the lower down in the social strata has penetrated the urge for an enhanced share of power and wealth. The long-run consequences of such a 'spread effect' may or may not be to strengthen stable democracy. Much will depend on the modes and intensity with which new demands are made and on the willingness of the pressed elite to make timely concessions" (1990a, p. 10).

Some argue that the broadening of democracy has indeed increased the 'governability' of India, put in question earlier by Kaviraj and Kohli: increasing participation of subalterns and changing participation patterns in local councils, for instance, are seen as good signs for democracy in general. And they add that some 'middle-class'-mediation herein seems to be unavoidable, even in organisations of, say, the Dalits themselves. Their relating to the state and their own organisation is always mediated, never immediate (Corbridge et al., 2013, pp. 172–173, 175; Heller, 2011). The question rather seems to be how to organise such mediation so that co-optation from above is minimised so that 'timely concessions' may be obtained. Measures such as the Indian constitution's provision of specific rights for SC/ST (and now OBCs) do not directly translate into empowerment, but do change the "terms of engagement" (Corbridge & Harriss, 2003, p. 210) between the communities.

These 'terms of engagement' are what is otherwise called strategic selectivity and demonstrates how through the forcing of social struggles into state channels (and with Poulantzas both 'societies' should be seen as such, since they are both relations with and hence of the state), collective and autonomous organisation of contestation might either be prohibited for the subaltern or allowed for

those with 'access' to civil society, i.e. mostly the upper and middle classes. Whatever this means for politics, for analysis it must mean to look not at classes, but comprehensively at class-relations (Harriss-White, 2003, pp. 17, 44; Das, 2007, p. 415). Which is to say that there is never just the 'middle class' or 'agricultural workers', speaking of them only makes sense when considering their structural (political, economic, cultural) position (place, position, positioning) in a larger relational social system. And thus it becomes necessary to consider the class relations' 'intersection' with other categories/ factors. Similarly and more concretely, what interests e.g. Jeffrey and Lerche regarding the local Indian state "is the way the overall political control of the state administration interacts with positions of social actors within and outside the local state apparatus" (2000, p. 875). To pit one against the other would "ignore what most SCs in the areas in which we worked have come to believe: that the state can and must be made to work in the interests of the rural poor" (Jeffrey & Lerche, 2000, p. 874).

A crucial factor in the re-articulation of caste and class politics since the '80s is thus a 'middling' – though this of course is not to say that Indian politics is now generally centred on some middle (class/ caste) and this is also different from the Rudolphs' centrism (see above; the inability for any one section/ sector of the economy to take a dominant position). Rather, it indicates the growing political assertion of middle castes and classes (in whatever form and flavour), pitted against the upper as well as the lower equivalents, just as these are pitted against the former and each other. Three relations will be crucial for analysing such politics more deeply: the relationship between lower and middle entities (as both exploitation and/ or solidarity), the relationship of the middle and the upper (in forging dominant coalitions) and that of the lower to the upper (for coalitions of extremes seem not to be seldom in Indian politics, especially with Congress; besides the obvious structural exploitation/ contradiction relevant here).

We saw that reservations were part of what created a Dalit 'middle class' and that this middle class seems now to attempt to 'develop itself' by means of further reservations or positive economic discrimination. This does not necessarily lead, but it did in the case of the BSP, to this middle class taking the lead of a more broad-based Dalit empowerment. But the BSP did not seem to have a comprehensive economic platform, it was more busy erecting Ambedkar statues – discourse, however, seems just as insufficient as 'middle class' aspirations in addressing the exploitative, oppressive relations the 'lower' Dalits still find themselves in.

We might also conclude, that caste politics had its heyday in the late '80s and then '90s and, paradoxically, save for some of its key moments (calling for the Mandal commission and implementing

its reports), never really broadly penetrated the national political arena. It did not even substantially benefit its makers (JD et al.) at this level, and the INC and BJP were more reserved to the reservation issue, as we saw. We thus might join Manor (2011, p. 208) in his more careful assessment of the ‘dangers’ that caste-politics posed (to the Congress in his case; but we may extend this to the BJP as well). Mandalisation was more of a state-level phenomenon in terms of party politics (something the INC only got around to in 2004, as we saw). But even here it ‘faded’ again in the 2000s, when the broadening of coalitions diluted its radicalism (or exposed its scant economic aspirations). In fact, Ruparelia goes so far as to contend that “[t]he emergence of a bipolar national contest, in which state-based parties oscillate between the Congress and the BJP, ended the hope of radicalism. It signalled the failure of lower-caste, communist and regional parties to construct a viable third force” (Ruparelia, 2011, p. 200).⁷⁶ This bipolarity is similar to the convergence that Yadav and Palshikar observe for state party systems, which they relate both to the systemic coalitional tendencies and to the “diminishing space for politics in a globalising economy” (2003, p. 22).

We should be careful to not extend conclusions for one state to another or to nationalise them. Though there are some similarities between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, they are not merely two instances of the exact same underlying dynamics (Witsoe, 2013, p. 201). Nevertheless, they showed, in Bihar, the rise of OBCs and, in UP, that of Dalits; and how their respective coming to power got articulated with the interests of other castes, how party politics evolved with and through their struggles, and often, quite frankly, how their corrupt populism played out. And the choices of the two states are of course also significant, had Tamil Nadu and West Bengal been added to the picture, we could instead have seen mobilisation along language and class lines respectively. Additionally, caste politics should not be confined only to caste-as-party-politics, but one should also recognise caste-in-party-politics, and here seems to be a more lasting and more broader legacy of the second democratic upsurge, in that even parties as the BJP now have more OBC personnel and stronger integration of their issues into their political agendas (Yadav & Palshikar, 2003, pp. 22, 31).

4.3.3 *Silent and bourgeois revolutions*

Given the above discussion, it seems reasonable to assume that India is tentatively emerging out of a hegemony crisis, which has its roots in the contradictions of Nehru’s modernist project in the context of a stalemate within the triumvirate. This fostered corruption with the distribution of spoils being organised in the form of the licence-permit-quota Raj. Subaltern inclusion was passive, at times

⁷⁶ Yadav (1996, p. 101) had already warned that institutionalisation of the second democratic upsurge would crucially depend upon “building a viable and credible political force which may occupy the third space in Indian politics”, and now, twenty years later, Ruparelia (2015) has meticulously traced its failure in doing just that.

populist and mainly through promises of development (mediated locally through dominant castes/ classes) at first and poverty reduction programmes later. The first to (significantly) rise against this were the middle peasants, after they (were) de-coupled from the Congress' patronage network and themselves increasingly assertive against 'capital' to the degree that they were able to themselves accumulate economic resources, not least through the green revolution. They translated this economic power into Mandalisation and the two Janata governments nationally, and the triumvirate began to break. Capital reacted to this through liberalisation; or liberalisation acted for non-agricultural capital against this (probably both assertions are correct to some extent, the intricacies of ascribing relative significance to each need not bother us here since, luckily, we are after subaltern politics). In any case, it was now non-agricultural capital that dominated (or perhaps it is better to cite Kohli's 'big business', it might also be big agricultural business, after all; but not the aggregate of more or less intermediate classes as before). A result not that surprising if we compare the relative share of GDP in figure 1, as well as the structural problems of agriculture hinted at above.

It turned out that the middle-peasants were not as able to form a coherent political and party project as the term 'democratic upsurge' might suggest, in the sense that theirs was an upsurge very much against the top, but not (for long) allied with the 'bahujan samaj', just as they were pitted against each other themselves (the Jats against the Yadavs, the Yadavs against other OBCs, the OBCs 'in general' against the Dalits, etc.) Here appeared important fault-lines between 'the OBCs' (specification is certainly necessary but only complicates and does not refute the argument, as detailed above) and 'the Dalits' and the upper OBCs against the lower. And these lines emerged as a combination of, firstly, the dynamisation of the caste system, in the sense that jati is now a much more contingent-since-secularised entity, to some extent detached from the religious varna hierarchy, allowing for other hierarchisations to take effect, such as class – and thus, secondly, class struggle between proprietary (or simply jatis ascending the economic hierarchy) and non-proprietary jatis. We did not discuss in this text how particular jatis came to take specific positions in the economy (and with them in the relations of production), but we did note how the evolution of the caste system was always intricately linked to various economic and political systems. Irrespective of how much statements regarding the demise of the caste system modernists might make it was thus 'always' to have this very material meaning to those taking these positions. It did, and they knew it.⁷⁷ And the fact that Vaid finds a significant statistical link between upper and lower classes and the extremes of the

77 Which is not to say that just because such position-systems are polit-economically/ materially articulated, they are here to stay. In fact, the Rudolphs point out that by the doing away with the zamindari system, "[a] class that might have played historical roles comparable to those played by Britain's landed gentry and aristocracy, Prussia's Junkers, Japan's daimyos and samurai, or Latin America's latifundia masters was removed from the historical stage" (1987, p. 315). A rather massive class-'annihilation', by decree (at least from a broader macro-perspective).

caste system and even more to the division of mental and manual labour indicates that caste-class links are still relevant. Though it also shows how the division of mental and manual labour is not enough to define a class (see 3.1 above), or to put it differently, classes need to be more carefully/complexly defined if we are to construct meaningful explanations with them (and this is why Poulantzas' conception, especially if amended, seems so productive).

Since not all who want OBC-status have it and not all who do have it 'should' have it (the creamy layer being a 'political product') and not all who claim to represent *the* OBCs do, it might, analogously, be very useful to transparently and precisely identify 'Dalit', so that the referents of this term might be meaningfully addressed, without glossing over (too many) contradicting positions (in cultural, political and economic systems), as similarly argued by Kumar (2010, p. 305). Which is to say it might be useful to differentiate it from 'bahujan samaj' (the Panthers used it synonymously), not that 'Dalit' is then a coherent, uncontradicting entity (Bathran, 2016), but that *its* contradictions with other caste-groups might then be better framed; so long as 'Dalit' is ascribed any meaning in struggles or policy, that is. This is very close to Poulantzas' intentions for providing his class theory: that class coalitions be principled (i.e. not include such contradictory ruptures that might cause their dissolution at a later stage). It may be questioned in how far that is a reasonable strategic goal, constructing principled coalitions, and whether coalitions might not be more usefully thought of in strategic-hegemonic terms (much less comfortable if the alternative might ostensibly be pure and more egalitarian; but we saw what the CPI-M got for being so very principled). Nevertheless, such hegemony also needs understanding/ analysis. And as such not just the various subaltern classes need more careful classification, but also the middle classes (so that they may be written about without quotation marks). Harris, for instance, notes in passing (2011, p. 144), how the intermediates might be petty-bourgeois. And indeed this is an intriguing suggestion given Poulantzas' definition, which allows for accommodation of classes of various production-relation-systems (modes of production). Shared indulgence in consumerism might also indicate similar class positions (see e.g. Boos, 2017), but would as such not yet satisfy Poulantzas' rather more economic requirements, which is to say stronger focus on the positions in contradicting relations of production. Going further in such directions would, alas, exceed this text's scope.

So what about the state project then? We saw that, for a while at least, caste was a prime category for 'projecting' the state, and that it did: it changed the composition of administrations, parties and governments towards more inclusiveness for various fractions (not that this is now set in stone, as the recent rise in the Brahmin share of Lok Sabha members indicates). This is very much a re-articulation of the materiality of the state – and a very relevant one, considering that political-bureau-

cratic alliances (especially in the north) were often based on caste, not least in the staffing of the state (Ramachandra Guha, 2007, pp. 687–688). An interesting turn of events, given that we saw ‘the state’ in its modernist project (see above on this for the justification of such language) aimed at doing away with class in general and ‘backwardness’ in particular; now, as Witsoe puts it “the backward-caste movement has sought to make the government itself “backward”, ruled by backward caste leaders in the interests of lower castes – a radicalization of caste through democratic mobilisation” (Witsoe, 2013, p. 44).

But since caste-for-itself parties and governments were rather ephemeral, the question must be of the broader hegemony and state projects and how the subaltern were integrated here. It might be argued that what we are witnessing with liberalisation is indeed ‘the’ bourgeois revolution that was cited as not having happened after independence (especially if we consider that (however much it also worked through the state) it partially subverted the licence-permit-quota Raj that gave the Rudolphs grounds for arguing the state’s dominance; and it certainly went against agricultural classes, as we noted above). And we may follow Chatterjee in saying that, given the nature and extent of its exclusivity, it is a passive revolution. But we should then also note another revolution: that of the OBCs and Dalits that happened against and without the upper classes and castes (since ‘activity’ is defined in reference to ‘subalternity’, this cannot be a ‘passive revolution’; if we are in need of an adjective we might call *part of it* ‘silent’ as Jaffrelot does, since Mandalisation for him was rather unbloody and calm compared to what revolutionised societies might otherwise experience (2003, pp. 350, 494)). They did it themselves and they did it through the state (pace Poulantzas’ absolutist theorem of power). This was thus an activation of the subaltern, but only to the extent that the very fact of the continued need for hegemony in the caste and class contradictions of Indian society imposed upon the asserting the requirement for alliances with upper classes and castes to try to ‘spread’, which is to say more broadly institutionalise, their project. Here, (attempted) hegemonisation acted as a passivisation, which we called ‘deradicalisation’ above. Additionally, the competing passive revolution seems to, at the moment, have gained the upper hand in the form of the broadly anchored BJP governmental coalition. Thus there currently are two passivisation trends against subaltern assertion-activation (somewhat similarly Nilsen & Roy, 2015, who also highlight that such predicaments *are* subaltern politics).

It is intriguing to combine the calls for reservations (even the ‘middle-class’ ones for private sector reservations and positive economic discrimination) and the calls for state interventions into the informal economy (both as charity and as regularisation-formalisation) into an ‘subaltern assertion’. They of course are to be found originating in different decades and emanate from different actors

(middle-peasants and other OBCs; the judiciary, the INC and the Left Front (the coalition around the CPI-M)) and different structural problems (we may simplify these as exploitation based on discrimination or exclusion (which then translate into each other down the line)). Nevertheless they tendentially go in a similar direction: they articulate on the strategic field of the state the resolution of social issues which otherwise might be left to markets and/ or ‘civil society’. But since we saw that ‘mere’ social programmes do not necessarily address the exclusion from institutional avenues, it is only in excess of the necessity to ameliorate the effects of liberalisation/ primitive accumulation that we find the two approaches to the state to differentiate. And it should be entirely possible that this not happen, that charity remains all there is to rights-based social programmes and reservations all that there will be for ‘caste empowerment’. But here we go beyond ‘historically informed journalism’ and enter the completely dubious terrain of political prediction. But what we are allowed, thanks to the strategic-relational framework’s retention of a moment of structuralism, is point to the potential strategic selectivity of judicialisation itself: access to judicial system (*égalité*) is not given to everybody equally (*fraternité*), just as implementation will depend on the concrete materiality of the (local) state.⁷⁸

These two revolutions (if we take them as generalisations of more complex, sometimes not so neatly separated but overlapping tendencies⁷⁹) thus may appear to take the form of state projects: they are tentatively ‘reinventing India’ and the Indian state with them; this is apparent in their (re-)definitions of the desired reach, and nature of such reach, of the state into society; in the very type and modus of social policy they propose and the very personnel they would like to see implementing them. We saw this in the example of the local caste associations: here, the resolution-condensation of societal conflicts materialises not in the state but explicitly avoids it via materialising in ‘civil society’ associations instead (and this might be where the combination of Gramscian and Poulantzian terminology is at its limits, if it is not already exceeded). Non-state resolution of economic conflicts defines the informal sector (however much it is *made* informal by the state, or how the latter allows it to remain such).

78 And various other of such more specific strategic selectivities can certainly be found. For instance, we almost completely omitted discussing India’s federalism and how it evolved. If we were to follow Corbridge (2011, pp. 69–70, 74) and conclude that in the spirit of neo-liberal competition, the Indian states have become “competition states”, we may see selectivities in the competition’s dictates, in the respective fragmentation of the labour movements, but we may also take Bihar and UP as examples of how the increasing federalism might open spaces for opposition. Yadav and Palshikar even lure ‘Marxist’ analysts in proclaiming that “[i]f one was looking for evidence for the famous quip that governments are nothing but the executive arms of the capitalist class, many states in contemporary India would fit the bill” (2008). This it seems worthy to explore further (it cannot really be that simple, can it?)

79 For instance, it seems possible to mobilise lower classes e.g. in the form of a ‘neo-middle class’, or as a lower castes (which populate these classes) that would then imply very different demands towards the middle/ upper castes and classes. Or, as the JD’s and BSP’s temporal alliance with the BJP proves, one might even *attempt* both.

Harriss-White then calls this the 'shadow state', but this only refers to state as a principle, or as a nominalistic designation (to which Poulantzas comes close as well (in fact Demirović argues he should be read that way: 2007, p. 124)), i.e. that we call 'state!' wherever condensations of conflicts in social relations of forces materialise somewhere. For concrete analysis this seems to blur the category of the state (if we want to distinguish it as such (as state) from other arenas) too much since it would not be clear what is not a material condensation of relations of forces (if we assume that not everything is 'the state'). 'State' or 'not state', after all, makes a crucial difference to all those exploited by 'informal' institutions.

However, we should be careful to use the term 'project' for both. It probably always is a rather precarious assumption to make that actors in such broad and rather abstract 'projects' act consciously, intentionally and coherently towards what is most often a ex-post formulation of 'historical developments' (or, even worse, ex-ante structuralist determinism). Especially the two developments lumped together in the 'subaltern assertion' above seem hardly to be a joint, concerted effort. In fact we saw how the assertion of the creamy layer might be only too compatible with continued informality and middle-cum-upper caste/ class rule through it. Nevertheless, precisely because they are 'generalisations' of social conditions in the state (reservations *as such* apply to *all* OBCs, social programmes to *all* the poor (as defined by these policies), etc.), they de facto 'reinvent' the state along lines that we saw in the current conjuncture to structurally-selectively and in their extent tendentially be in favour of 'the subaltern' (that is those, who still are subaltern; even if it might also be in favour of 'the middle', and even if that middle currently profits disproportionately from it). Here, the realist amendment to Buckel et al.'s historical-materialist-political-analysis takes effect. But still, 'project' seems a bit much; maybe it would be more useful to indeed frame the inquiry as into the transformation of the strategic selectivities of the state, since these are definitely being transformed. Whether or not this is then translated into a project is a different question, but also a distinct possibility to consider, and perhaps a worthwhile one at that.

5. Conclusion

So is all ambivalent then? Perhaps: the subaltern are a manifold category (as it was designed to be), neither lower castes (not even the lowest), or lower classes pursue a pure political project, nor could they reasonably be expected to. Poulantzas' motivation, to provide careful theoretical analysis so as to avoid 'unprincipled coalitions', if read in an orthodox way as 'identifying the revolutionary subject' (which is sometimes what Poulantzas indeed seems to have in mind, though he is aware of the intricacy of any transformative process), must be treated with great care. Indeed, Poulantzas, it

seems, is more concerned with long-term issues, that tend to be relevant only through, literally, mediation in the medium term and hence be variously articulated; and through this is shifted the basis for their long-term significance, which thus become a fleeting constraint, an anchor, always in the water, never really on the ground. Which is not to say that they are ever irrelevant, just that they are tendencies, always pulling, never satisfied – and never sufficient to ‘direct’ movement. But ambivalence does not mean sheer contingency or an infinite regress into concrete complexity. So much we took from critical realism and Marx/ Althusser and others: “To be able to see dynamics in what appears as a static [...] order, and, by the same token, to be able to discern order in flux, surely constitutes the greatest challenges in any disciplinary pursuit of knowledge” (Gupta, 2000, p. 18).

For our particular inquiry this meant, as we saw, taking class seriously as a relational concept. This requires fundamentally discussing the evolution of the structural articulation of the places, positions and positionings of various classes (and not just the subaltern). For instance, Pattenden (2016, pp. 5, 54, 60) claims that a rights-based approach to class struggle, and with it ‘constructive’ engagement with the state, is the most promising avenue for promoting the labouring classes’ interests. He warns against ‘liberal’ interpretations of such strategies, that mere political representation will not ‘solve’ the underlying class contradictions and its exploitative tendencies (similarly Das, 2001, p. 112). Which is yet to say nothing about the feasibility (and regarding this, the desirability) of transcending such relations, or the concrete means of doing so; for the purpose of argument we may be agnostic in this regard and should still acknowledge the value class analysis brings in understanding the fundamental dynamics that it uncovers (if we are to seek better explanation). But if we accept the merit of such explanation, we may again be nudged towards more political/ ethical/ valuey contemplations; for we now uncover the (wanted or unwanted) ‘determinations’ of social life and possibly their “avoidable frustration of human needs” (Collier, 1994, pp. 182–184, 192–200; Sayer, 2000, pp. 159–162), perhaps based on the definition of ‘development’ in footnote 33.

We may have found, for instance, that the subaltern were continuously and actively excluded from institutional modes of access to the state and from the ruling coalition (or at times more precisely-exclusively: their ‘distributional coalition’). Now, “clever functionalist hindsight [‘ex-post determinism’] will tell us that the state was only doing the job on behalf of the rising bourgeoisie. But such convenient teleology is no substitute for explanation” (Bardhan, 1984, pp. 34–35). Once we have avoided such vulgar teleologies, as I hope the above argument has by pointing to the politically ambivalent, complexly-contingent processes, we may find that such explanation is only ever true if the outcome is to whatever extent indeterminate as in open (of course, not arbitrary but structured, see above). The state is not the state of the bourgeoisie, always, just for now (and just in the sense that

the subaltern are still that). – And with this one cannot but agree with Herring and Agarwala on that:

“Class theory then deflects policy from Gandhi to Ambedkar: justice is not a question of reforming the hearts and minds of propertied people, but rather a question of reducing the dependency and destitution that subject those without property to abject subordination, including the rich tapestry of humiliation and degradation implied by ‘caste.’ Obscuring class analysis contributes to thought and policy harmful to those least capable of pursuing their interests via either state or market” (2006, p. 325).

Thus context is history pushing into the present, with its tendencies being variously but not arbitrarily articulated by contemporary actors – ‘political analysis’. Our ‘context analysis’ hence was concerned with the class and caste relations (e.g. decline of caste dominance, shift to dominance of ‘big capital’ away from the triumvirates’ stalemate) and with the political forms (e.g. a disintegrating Congress, middle-peasant movements, un-hegemonic governance) that actors (for us mainly parties) found themselves in in the ‘80s; but also how this structuring has evolved: In ‘actor analysis’ parties were thus situated in a position-praxis system by way of tracing their strategies pursued through it and how this re-shaped the relations themselves, shifted their positions in them, or reproduced it (‘process analysis’).

This text and its argument have severe limitations that we shall try to gloss over here by discussing them as avenues for further study: While the feasibility of applying Poulantzas’ class and state theory to contexts of the global south (or, with analogous adaptation, to present-day contexts anywhere, they certainly have shifted also) was contended, it was not actually developed save for some basic formulations that allowed us to assume we may proceed in applying it. Concretely this meant that the world systemic integration of the Indian economy was neglected as well as an empirical ‘classification’ (who does constitute the various classes after all? Even if Poulantzas would shy away from such level of detail, we saw it to be unavoidable had we wanted to deepen the above argument). We already noted the many issues we left out regarding Indian politics (mentioned were Hindu nationalism, federalism, the Naxalites, other states’ politics; but crucially we should add the significance of non-party, perhaps more grass-roots but also social movement politics as well as a deepening of the many aspects only hinted at (the many, many other jatis that are relevant, for instance; comparisons with other nation-states, etc.)) It would also seem worthwhile to take up Teitelbaum’s productive questioning of standard accounts of unions’ weaknesses and how they and their struggles are linked to party politics or the state in general. Just as worthwhile might be a longer tracing of relevant trends in history. – To be continued.

While Ruparelia as well as Yadav and Palshikar were rather pessimistic regarding the opportunities for subaltern politics in the current conjuncture, the above has highlighted some relevant avenues

for both meaningfully deepening the integration of subaltern interests in state politics and policy and by extension the political and economic relations in general. Certainly, much will depend on the ability of forces such as the 'Left Front', the various JDs, the Congress or other parties to form a more lasting alliance and to more substantially articulate a broad, national but integrative project (this time in the intentional sense). Much will depend on and reveal in the 2019 general elections. We have seen Ambedkar confirmed in his warning of the 'life of contradictions' that awaited independent India. But we have also seen in many ways a democratisation in terms of the activation-integration of wider sections of society, ameliorative moves against the effects of contradictions' conflicts and regarding caste even to some extent a receding of certain aspects of the 'caste contradiction'. Structural contradictions of course remain, but so does their political, liberatory processing. And so, to come back to Ramachandra Guha (see pages 1 and 30 of this text), India in the 21st century seems to have lost nothing of its fascination and value for those studying, which is to say attempting to learn not just about but also from, its "multilingual, multireligious, multiethnic, political and economic community".

Literature

- Alavi, H. (1982). State and Class Under Peripheral Capitalism. In H. Alavi & T. Shanin (Eds.), *Introduction to the Sociology of 'Developing Societies'* (pp. 289–307). London: Macmillan.
- Alnasser, S. (2004). *Periphere Regulation: regulationstheoretische Konzepte zur Analyse von Entwicklungsstrategien im arabischen Raum* (1. Aufl.). Münster: Verl. Westfäl. Dampfboot.
- Alnasser, S. (2011). Imperialism and the Social Question in (Semi)-Peripheries: The Case for a Neo-National Bourgeoisie. *Global Discourse*, 2(2), 121–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2011.10707913>
- Althusser, L. (2011). *Für Marx*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Ambedkar, B. R. (1949). *Speech to the Constituent Assembly*. Retrieved from <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/792941/>
- Amin-Khan, T. (2012). *The Post-Colonial State in the Era of Capitalist Globalization: Historical, Political and Theoretical Approaches to State Formation*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Archer, M. (1995). *Realist social theory: the morphogenetic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bardhan, P. K. (1984). *The political economy of development in India*. Oxford; New York: B. Blackwell.
- Bardhan, P. K. (2009). Notes on the political economy of India's tortuous transition. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(49), 31–36.
- Barfuss, T., & Jehle, P. (2014). *Antonio Gramsci zur Einführung*. Hamburg: Junius.
- Bathran, R. (2016). The Many Omissions of a Concept. Discrimination amongst scheduled castes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 51(47), 30–34.
- Becker, J. (2008). Der kapitalistische Staat in der Peripherie: polit-ökonomische Perspektiven. *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, 24(2), 10–32. <https://doi.org/10.20446/JEP-2414-3197-24-2-10>
- Bhowmik, S. K. (2004). The Working Class Movement in India: Trade Unions and the State. In M. Mohanty (Ed.), *Class, caste, gender* (pp. 106–127). New Delhi; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Bhowmik, S. K. (2010). Globalisation, Governance and Labour. In K. Choudhary (Ed.), *Globalisation, governance reforms and development in India* (pp. 281–301). New Delhi: Sage.
- Bloch, E. (2013). *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (9th ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Bolt, J., Inklaar, R., Jong, H. de, & Zanden, J. L. van. (2018). "Rebasing 'Maddison': new income comparisons and the shape of long-run economic development" (Maddison Project Working Paper No. 10). Retrieved from <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-project-database-2018>
- Boos, T. (2017). Pact of Consumption – Kirchnerism and the Argentinian Middle Class. *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, 33(4), 37–62. <https://doi.org/10.20446/JEP-2414-3197-33-4-37>
- Brand, U. (2013). State, context and correspondence. Contours of a historical-materialist policy analysis. *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft*, 42(4), 425–442.
- Brand, U. (2015). Poulantzas und Gramsci in Lateinamerika. (Semi-)Periphere Staatlichkeit aus neo-marxistischer Perspektive. In G. Hauck, I. Lenz, & H. Wienold (Eds.), *Entwicklung, Gewalt, Gedächtnis: Festschrift für Reinhart Kössler* (pp. 85–105). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Buckel, S., Georgi, F., Kannankulam, J., & Wissel, J. (2014). Historisch-materialistische Politikanalyse. Operationalisierung materialistischer Staatstheorie für die empirische Forschung. In Forschungsgruppe Staatsprojekt Europa (Ed.), *Kämpfe um Migrationspolitik* (pp. 43–59). Bielefeld: transcript. <https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839424025.43>
- Butler, J. (1999). *Gender trouble: the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Campling, L., Miyamura, S., Pattenden, J., & Selwyn, B. (2016). Class dynamics of development: a methodological note. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(10), 1745–1767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1200440>
- Cardoso, F. H., & Faletto, E. (1979). *Dependency and development in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chakrabarti, A., & Dhar, A. (2017). *Class as Noun: A Critical Examination*. Working paper. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318310906>
- Chakravarti, A. (2004). Class and Agrarian Class. A View from Bihar. In M. Mohanty (Ed.), *Class, caste, gender* (pp. 47–88). New Delhi; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Chandra, K. (2004). *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108573481>
- Chatterjee, P. (2004). *The politics of the governed: reflections on popular politics in most of the world*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chatterjee, P. (2008). Democracy and Economic Transformation in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43(16), 53–62.
- Chhibber, P., & Verma, R. (2014). The BJP's 2014 'Modi Wave': An Ideological Consolidation of the Right. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(39), 50–56.
- Chibber, V. (2005). From Class Compromise to Class Accommodation: Labor's Incorporation into the Indian Political

- Economy. In R. Ray & M. F. Katzenstein (Eds.), *Social movements in India: poverty, power, and politics* (pp. 32–61). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Chibber, V. (2011). *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400840779>
- Collier, A. (1994). *Critical realism: an introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy*. London; New York: Verso.
- Corbridge, S. (2010). The political economy of development in India since Independence. In P. R. Brass (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of South Asian Politics* (pp. 305–320). London; New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203878187.ch21>
- Corbridge, S. (2011). The contested geographies of federalism in post-reform India. In S. Ruparelia, S. Reddy, J. Harriss, & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *Understanding India's new political economy: a great transformation?* (pp. 66–80). Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Corbridge, S., & Harriss, J. (2003). *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu nationalism and popular democracy*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Corbridge, S., Harriss, J., & Jeffrey, C. (2013). *India today: economy, politics and society*. Cambridge; Malden: Polity.
- Costilla, L. O., & Pimmer, S. (2015). Konfigurationen von Staatlichkeit in Lateinamerika. Eine Kartographie der historischen Debatten. In A. Jenss & S. Pimmer (Eds.), *Der Staat in Lateinamerika: Kolonialität, Gewalt, Transformation* (1. Auflage, pp. 34–58). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: critical realism in the social sciences*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Das, R. J. (2001). The Political Economy of India. *New Political Economy*, 6(1), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563460020027786>
- Das, R. J. (2007). Looking, but not seeing: The state and/as class in rural India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 34(3–4), 408–440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150701829986>
- Datt, G., & Ravallion, M. (2010). Shining for the Poor Too? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(7), 55–60.
- Demirović, A. (2007). *Nicos Poulantzas - Aktualität und Probleme materialistischer Staatstheorie*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Demirović, A. (2008). Zu welchem Zweck und auf welche Weise den Staat kritisieren? In J. Wissel & S. Wöhl (Eds.), *Staatstheorie vor neuen Herausforderungen: Analyse und Kritik* (pp. 24–47). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Demirović, A. (2009). Staatliche Herrschaft und die Konstruktion von sozialen Klassen. In P. Bescherer & K. Schierhorn (Eds.), *Hello Marx: zwischen 'Arbeiterfrage' und sozialer Bewegung heute* (pp. 62–88). Hamburg: VSA.
- Demirović, A. (2017). Kapitalistischer Staat, Hegemonie und demokratische Transformation zum Sozialismus. In T. Boos, H. Lichtenberger, & A. Puller (Eds.), *Mit Poulantzas arbeiten: ... um aktuelle Macht- und Herrschaftsverhältnisse zu verstehen* (pp. 51–76). Hamburg: VSA.
- Election Commission of India. (2017). *Electoral Statistics Pocket Book 2017*. New Delhi. Retrieved from https://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/current/Electoral_Statistics_Pocket_Book2017_18052017.pdf
- Engels, F. (1971). Engels an Eduard Bernstein (107) (MEW, Vol. 35, pp. 386–390). Berlin: Dietz.
- Evans, P. B. (1995). *Embedded autonomy: states and industrial transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Evers, T. (1977). *Bürgerliche Herrschaft in der Dritten Welt. Zur Theorie des Staates in ökonomisch unterentwickelten Gesellschaftsformationen*. Köln; Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt.
- Fernandes, L. (2004). The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India. *Urban Studies*, 41(12), 2415–2430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980412331297609>
- Fetscher, I. (2006). „Sollte diese Qual uns quälen / Da sie unsre Lust vermehrt?“ Fortschritt und Katastrophen von Goethe bis Walter Benjamin. *Athenäum*, 16, 77–96. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18452/5871>
- Frankel, F. R. (2005). *India's political economy, 1947 - 2004: the gradual revolution*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gerstenberger, H. (2017). *Markt und Gewalt: die Funktionsweise des historischen Kapitalismus*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Gopal Jayal, N. (2016). Contending representative claims in Indian democracy. *India Review*, 15(2), 172–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2016.1165556>
- Gramsci, A. (1999). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Eds.). London: ElecBook.
- Guha, Ramachandra. (2007). *India after Gandhi: the history of the world's largest democracy*. London: Macmillan.
- Guha, Ranajit. (1982a). On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India. In Ranajit Guha (Ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (pp. 1–8). Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Guha, Ranajit. (1982b). Preface. In Ranajit Guha (Ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (pp. vii–viii). Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gupta, D. (2000). *Interrogating caste: understanding hierarchy and difference in Indian society*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Gupta, D. (2005). Whither the Indian Village. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(8), 751–758.

- Guru, G., & Chakravarty, A. (2005). Who Are the Country's Poor? Social Movement Politics and Dalit Poverty. In R. Ray & M. F. Katzenstein (Eds.), *Social movements in India: poverty, power, and politics* (pp. 135–160). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Harriss, J. (2011). Class and Politics. In N. G. Jayal & P. B. Mehta (Eds.), *The Oxford companion to politics in India* (pp. 139–153). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Harriss, J. (2013). Does 'Landlordism' Still Matter? Reflections on Agrarian Change in India: Does 'Landlordism' Still Matter? *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(3), 351–364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12024>
- Harriss-White, B. (2003). *India working: essays on society and economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heigl, M. (2007). Peripherer Staat oder 'failed state'? Zur Analyse von Staatlichkeit in abhängigen Formationen am Beispiel Mexiko. *ProKla*, 37(2), 273–288.
- Heller, P. (1999). *The labor of development. Workers and the transformation of capitalism in Kerala, India*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Heller, P. (2011). Making citizens from above and below. The prospects and challenges of decentralization in India. In S. Ruparelia, S. Reddy, J. Harriss, & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *Understanding India's new political economy: a great transformation?* (pp. 157–203). Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Herring, R. J., & Agarwala, R. (2006). Introduction: Restoring Agency to Class: Puzzles from the Subcontinent. *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(4), 323–356. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672710601072954>
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1996). *The Age of Revolution. 1789-1848*. New York: Vintage Books.
- International Labour Organization. (2018). *Days not worked due to strikes and lockouts by economic activity*. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pagehierarchy/Page27.jspx?subject=IR&indicator=STR_DAYS_ECO_NB
- Jaffrelot, C. (1999). *The Hindu nationalist movement and Indian politics: 1925 to the 1990s*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2003). *India's silent revolution: the rise of the lower castes in North India*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jaffrelot, C. (2015). The Class Element in the 2014 Indian Election and the BJP's Success with Special Reference to the Hindi Belt. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 3(1), 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2321023015575211>
- Jaffrelot, C., & Verniers, G. (2015, July 24). The representation gap. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-representation-gap-2/>
- Jeffrey, C., & Lerche, J. (2000). Stating the Difference: State, Discourse and Class Reproduction in Uttar Pradesh, India. *Development and Change*, 31(4), 857–878. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00180>
- Jessop, B. (1982). *The capitalist state: Marxist theories and methods*. Oxford: M. Robertson.
- Jessop, B. (1990). *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in Its Place*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Jessop, B. (2001). Kritischer Realismus, Marxismus und Regulation: Zu den Grundlagen der Regulationstheorie. In M. Candeias & F. Deppe (Eds.), *Ein neuer Kapitalismus? Akkumulationsregime, Shareholder Society, Neoliberalismus und Neue Sozialdemokratie* (pp. 19–40). Hamburg: VSA.
- Jessop, B. (2008). *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Jessop, B. (2011). Der ökonomische Determinismus - neu betrachtet. *ProKla*, 41(4), 579–596.
- Jessop, B. (2014). Reform, Umformierung, Gegenformierung, Neuformierung und Transformation. In M. Brie (Ed.), *Futuring: Perspektiven der Transformation im Kapitalismus über ihn hinaus* (pp. 126–160). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Jessop, B. (2017). Poulantzas über den Imperialismus. In T. Boos, H. Lichtenberger, & A. Puller (Eds.), *Mit Poulantzas arbeiten: ... um aktuelle Macht- und Herrschaftsverhältnisse zu verstehen* (pp. 77–103). Hamburg: VSA.
- Jha, P. K. (2016). *Labour in contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jodhka, S. S. (2011). Caste and Politics. In N. G. Jayal & P. B. Mehta (Eds.), *The Oxford companion to politics in India* (pp. 154–167). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kaviraj, S. (2010). *The trajectories of the Indian state: politics and ideas*. Ranikhet; Bangalore: Permanent Black; Orient Blackswan.
- Kohli, A. (1990a). Interpreting India's Democracy: A State- Society Framework. In A. Kohli (Ed.), *India's Democracy. An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations* (pp. 3–17). Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400859511.3>
- Kohli, A. (1990b). State-Society Relations in India's Changing Democracy. In A. Kohli (Ed.), *India's Democracy* (pp. 305–318). Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400859511.305>
- Kohli, A. (2006a). Politics of Economic Growth in India, 1980-2005. Part I: The 1980s. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(13), 1251–1259.
- Kohli, A. (2006b). Politics of Economic Growth in India, 1980-2005. Part II: The 1990s and Beyond. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(14), 1361–1370.
- Krieger, H. (2015). *Umkämpfte Staatlichkeit. Palästina zwischen Besatzung, Entwicklung und politischem Islam*. Wiesbaden: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-09884-1>
- Kumar, V. (2010). Governance and Development in the Era of Globalisation: Understanding Exclusion and Assertion of

- Dalits in India. In K. Choudhary (Ed.), *Globalisation, governance reforms and development in India* (pp. 302–331). New Delhi: Sage.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (2014). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. London; New York: Verso.
- Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J.-B. (2012). *Das Vokabular der Psychoanalyse*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Lawson, T. (1999). Feminism, Realism, and Universalism. *Feminist Economics*, 5(2), 25–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135457099337932>
- Lerche, J. (2010). From ‘Rural Labour’ to ‘Classes of Labour’: Class Fragmentation, Caste and Class Struggle at the Bottom of the Indian Labour Hierarchy. In B. Harriss-White & J. Heyer (Eds.), *The comparative political economy of development: Africa and South Asia* (pp. 66–87). London; New York: Routledge.
- Lerche, J., Shah, A., & Harriss-White, B. (2013). Introduction: Agrarian Questions and Left Politics in India. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(3), 337–350. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12031>
- Lindner, U. (2011). Epistemologie, Wissenschaft und Ethik. Zum Kritikbegriff der marxischen Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. In S. Ellmers & I. Elbe (Eds.), *Die Moral in der Kritik: Ethik als Grundlage und Gegenstand kritischer Gesellschaftstheorie* (pp. 87–117). Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.
- Lindner, U. (2014). Soziale Strukturen, generative Mechanismen und das gute Leben. *Zeitschrift Für Kritische Sozialtheorie Und Philosophie*, 1(2), 198–275. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zksp-2014-0009>
- Lodha, S., Palshikar, S., & Kumar, S. (2017). Introduction. In S. Palshikar, S. Kumar, & S. Lodha (Eds.), *Electoral politics in India: the resurgence of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (pp. 1–12). London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis. Retrieved from <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4799849>
- Mader, D., Lindner, U., & Pühretmayer, H. (2017). Einleitung. Critical Realism als Philosophie der Sozialwissenschaften. In U. Lindner & D. Mader (Eds.), *Critical Realism meets kritische Sozialtheorie* (pp. 7–73). Bielefeld: transcript. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839427255-001>
- Manor, J. (1990). Parties and the Party System. In A. Kohli (Ed.), *India’s Democracy* (pp. 62–98). Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400859511.62>
- Manor, J. (2011). The Congress Party and the ‘Great Transformation’. In S. Ruparelia, S. Reddy, J. Harriss, & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *Understanding India’s new political economy: a great transformation?* (pp. 204–220). Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Marx, K. (1960). Die britische Herrschaft in Indien (MEW, Vol. 9, pp. 127–133). Berlin: Dietz.
- Marx, K. (1971). Einleitung [zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie] (MEW, Vol. 13, pp. 615–641). Berlin: Dietz.
- Marx, K. (1973). *Das Kapital. Band 1* (MEW, Vol. 23). Berlin: Dietz.
- Masina, P. P. (2006). *Vietnam’s development strategies*. Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- McCartney, M. (2013). Going, Going, But Not Yet Quite Gone: The Political Economy of the Indian Intermediate Classes during the Era of Liberalisation. In S. Bhattacharyya (Ed.), *Two decades of market reform in India: some dissenting views* (pp. 243–259). New York: Anthem Press.
- McCartney, M., & Harriss-White, B. (2000). The ‘Intermediate Regime’ and ‘Intermediate Classes’ Revisited: A Critical Political Economy of Indian Economic Development from 1980 to Hindutva (Working Paper No. 34). Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment. (2016). *Indian Labour Year Book 2016*. Shimla. Retrieved from http://www.labourbureaunew.gov.in/UserContent/ILYB_2016.pdf
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2014). *Women and Men in India. Chapter 3: Literacy and Education*. Retrieved from http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/cso_social_statices_division/Chapter_3_2014.pdf
- Mohanty, M. (2004). Introduction: Dimensions of Power and Social Transformation. In M. Mohanty (Ed.), *Class, caste, gender* (pp. 14–44). New Delhi; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mukherjee, R. (2000). Caste in Itself, Caste and Class, or Caste in Class. *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 6(2), 332–339. <https://doi.org/10.5195/JWSR.2000.229>
- Mukherji, R. (2009). The State, Economic Growth, and Development in India. *India Review*, 8(1), 81–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480802665238>
- Nilsen, A. G., & Roy, S. (2015). Reconceptualizing Subaltern Politics in Contemporary India. In A. G. Nilsen & S. Roy (Eds.), *New Subaltern Politics* (pp. 1–28). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199457557.003.0001>
- Oliver, L. (2010). Schattierungen einer progressiven Regierung: Der erweiterte Staat in Brasilien. *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, 26(1), 42–71. <https://doi.org/10.20446/JEP-2414-3197-26-1-42>
- Ortega, J. (2015). Der lateinamerikanische Staat im Denken René Zavaletas. In A. Jense & S. Pimmer (Eds.), *Der Staat in Lateinamerika: Kolonialität, Gewalt, Transformation* (pp. 106–118). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Pai, S. (2013). *Dalit Assertion*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Palshikar, S. (2014). The Defeat of the Congress. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(39), 57–63.
- Palshikar, S. (2018). Towards Hegemony. BJP beyond Elecotral Dominance. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53(33), 36–42.

- Palshikar, S., & Suri, K. C. (2014). India's 2014 Lok Sabha elections: Critical shifts in the long term, caution in the short term. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(39), 39–49.
- Palshikar, S., & Suri, K. C. (2017). Epilogue: critical shifts in 2014 election. In S. Palshikar, S. Kumar, & S. Lodha (Eds.), *Electoral politics in India: the resurgence of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (pp. 282–299). London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis. Retrieved from <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4799849>
- Patnaik, P., Chandrasekhar, C. P., & Ghosh, J. (2004). The Political Economy of the Economic Reform Strategy. In M. Mohanty (Ed.), *Class, caste, gender* (pp. 89–105). New Delhi; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Pattenden, J. (2011). Gatekeeping as Accumulation and Domination: Decentralization and Class Relations in Rural South India. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 11(2), 164–194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2010.00300.x>
- Pattenden, J. (2016). *Labour, state and society in rural India: a class-relational approach*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Peet, R., & Hartwick, E. R. (2009). *Theories of development: contentions, arguments, alternatives* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Pimmer, S. (2017). Relative Autonomie in Zentrum und Peripherie. Staatstheoretische Überlegungen im Anschluss an Nicos Poulantzas, René Zavaleta und Luis Tapia. In T. Boos, H. Lichtenberger, & A. Puller (Eds.), *Mit Poulantzas arbeiten: ... um aktuelle Macht- und Herrschaftsverhältnisse zu verstehen* (pp. 207–231). Hamburg: VSA.
- Planning Commission. (2014). Data-book Compiled for use of Planning Commission. Retrieved from http://planningcommission.nic.in/data/datatable/data_2312/comp_data2312.pdf
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time*. Boston: Beacon.
- Poulantzas, N. (1973). *Zum marxistischen Klassenbegriff*. Berlin: Merve.
- Poulantzas, N. (1975). *Klassen im Kapitalismus - heute*. Hamburg: VSA.
- Poulantzas, N. (1976). *Classes in contemporary capitalism* (2nd ed.). London: New Left Books.
- Poulantzas, N. (2000). *State, power, socialism*. London: Verso.
- Poulantzas, N. (2002). *Staatstheorie: politischer Überbau, Ideologie, autoritärer Etatismus*. Hamburg: VSA.
- Poulantzas, N. (2008). *The Poulantzas reader: marxism, law, and the state*. (J. Martin, Ed.). London: Verso.
- ProKla. (2014). *Klassentheorien* (Vol. 175). Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Pühretmayer, H. (2012). Bedeutung wissenschaftstheoretischer Reflexion für den politikwissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisproduktionsprozess. In E. Kreisky (Ed.), *Theoriearbeit in der Politikwissenschaft* (pp. 33–49). Wien: Facultas.
- Pühretmayer, H. (2017). Zur materialistischen Wissenschaftstheorie in Nicos Poulantzas' Gesellschafts- und Staatstheorie. In T. Boos, H. Lichtenberger, & A. Puller (Eds.), *Mit Poulantzas arbeiten: ... um aktuelle Macht- und Herrschaftsverhältnisse zu verstehen* (pp. 104–126). Hamburg: VSA.
- Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America. *Nepatla*, 3, 533–580.
- Ray, R., & Katzenstein, M. F. (2005). Introduction. In the Beginning, There Was the Nehruvian State. In R. Ray & M. F. Katzenstein (Eds.), *Social movements in India: poverty, power, and politics* (pp. 1–31). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Roy, I. (2016). Equality against hierarchy: Imagining modernity in subaltern India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 50(1), 80–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0069966715615036>
- Rudolph, L. I., & Rudolph, S. H. (1987). *In pursuit of Lakshmi: the political economy of the Indian state*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ruparelia, S. (2011). Expanding Indian democracy. The paradox of the third force. In S. Ruparelia, S. Reddy, J. Harriss, & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *Understanding India's new political economy: a great transformation?* (pp. 186–203). Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Ruparelia, S. (2013). India's New Rights Agenda: Genesis, Promises, Risks. *Pacific Affairs*, 86(3), 569–590. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2013863569>
- Ruparelia, S. (2015). *Divided We Govern: Coalition Politics in Modern India*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190264918.001.0001>
- Sarkar, R., & Sarkar, A. (2016). Dalit politics in India: recognition without redistribution. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 51(20), 14–16.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in social science: a realist approach*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Sayer, A. (2000). *Realism and social science*. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Schaffar, W. (2008). Birma: gescheiterter Staat oder (neue) Form peripherer Staatlichkeit. *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, 24(2), 33–62. <https://doi.org/10.20446/JEP-2414-3197-24-2-33>
- Scott, J. C. (2008). *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press.
- Senghaas, D. (2003). Die Auswege aus der Armut sind bekannt! Alte Wahrheiten angesichts neuer Konzepte. *Journal Für Entwicklungspolitik*, 19(2), 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.20446/jep-2414-3197-19-2-7>
- Sethi, S., & Chawla, P. (1980, January 31). Jan Sangh: The face of defeat. *India Today*. Retrieved from

- <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19800131-1980-lok-sabha-elections-see-virtual-eclipse-of-jan-sangh-in-parliament-821699-2014-12-19>
- Shah, G. (1990). Grass-Roots Mobilization in Indian Politics. In A. Kohli (Ed.), *India's Democracy* (pp. 262–304). Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400859511.305>
- Shankar, B. L., & Rodrigues, V. (2011). Changing Social Composition of the Lok Sabha. In *The Indian Parliament*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198067726.003.0003>
- Spash, C. L. (2014). Policy analysis: Empiricism, social construction and realism. *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft*, 43(4), 401–410.
- Sridharan, E. (2014). Class voting in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The Growing Size and Importance of the Middle Classes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(39), 72–76.
- Teitelbaum, E. (2006). Was the Indian Labor Movement Ever Coopted?: Evaluating Standard Accounts. *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(4), 389–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672710601072988>
- UNU-WIDER. (2017). World Income Inequality Database (WIID3.4). Retrieved from <https://www.wider.unu.edu/database/world-income-inequality-database-wiid34>
- Vaid, D. (2012). The Caste-Class Association in India: An Empirical Analysis. *Asian Survey*, 52(2), 395–422. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2012.52.2.395>
- Vakulabharanam, V., & Motiram, S. (2011). Political economy of agrarian distress in India since the 1990s. In S. Ruparelia, S. Reddy, J. Harriss, & S. Corbridge (Eds.), *Understanding India's new political economy: a great transformation?* (pp. 101–126). Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Verma, A. (2014). Development and governance trump caste identities in Uttar Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49(39), 89–94.
- Verniers, G. (2018). The Transformation of Backward Class Politics in Uttar Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53(33), 69–73.
- Wallerstein, I. (2006). *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham; London: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822399018>
- Wissel, J. (2010). Kräfteverhältnis. In W. F. Haug (Ed.), *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus* (Vol. 7/II, pp. 1941–1955). Hamburg: Argument.
- Witsoe, J. (2013). *Democracy against development: lower-caste politics and political modernity in postcolonial India*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- Wright, E. O. (1985). *Classes*. London: Verso.
- Wright, E. O. (2005). *Approaches to class analysis*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Yadav, Y. (1996). Reconfiguration in Indian Politics: State Assembly Elections, 1993-95. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(2/3), 95–104.
- Yadav, Y., & Palshikar, S. (2003). From hegemony to convergence: party system and electoral politics in the Indian states, 1952 - 2002. *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, 15(1–2), 5–44.
- Yadav, Y., & Palshikar, S. (2008). Ten theses on state politics in India. In *Seminar* (Vol. 591, pp. 14–22). Retrieved from http://www.india-seminar.com/2008/591/591_y_yadav_&s_palshkar.htm
- Zijdeman, R., & Ribeira da Silva, F. (2015). Life Expectancy at Birth (Total). IISH Dataverse. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/LKYT53>