



FORUM: INDIA

Critical Reflections on Celebrating Success: A Response to Maya Chadda

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Maya Chadda's article in *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* (Chadda 2002) raises a number of issues that are worthy of serious discussion. It represents one current in the study of developing societies that argue that India has evolved into a form of federalism which has successfully contributed to the consolidation of democracy and relatively benign management of ethnic conflicts. This argument is normally presented with reference to India's farsighted constitutional design, its benevolent management by the Indian National Congress (INC) under Nehru, and the social pluralism of Indian society that underpins the political arrangements. There are, however, several problems with this approach some of which Chadda does not address or that she dismisses out of hand.

First, on reading the article we do not get a clear exposition of the analytical framework that explains the development of centre-state relations in India. The nearest we get is the idea of 'relational control and interlocking balance' (Chadda 2000: 49) and necessary conditions for its effective functioning (Chadda 2000: 50). These are merely descriptive categories, and one is at loss to fathom the meaning of 'layered order'. That a clear analytical framework exists has been highlighted by scholars like Brass (1991: Ch. 5). It is further evident in the constitutional discourses on India's distinctive 'civilisational' identity as a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multicultural entity which foreclosed any debate about India as a multi-national state. This identity and how it has been managed has been determined by the political coalitions that have dominated Indian politics. Above all, it has been the political interests of these coalitions that have structured how Indian federalism has been reshaped.

In understanding the evolution of centre-state relations in India we need a framework that can give us a better handle on the relationship between India's external and internal boundaries, between India's conception of itself and its internal order. I have attempted to do this, and reached conclusions diametrically opposed to those of Chadda (Singh 2001). Rather than suggest that the 'creative' management of relations with enemies provided for an imaginative federal solution to India's borderlands, I argue that following partition India's conception of its national identity has created a sharp divide between the core and peripheral states. That is why the peripheral states have remained the sites of resilient ethno-national movements that have done so much to frustrate India's nation-building efforts (Singh 2000). That is why the rules used for reshaping the core of Indian federalism are inapplicable in the periphery. And that is why different modes of 'integration'—coercion and cooption – are used to retain control.

Second, Chadda dismisses the validity of an alternative reading of Indian history that was aborted by the partition, a history with constitutional designs that could have averted partition (Talbot and Singh 1999). It is no doubt difficult to conjecture whether such an alternative would have produced a state (or states) that would have been more or less democratic than today's India but, arguably, that would have been more attuned with the provincial realities of subcontinental India than the centralised Nehruvian state that subsequently emerged. Chadda has not satisfactorily explained why a subcontinent of the regions continues to have substantial appeal and why India as a nation-state remains a deeply contested fact. The recent mobilisation over Kashmir has demonstrated the heavy price India has had to pay for its nation-building efforts. It also illustrates that despite over 50 years of 'violent control', the Indian state in Kashmir has been unable to establish the kind of legitimacy one would expect of a consolidated nation state, even allowing for the devious machinations of India's enemies.



Third, there is considerable evidence to suggest that Mrs Gandhi, who destroyed the INC of Nehru, was the principal cause of the rise in populism, political decay and de-institutionalisation. She suspended the constitution between 1975 and 1977 by imposing a state of emergency during which opponents were jailed. She deliberately fostered the cult of personality. And as Brass (1991: Ch. 5) has so effectively demonstrated, she systematically reversed the guidelines for ethnic conflict management set by her father by encouraging militancy in Punjab only to put it to the sword later on in order to garner the Hindu vote. Without seeking to defend Kohli (1990), my understanding of the latter's work is precisely that the crisis of governability—and a resort to coercion—was the outcome of systematic deinstitutionalisation and decay of state institutions consciously subverted by Mrs. Gandhi for her own political ends. More than any other politician in post-independence India it was Mrs. Gandhi who undermined federal autonomy by regularly imposing President's rule (direct rule from New Delhi) and dismissing Congress and non-Congress chief ministers at whim. Chadda's arguments do not accord with the facts. Nor do they provide any insights into Mrs. Gandhi's period in office. At best they are an elaborate apologia for Mrs. Gandhi's statecraft which, in Chadda's own words, enfeebled the Indian state to its weakest condition since 1947.

Fourth, my argument that INC rule in post-1947 was hegemonically oppressive attempts to analyse how the INC used political, constitutional, ideological and coercive means to undermine the Sikh agitation for a Punjabi-speaking province. This argument is developed at length in *Ethnic Conflict in India* (Singh 2000). Part of that strategy was to encourage ethnic flooding by getting Punjabi Hindus, who were then a majority in the province, to declare Hindi – not Punjabi – as their official language, thereby undermining the case for a linguistic state based on Punjabi. Many Punjabi Hindus, the ideologues of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and ill-informed observers continue to propagate the idea that Sikhism is merely a Hindu sect. It is in this context that we should read Chadda's statement that 'The demand for a separate province of Punjabi Suba (Punjabi-speaking state) was based on religious separateness of Hindus and Sikhs' (Chadda 2000: 48). In fact, the Sikh tradition had begun to reform itself of accretions of Hinduism from the late nineteenth century onwards. The claim to separate statehood before 1947 was based not only on the pre-colonial legacy of a Sikh state but the recognition of a self-conscious community with distinct religious boundaries, history and political institutions. After failing to secure the constitutional guarantees of autonomy that they were promised prior to independence, the Sikh political leadership in a majority Hindu Punjab adopted the political infiltration of Congress as a tactic that would protect its interests (Nayer 1966). Minorities have adopted similar tactics elsewhere and in India (for example Kashmir's National Conference's alliance with the BJP), but it would be naïve to read into this an affirmation of INC's secularism or support for the BJP's political programme of *Hindutva* (Hinduness).

Sikh demands for autonomy, which led to the violent agitation in the 1980s and early 1990s, harked back to the pre-independence claim for an autonomous area for Sikhs. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution that became a charter of Sikh demands was very much modelled on Article 370 that gave Kashmir special status. The idea of a Sikh nation does not necessarily imply, as Chadda claims, a Sikh state. Only paranoia and fear, which has been the hallmark of India's centre in dealing with Sikh political leaders, would conflate the two.

Fifth, my argument for interpreting India as an ethnic democracy (Singh 2000: Ch. 3) seeks to interrogate the nature of Indian democracy by exploring the post-partition nation, its core and peripheral fault lines, the role of Hinduism—with its extreme diversity—as a 'meta ethnicity' and as a 'civic religion', outcomes from the political system, and the modularity of the majoritarian discourses of Nehruvian secularism and

current day *Hindutva*. It is an argument that certainly is worthy of *some* consideration, even if it is ultimately refuted. Given the banalisation of the distinction between Nehruvianism and *Hindutva* and the plight of minorities in today's India, where the Muslims of Gujarat have become the symbols of orchestrated violence against minorities, the onus is on the critics of this argument to provide convincing evidence to the contrary.

Against the dominant trend that celebrates India's democratic achievements, which are, indeed, considerable, there is also the need to question the *kind* of democracy India is (Singh 2002). Why is it that the nation-building project over the last two decades has cost over 100,000 lives in the peripheral states alone? Why is it that concentration camp-like conditions exist for over 100,000 Muslims in Gujarat whose safety cannot be guaranteed? Academics interested in understanding the management of ethnic conflicts in India since 1947 and more humane policy options to accomplish this should also consider alternatives to Maya Chadda's argument.

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Do the New States Tell a Story about Indian Federalism? Some Comments on Maya Chadda's 'Integration through Internal Reorganization: Containing Ethnic Conflict in India'

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Maya Chadda's article (Chadda 2002) seeks to explain the ability of the Central government in India to create new states. She argues that the model of governance adopted by India at independence was a combination of 'relational control' (pertaining to India's role in South Asia) and 'interlocking balances' (within the country). The first phase of federal reorganization (in the 1950s) on the basis of language breathed life into this model; the second phase, of reorganization in the north-east, protected the model by giving the new states a stake in India's territorial integrity; and the third and most recent phase of reorganization also, she argues, fits this model well. Ergo, in her view, this governance model still holds.

Even if we agree that the imperatives of territorial unity have generally prevailed over those of federal democracy in India, it is difficult to see what purchase this argument has in relation to the third phase of reorganization. It may explain the response of the Indian state to the Punjab and Assam issues in the 1980s, but in relation to the three newest states of the Indian Union, Chadda's argument is somewhat ambiguous and even



bewildering. She seeks to justify and even endorse the predisposition of the Indian Union towards territorial unity in fairly strong normative terms. She also suggests that when the demand (e.g., for separate statehood) is conceded, it is only because it is relatively uncontroversial. What, if anything, does this tell us about state capacity? It would seem to be logical to deduce, from this account, that the third phase of reorganization is relatively inconsequential from the point of view of the – normatively, constitutionally and empirically – strong Indian state. If so, then the analytical merit of focusing on the newly-created states is not very clear. And an empirical assertion of the strength of the Indian state is anyhow contestable.

The creation of new states is arguably only one dimension of the larger story of federalism in India. Indeed, the federal question in India is not only about ethnic conflict, and its containment by the state. It has many other significant aspects quite unrelated to ethnicity, including issues of greater autonomy for the states, the centre's power over the declaration of President's rule, state finances, and so forth. While it is a perfectly legitimate exercise to subject one dimension of the centre-state relationship to closer scrutiny, problems are wont to arise when the conclusions emanating from the study of the segment do not cohere with our broader understanding of centre-state relations, or lead us to misrecognize the larger picture. Chadda's argument about the big picture is straightforward. Whenever federal democracy is challenged, she says, considerations of territorial integrity take primacy. When, however, the grant of autonomy is less controversial, it is acceded to. This is not saying very much about the capacity of the state, which was the point of departure of the article. Should accommodation be interpreted as a sign of state strength or state weakness? It could, for instance, be argued that under the impact of factors such as the decline of the one-party dominant system, the regionalization of the party system and so on, the constitutionally strong position of the Centre has been considerably diluted in the recent past. Chadda herself mentions these factors, but they do not form a part of her account of state capacity.

That the model of governance evolved in the 1950s essentially holds, as Chadda suggests, is contestable. The comparison between this last phase of state-creation and the challenges faced by the Indian federation in the previous decade, is not very clear. Insurgency in the Punjab and Assam was surely a challenge to federal democracy, as in Kashmir and the North-East even today. The explanation for the difference in state response surely lies not just in the political circumstances, but also in that the nature of the claim in the latter was/is different in those cases from that in the newly-created states. In all the three newly-created states, the issue of identity (tribal identity in the case of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, and the distinctive identity of the hill people in the case of Uttarakhand) was almost inseparable from that of development and/or maldevelopment. The development deficit was critical in Jharkhand and the issue of sustainable development was central to the Uttarakhand agitation.

Chadda's account of the movements leading to state-creation is rather perfunctory. She forbears to mention, for example, the particular circumstances under which the demand for a separate state of Uttarakhand (using the self-description of the movement) was revived after the 1950s. Post-Mandal, it was the policy of 27% reservation in public employment for OBCs in the hill region (where their proportion in the population is barely 2%) that sparked off the agitation. The rape and killing of movement activists at Muzaffarnagar by Mulayam Singh Yadav's government was a blow that could not be forgotten or condoned. It was, however, only the proverbial match on a tinder-box waiting to explode. Developmental neglect, combined with the perception that the hill regions of Garhwal and Kumaon were rather low on the developmental priorities of the Uttar Pradesh state administration at Lucknow, was substantially responsible for fuelling the movement. No major party was willing to risk even the handful of parliamentary

seats from this region by decrying the movement: all sought to appropriate it. In Jharkhand, likewise, it was easy for the movement to muster support across party lines because the issue of development was foregrounded.

Ultimately, Chadda's explanation for the third phase of reorganization hinges on three points: first, that these were relatively uncontroversial demands; second, that they fitted well into the electoral calculations of political parties; and third, that a sea-change had occurred in Indian politics. What does this tell us about Indian federalism? Arguably little. What can we extrapolate from this account that can help us understand state capacity, in a way that simultaneously and coherently explains the Indian state's response to Punjab and Assam, the continuing troubles in Kashmir and the North-East, and the process of state-creation two years ago?

On the question of ethnicity *per se*, it can be argued that the Indian polity has witnessed a reinvention of ethnicity. Earlier episodes of ethnic assertion were expressed in the form of territorial claims. Today, this has changed. OBCs, who constitute 50% of India's population, found themselves considerably under-represented in governance structures. The implementation of the Mandal Commission's report, and the emergence of political parties such as the Samajwadi Party, have shown that the claims of ethnicity based on region have given way to an altogether new form that does not challenge the federal structure. Rather, it seeks to forge trans-state linkages and alliances based on caste (e.g., the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party) or religion (the Sangh Parivar). It is this, along with the fact that regional parties have burst the bounds of regions and become decisive in the matter of government-formation at the centre, that gives the Indian nation-state its apparently more 'settled' character. The only new candidate to offer itself for separate statehood in the last two years is 'Harit Pradesh', comprising the prosperous and productive western region of Uttar Pradesh, and – though it has thus far been treated rather dismissively—it is worth noting that this demand is grounded in a claim that is entirely unrelated to ethnicity.

Finally, Chadda laments that the debate on Indian federalism has been polarized between centralization and decentralization in a way that is entirely untenable. It can be argued that a measure of decentralization has taken place, both politically and constitutionally. In political terms, the emergence of strong regional parties which are decisive players in the national polity; in economic terms, the ability of Chief Ministers to invite foreign direct investment and multilateral funding, and to take economic reforms forward in their own states; and constitutionally, the enactment of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments reviving the *panchayati raj* institutions of local governance, are irreversible trends for the foreseeable future. The Indian polity is surely moving in a more federal direction, even if by political accident rather than design. Even as we consider this to be a reassuring trend, we may continue to be less than sanguine about the ability of the Indian state to manage and contain ethnic conflict in particular regions.

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Multiple Identities, Dual Loyalties and the Stabilisation of Federalism in India: Observations on Maya Chadda's 'Integration through Internal Reorganization: Containing Ethnic Conflict in India'

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Maya Chadda's article (Chadda 2002) on the 'integrative capacity' of the Indian federation and its contribution to building an 'Indian nation' covers many issues. She seeks to explain the differences in the rationale behind the reorganisations of the 1950s, 1970s and in 2000. From a comparative federal perspective, the creation of the states of Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttaranchal in September 2000 was a radical and innovative step. Yet, as Chadda identifies, on one level, these reorganisations continued a trend set since independence. The Indian state has continuously reorganised its internal political boundaries in order to manage the diversity within its borders.

As Chadda acknowledges, the Indian state has pursued different objectives in undertaking these reorganisations. The reorganisations of the 1950s and 1970s were the result of challenges to the centre. Although the Congress Party was dedicated to linguistic reorganisation before independence, its commitment to a majoritarian constitutional framework after independence was challenged by this obligation (Adeney 2002). After independence Congress backtracked on the promise to create linguistically homogeneous provinces despite conceding the legitimacy of regional languages for governmental use. The Congress eventually accepted the demands for reorganisation because of electoral considerations. It initially reaped the benefits of so doing.

Although Chadda accepts that linguistic reorganisation played a positive role in stabilising the Indian federation, promoting the growth of dual loyalties to centre and region, she does not directly address *how*. Linguistic reorganisation promoted security for territorially concentrated linguistic groups. However, it only did so in conjunction with linguistic multiculturalism at the centre. This multiculturalism concerned the provision to use regional languages at state level. It also included the right to sit government exams and communicate with the centre in any of the languages recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the constitution. Reorganisation on its own was not sufficient, these other provisions were also necessary to promote security for linguistic groups. This is because federations are often centralised, majoritarian governmental forms. There is no necessary equation with federal forms of government and ethnic accommodation as Chadda recognises (Chadda 2002: 56). However, her conflation of federal ethnic accommodation, or as she negatively describes it—containment—with decentralisation is confusing. Federations are not necessarily the most decentralised forms of government. They are defined by a division of sovereignty between two territorially defined levels of government rather than a specific division of sovereignty. Therefore, centralism and federalism can coexist.

Although Congress was the initial beneficiary of the reorganisations of the 1950s in electoral terms, regionally defined parties were the main beneficiaries a decade later. Yet the reorganisations did not just provide the conditions for regional parties to emerge – they permitted alternative identities such as caste to assert and mobilise themselves politically. As Horowitz (1985: 617) argues

When groups are territorially concentrated, devolution may have utility not because it provides 'self-determination', but because once power is devolved it becomes somewhat more difficult to determine who the self is.

That these alternative identities emerged was indicative of the fact that linguistic groups had received security. Therefore linguistic reorganisation in the 1950s provided the conditions under which dual loyalties were created, both to the region and to the Indian

nation. The creation of dual loyalties is essential to the success of a federation. The proliferation of regionally delimited political parties has not challenged the security of the Indian federation, although they have proved to be more of a challenge for governmental stability.

The reorganisations of the North East were omitted from the State Reorganisation Commission's recommendations partially because of the extreme heterogeneity of the region. Chadda argues that the Indian state undertook these reorganisations in order to promote India's governance and security. However, this argument poses more questions than it answers. Under Nehru, territorial recognition for non-Hindu groups was seen as antithetical to the security of the Indian state and its national identity. This was why the demand for a Punjabi speaking state was excluded from the initial reorganisations as it was perceived to be demanded along 'communal' lines. These later reorganisations were not as successful in creating the dual identities as the reorganisations in the 1950s were. The differential policies that the Indian state has adopted with regards to claims for recognition within the federal system have affected the ability of the state to accommodate these different identities. Chadda acknowledges this. However, she does not explicitly discuss the fact that the Indian state has adopted very different approaches to managing claims put by religious groups as opposed to those defined by language.

Although Nehru was reluctant to allow linguistic groups recognition within decision-making institutions he was even more reticent when these identities were religious. As all the states of the Indian Union had a Hindu majority with the exception of Jammu and Kashmir, this was a latent challenge to the 'neutrality' of Indian secularism. It is significant that it is only after the death of Nehru that states with a non-Hindu majority were created. Yet these states were not created on religious criteria. The creation of these states did not promote security for the groups within them. This was partially because many of these states remained heterogeneous on either linguistic or religious criteria. But the centre's attitude to legitimate demands for autonomy from these regions—e.g., the 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution proposed by the Akali Dal—created a self-fulfilling prophecy. Chadda argues that for federalism to be successful the centre needs to be perceived as a neutral arbiter (Chadda 2002: 49). Tensions within the Indian federation have been exacerbated precisely where the central government has *not* acted impartially and this partiality is perceived to be related to ethnic discrimination – in this case along religious or tribal lines.

The belated recognition of a Punjabi state and the attitude adopted in regard to autonomy in the Punjab, North East and Kashmir have affected the stability of the federation precisely because these policies have undermined the creation of dual identities. Chadda has been concerned in the article to elucidate the linkages between federal design and democracy. She has concentrated on a one-way process – whether federal reform has improved democracy. Yet this perspective ignores the relationship in the other direction—the manner in which central policies have undermined democracy and therefore caused federal destabilisation. The Indian centre has dismissed state governments in all parts of India. The non-Hindu regions are not unique in this regard. Yet Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir have been subject to President's Rule for longer than any other state. It was the massive rigging and 'strong army tactics' adopted by the Indian state in Jammu and Kashmir during the 1987 state election which violently escalated the conflict (Bose 1997: 45-9). Additionally, democracy can be more or less majoritarian or consociational (as can federations). The form that democracy takes is crucial in an ethnically divided society. Chadda does not address this point. A majoritarian federation and a majoritarian democracy do not contribute to federal stabilisation in an ethnically divided society. She correctly identifies that with the advent of coalition politics the Indian federation is likely to become less centralised, although



economic liberalisation also prompted moves in this direction. The Bommai judgement of 1994 and the willingness of the previous president, Naryanan, to uphold its stipulations will influence the future direction of the federation.¹ Even though these precedents will act as a check on politically motivated dismissals of state governments, they are less important in accounting for the ability of the federation to regulate ethnic conflict.

Federations are not an automatic institutional panacea for ethnic conflict as Chadda acknowledges. This is because they can be majoritarian structures of government. Autonomy is meaningless without inclusion within the wider federation, which the current era of coalition politics promotes. The creation of dual identities within a federation requires at the very least, the *security* of a group. Central government policies and other mechanisms of inclusion are vitally important in explaining the 'integrative' potential of the federation. One way of increasing the security of groups within a federation is to create homogeneous provinces in which security of culture is assured. However, without inclusion within the wider federal system, e.g., in representation in the decision making institutions and proportionality in government appointments, federal autonomy and redrawing of boundaries will be insufficient to manage ethnic diversity. Chadda's article acknowledges that central policies are important. However, she downplays the different attitude the centre has adopted with regard to demands made by religious groups compared to those defined by language. These policies have been to the detriment of federal stabilisation and its 'integrative' potential.

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India: An Ethnocracy, Theocracy or Democracy? A Reply to Singh, Jayal and Adeney

Maya Chadda

My article 'Integration through Internal Reorganization: Containing Ethnic Conflict in India' in the last issue of *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* (Chadda 2002) has sparked a considerable debate among scholars with an expertise in India. It emphasises both the continued interest in political developments on the sub-continent, as well as the wider significance of any lessons learned from the way in which ethnic conflict in the world's largest democracy has been partly prevented and partly managed over the past half-century.

In the following, I will respond to the various criticisms that my three colleagues have made in this forum discussion on India. In taking their points one by one, my aim is not

¹ The Bommai judgement of the Supreme Court restricted the ability of the centre to unilaterally dismiss state governments without following procedures such as giving the state government a chance to prove its majority on the floor of its Legislative Assembly.

to dismiss the objections that they raise, but rather to clarify and elaborate further the arguments I made in the original article, as only through constructive debate, focussing on issues rather than people, will we be able to advance the state of our scholarship.

To begin with, Gurharpal Singh's objection that my article lacks a clear analytical framework can be dealt with most easily. In my book *Ethnicity, Security and Separatism in India* (Chadda 1996), I discussed extensively both the theory and practice of what I called *interlocking balances and relational control*. I did not reiterate the way these have shaped Indian federalism at length only because it had been done so extensively elsewhere.

The more serious point that Gurharpal Singh makes is that 'following partition, India's conception of its national identity created a sharp divide between the core and peripheral states... The rules used for reshaping the core of Indian federalism are inapplicable to the periphery... that is why different modes of "integration" – coercion and cooption (sic) – are used to retain control.' In sum, while the central state in India used accommodation to maintain unity within the core states, it used coercion against the peripheral states. This thesis has the merit of being elegantly simple. But, like a vastly enlarged photograph, the clean lines that are visible from a distance disintegrate as one goes closer to it. In response, I contend that Singh's objections to my article arise from his insistence on using an analytical framework that looks at India and its federal politics along the all too familiar religious divide. In addition, how does one distinguish between core and peripheral states? In Singh's comments, one possible fault line between the two seems to be that the peripheral states remain the sites of 'resilient ethnonational movements'. By this yardstick, should Tamil Nadu, which has a political party, the Dravida Kazhagam, which is overtly separatist, not be categorized as a peripheral state? If so, then why was coercion not used to bring it to heel? A similar question can be asked about Andhra Pradesh, where the Telugu Desam captured power in 1983 within 10 months of its formation, almost entirely because it was able to tap into the then latent ethnonationalism of the Telugus. Ethnonational sentiment is also strong in West Bengal, which has a rich and distinctive culture and a highly developed language of its own. Are Andhra and West Bengal peripheral states? Or are they core states simply because their ethnonationalism has never turned either violent or separatist? To me, this seems to stem from a conflation of geography and conflict, and the use of the presence of the latter as an explanation for India's federal politics.

Following this argument through to the end would imply two important things: first, peripheral states, in Gurharpal Singh's sense of the word, define themselves. They do so by rejecting accommodation. That leaves the Indian State only two options – to permit them to secede or to enforce unity. Second, the distinction between core and periphery, far from being sharp and immutable, as Singh suggests, is a shifting one. Virtually any state in India (perhaps excluding the four Hindi speaking states of the north) can become a part of the periphery by becoming the site of a secessionist movement. It can return to the core when the separatism is contained. The possibility of such shifts deprives the distinction between core and periphery of its analytical value. What distinguishes one from the other are the implication each carries for the security and territorial integrity of the Indian Union. To recognize this is not to endorse the government's policy, which I do not do. But to ignore it is equally problematic. Are we to understand that New Delhi was never really worried about the security implications of Sikh, Kashmiri, Assamese and Naga and Tamil nationalism?

Is there any other way in which Gurharpal Singh's distinction can be rescued from this fate? The only one that remains is to define core states as Hindu states and the periphery as non-Hindu. Such a fault line would neatly put all the states where there is, or has



been, some insurgent activity – Punjab, Kashmir and the Northeast—on one side while putting the rest of India on the other. But on closer examination, this too does not work. First, it assumes that there will never be a separatist movement in a Hindu state. Second, it does not even explain all the insurgent activity going on in the country today. Where do we put the DK and the still very small Tamil National Renewal Army in Tamil Nadu, and the ULFA in Assam? Second, how does this explain the fact that in Punjab, only a small fraction of the Sikhs supported the insurgency even when it was at its height, which manifested itself in the fact that between 1983 and 1993, 61% of all the civilians whom the militants killed were Sikhs. In fact, the insurgency in Punjab died down when Sikh villagers not only turned against the insurgents, but took up arms against them. The neat fault line also breaks down in Kashmir. In the recent state election, Kashmiris rejected the National Conference and voted for many independent candidates. In a MORI opinion poll, conducted in Jammu and Kashmir in April 2002, which had foreshadowed these results, a quarter to a third of the Muslim residents of Kashmir valley said that they preferred to stay with India rather than merge with Pakistan (MORI 2002).

Niraja Gopal Jayal's point that I have emphasized territorial imperatives over those of building a federal democracy in my analysis do not reflect either my intention when writing the article or my assessment after re-reading it. The point of my analysis was to show that while the second reorganization, for instance the demands for an autonomous Sikh state during the Nehru period, raised concerns over territorial unity, the third reorganization and the creation of the three new states of Chattisgarh, Uttarkhand and Jharkhand was based on a very different calculus. Political and electoral considerations were paramount in this third wave of reorganization. These considerations were certainly not absent in the earlier reorganizations, but the Coalition era of the 1990s had brought a dynamic to the forefront that was altogether different from that in the era dominated by the Congress party. The decision to carve out three new states, its timing and the lack of controversy over it, cannot be understood without taking into account the new correlation of domestic forces characterized by the demise of Congress's dominance, the rise of the BJP, the strengthening of local and regional political parties and its inevitable consequence, namely coalition governments.

Second, Jayal notes that in my analysis I do not account for the level of state capacity—whether it was weaker or stronger in ceding internal reorganization—since I argue that separate statehood is granted when it is uncontroversial. It is true that I have not tackled the question of state capacity, but that is because I had not meant to address it in the article. The focus of the article was to expose—through events and policy analysis—the patterns in government responses to demands for ethnically based state-provinces. Was there an implicit grand design in the three waves of reorganization? This was the main question I sought to answer. I show that the design apparent in the first reorganization—which must be considered in conjunction with the constitutional article governing the provisions for the creation of new states—sought to establish a balance between territorial imperatives and federal democracy. Both were important to the process of nation-state formation. But this was a shifting balance and the constitution had wisely provided room for maneuver by leaving the decision to the representative body of the people. It was the parliament that had to decide the appropriate basis for altering internal boundaries and creating new province states. What was at stake then was not only unity but also democracy. And in this balancing act, the Indian state performed rather poorly. The third reorganization did not, however, call into question territorial unity. This is why the decision to create the three new states was guided by the imperatives of domestic politics, at least largely so. And it did not become particularly controversial mainly because of the sea change in post-1989 Indian politics. The lack of

controversy is meant to tell us the extent to which center-state relations had changed and brought regional parties the power to veto the central government's policies.

This is not to deny that questions about state capacity are certainly important, but they could not be addressed comprehensively within the scope of a single article. That is why I suggested only in passing that state capacity—or the quantum of state power—depends on state's institutionalized ability to defuse conflict (Chadda 2002: 52). This requires considerable political capital. So we need to account for not only the 'development deficit' that Jayal so rightly underscores but also for the 'democratic deficit' evident in the concentration of decision-making powers at the apex under Indira Gandhi. The dissipation of political capital did not occur because Indira Gandhi was turning India into a Hindu Rashtra—(that honor had to be left to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar although she was not above using the Hindu card occasionally for electoral purposes), but because she was seeking legislative majorities at all costs, including those that eventually destroyed her party and undermined the independence and integrity of state institutions. Her authoritarian tendencies hid the decay of Congress and its weakening hold over the Indian electorate. The result was the unraveling of the Nehruvian design that had balanced the two principles of unification and diversity through accommodation. The failure led to ethnic violence and insurgencies in Assam, Punjab and Kashmir.

Third, Jayal points out that economic factors were critical in forging the demand for the creation of Uttarkhand. The 'development deficit' she underlines did indeed spur the movement to its conclusion. My analysis should have included some observations about the economic neglect and lack of development, and I accept her comments on this score. I was less concerned with the causes that brought the movement about, but more with the government's response to it. This is why the focus is on the political dynamics that provided the background against which the decision to carve out a separate state was taken. Indeed, Jayal herself admits that while 'deeper causes' for the demand could be traced to the sense of economic discrimination, the trigger factors were largely political. 'Identity politics' is always a mix of many factors that frequently includes desire for equal status and economic grievances, as well as for an equal share of political power and office. Different grievances come to the fore at different times in the life of a movement. Punjab is a good case in point. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 had a mix of religious, political and economic demands. The latter were even specified: guaranteed procurement prices for agricultural crops and investments in industry. But fulfilling the economic part of the demand alone would not have ended the insurgency in Punjab.

Finally, what are the component elements of ethnicity? As it would be far beyond the scope of my short reply, I do not wish to engage in the 'definitional' controversy and gladly concede Jayal's point that definitions shift according to who is doing the defining and for what purpose. So, caste groups or regional and caste associations that cross over more than one ethnically-based state, fall within the broad kind of definition of ethnicity that I implicitly based my argument on. More to the point, as I was interested in the strategies employed by the government and reasons for its choice, I found that these could be understood better if we were to construct a comparative frame of government response, beginning with spelling out the grand logic (which was explained briefly in the discussion of *relational control and interlocking balancin'* with citations for more elaborate discussion) of the 'original compact' between India and her federal parts. The extent to which governments strayed or adhered to the commitments in the original compact (implicit in the reorganization of 1956) provided clues for understanding at least two things: politics of center-state relations and the balance of political forces at large. One could infer something about the strengthening or weakening of the state from these, although, I hasten to add, that was not the focus of my article. In any event, the compact could accommodate a strong central state and a politically autonomous



province-state. Again, the relationship between Tamil nationalism and Indian nationalism, the DMK and the Congress or the BJP comes to mind, which, by and large, have been compatible. This is why the debates about centralization vs. decentralization that have so preoccupied scholars over the past decades are misleading. Decentralization is not the panacea it is made out to be and centralization is not the only problem Indian federalism needs to resolve. Many South Asia scholars have, however, invested too much passion in these arguments to acknowledge that the only way the Indian model can work is to do both within a frame of political negotiations with the disputants.

Katharine Adeney has two main objections to my article. First, that I do not distinguish between the government's treatment of Hindu as opposed to non-Hindu groups and their demand for autonomy. Second, that the particular form a democracy might take is crucial to understanding conflict in an ethnically divided society. For instance, a majoritarian democracy is bound to create a whole host of conflicts in a society as diverse as India. Adeney cites Nehru's rejection of the demand for Sikhistan because it was made by Sikhs. Indeed, Nehru distinguished between religion-based and language-based demands for the creation of separate province-states and remained stubbornly opposed to dividing India again on a religious basis. There is, however, a major difference between treating religious groups—who were granted total cultural autonomy—and ceding to their territorial demands. Punjabi Subha was created when Sant Fateh Singh replaced Master Tara Singh and articulated Sikh demands in terms of language rather than religion. Nehru took a principled position on this issue. Nehru's speeches and statements also reveal ample references to Punjab's location on the border with Pakistan. This shows that while principles of internal division were being debated, the government was worrying about ceding autonomy and creating a Sikh province on that border. Does that mean Sikhs were distrusted? The weight of evidence cited in scholarly literature about this period does not support such an interpretation of Nehru's motives. In any event, the majority of Sikhs in Punjab did not want a separate Sikhistan; only a small fraction had supported the demand for separate statehood. The politics of Punjab in the 1950s and 1960 was far more complex and cannot be reduced to a simple divide between Sikh and Hindus. Indeed, in subsequent elections, the majority of the Sikhs voted for the Congress rather than the Akali Dal which claimed to represent the Sikhs. And Master Tara Singh, the main advocate of Sikhistan was consigned to political oblivion.

In response to the second comment, I would like to point out that in the article and in my two books (Chadda 1997 and 2000) I have discussed extensively the disastrous consequences of Congress's quest for legislative dominance and centralized decision-making. I have argued that these quests eventually contributed to disaffection and violence in several parts of India. Indira Gandhi was violating the 'grand logic' that was meant to consolidate India's federal democracy and forging a more integrated union. That logic—evident in the constitutional design in combination with the rearrangements forged by the first federal reorganization—rested on strategies of accommodation to balance the interlocking interests within three arenas of conflict: between proximate ethnic communities (i.e., Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab) between the state and the central government (Punjab vs. government at the center) and India (with its indeterminate borders) and the neighboring states. The failure to balance and accommodate led to ethnic conflicts. Katherine Adeney and I are not in disagreement on this point.

In closing, I would like to thank all three respondents for their comments and for making me think harder about my arguments and conclusions and the logic by which I arrived at them. Although I disagree with Gurharpal Singh in his characterization of center-state relations, his arguments rightly warn us of the dangers we face now, should the resistance to 'Hindutva' crumble, which is all too real given the relentless march of the

VHP since the January 2003 elections in Gujarat. Jayal's learned comments point to the difficulty one must face in taking a 'small cut' from the seamless connectedness of politics and economics. Adeney's comments in fact reinforce many arguments I have made, although we differ on the significance of the Hindu—non-Hindu fault line in ethnic relations. Many of these and other more general points raised in the insightful comments on my article might become more applicable as we speak and deserve further rigorous examination by South Asia scholars. Yet, my aim was more modest, namely to offer an explanation for the three waves of internal reorganization in India that I discussed in my article.

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