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THE RISE OF “STATE-NATIONS”

Alfred Stepan, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav

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One of the most urgent conceptual, normative, and political tasks of our day is to think anew about how polities that aspire to be democracies can accommodate great sociocultural and even multinational diversity within one state. The need to think anew arises from a mismatch between the political realities of the world we live in and an old political wisdom that we have inherited. The old wisdom holds that the territorial boundaries of a state must coincide with the perceived cultural boundaries of a nation. Thus, this understanding requires that every state must contain within itself one and not more than one culturally homogenous nation, that every state should be a nation, and that every nation should be a state. Given the reality of sociocultural diversity in many of the world’s polities, this widespread belief seems to us to be misguided and indeed dangerous since, as we shall argue, many successful democratic states in the world today do not conform to this expectation.

All independent democratic states have a degree of cultural diversity, but for comparative purposes we can say that states may be divided into three broad categories:

- 1) States that have strong cultural diversity, some of which is territorially based and politically articulated by significant groups with leaders who advance claims of independence in the name of nationalism and self-determination.

- 2) States that are culturally quite diverse, but whose diversity is nowhere organized by territorially based, politically significant groups that mobilize nationalist demands for independence.

3) States in which a community that is culturally homogeneous enough to consider itself a nation dominates the state, and no other significant group articulates similar claims.

We call countries in the first category “robustly multinational” societies. Canada (owing to Quebec), Spain (especially owing to the Basque Country and Catalonia), and Belgium (owing to Flanders) are all “robustly multinational.” India, owing to the Kashmir Valley alone, merits classification in this category. The Sikh-led Khalistan movement in the Punjab, the Mizo independence movement in the northeast, and the Dravidian secessionist movement in southern India strengthen the multinational dimension of the Indian polity.

Switzerland and the United States are both sociologically diverse and multicultural. Yet since neither has significant territorially based groups mobilizing claims for independence, both countries clearly fall into the second and not the first category.

Finally, Japan, Portugal, and most of the Scandinavian countries fall into the third category.

What political implications do these three very different situations have for reconciling democracy with diversity? If a polity has only one significant group which sees itself as a nation, and there exists a relatively common sense of history and religion and a shared language throughout the territory, the building of a nation-state and the building of democracy can reinforce each other.

Yet if competitive elections are inaugurated under conditions that are already “robustly multinational,” the logic of nation-state building and the logic of democracy building will come into conflict. This is so because only one of the polity’s “nations” will be privileged in the state-building effort, while the other “nations” will go unrecognized and may even be marginalized. But before examining alternatives to the nation-state, we first need to attempt to explain its normative and political power.

The belief that every state should be a nation reflects perhaps the most widely accepted normative vision of a modern democratic state—that is, the “nation-state.” After the French Revolution, and especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, France pursued many policies devoted to creating a unitary nation-state in which all French citizens would have only one cultural and political identity. These policies included a package of incentives and disincentives to ensure that French increasingly became the only acceptable language in the state. Political mechanisms to allow the recognition and expression of regional cultural differences were so unacceptable to French nation-state builders that advocacy of federalism was at one time a capital offense. Throughout France, state schools at any given hour were famously teaching the same curriculum with identical syllabi by teachers who had been trained and certified by the same Ministry of Education. Numerous state policies, such as universal military conscription, were

designed to create a common French identity and a country that was robustly assimilationist.¹

Some very successful contemporary democracies such as Sweden, Japan, and Portugal are close to the ideal type of a unitary nation-state. Some federal states such as Germany and Australia have also become nation-states. In our view, if at the time a polity adopts a state-directed program of “nation-state” building sociocultural differences have not acquired political salience, and if most politically aware citizens have a strong sense of shared history, policies designed to build a nation-state should not create problems for the achievement of an inclusive democracy. In fact, the creation of such a national identity and relative homogeneity in the nineteenth century was identified with democratization and was possible in consolidated states.

In the twentieth century, however, attempts to create nation-states via state policies encountered growing difficulties, even in such old states as Spain. Thus if a polity has significant and politically salient cultural or linguistic diversity (as a large number of polities do), then its leaders need to think about, craft, and normatively legitimate a type of polity with the characteristics of a “state-nation.”

Identities and Boundaries

Two of the authors of the present essay, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, introduced the concept of the state-nation in 1996, but only in a paragraph (and one figure), citing states that “are multicultural, and [which] sometimes even have significant multinational components, [but] which nonetheless still manage to engender strong identification and loyalty from their citizens, an identification and loyalty that proponents of homogeneous nation states perceive that only nation states can engender.” They went on to say that neither Switzerland nor India was

strictly speaking [in the French sense] a nation state, but we believe both can now be called state nations. Under Jawaharlal Nehru, India made significant gains in managing multinational tensions through skillful and consensual usage of numerous consociational practices. Through this process India became in the 1950s and the early 1960s a democratic state-nation.²

“Nation-state” policies stand for a political-institutional approach that tries to make the political boundaries of the state and the presumed cultural boundaries of the nation match. Needless to say, the cultural boundaries are far from obvious in most cases. Thus the creation of a nation-state involves privileging *one* sociocultural identity over other potential or actual sociocultural cleavages that can be politically mobilized. “Nation-state” policies have been pursued historically by following a variety of routes that range from relatively soft to downright brutal. These may include: 1) creating or arousing a special kind of al-

legiance or common cultural identity among those living in a state; 2) encouraging the voluntary assimilation into the nation-state's identity of those who do not share that initial allegiance or cultural identity; 3) various forms of social pressure and coercion to achieve this and to prevent the emergence of alternative cultural identities or to erode them if they exist; and 4) coercion that might, in the more extreme cases, even involve ethnic cleansing.

By contrast, "state-nation" policies stand for a political-institutional approach that respects and protects *multiple but complementary* sociocultural identities. "State-nation" policies recognize the legitimate public and even political expression of active sociocultural cleavages, and they include mechanisms to accommodate competing or conflicting claims without imposing or privileging in a discriminatory way any one claim. "State-nation" policies involve creating a sense of belonging (or "we-feeling") with respect to the statewide political community, while simultaneously creating institutional safeguards for respecting and protecting politically salient sociocultural diversities. The "we-feeling" may take the form of defining a tradition, history, and shared culture in an inclusive manner, with all citizens encouraged to feel a sense of attachment to common symbols of the state and some form of "constitutional patriotism."

In democratic societies, the institutional safeguards constitutive of "state-nation" policies will most likely take the form of federalism, and often specifically *asymmetrical* federalism, possibly combined with consociational practices.³ Virtually every longstanding and relatively peaceful contemporary democracy with more than one territorially concentrated, politically mobilized, linguistic-cultural group forming a majority in some significant part of its territory is not only federal, but "asymmetrically federal" (Belgium, Canada, India) or is a unitary nation-state with a "federacy."⁴ As we discuss later, a federacy is a distinct cultural-political unit within an otherwise unitary state that relates to the central government via a set of asymmetrical federal arrangements. This means that such a polity, at a certain point in its history, decided that it could "hold together" within a single democratic system only by constitutionally embedding special cultural and historical prerogatives for some of the member units—prerogatives that respond to those units' distinct linguistic-cultural aspirations, security situations, or historical identities.

We believe that if political leaders in India, Belgium, Spain, and Canada had attempted to force one language and culture on their respective countries, and had insisted on imposing homogenizing nation-state policies reminiscent of the French Third Republic, the cause of social peace, inclusionary democracy, and individual rights would have been poorly served. For in each of these countries, more than one territorially based, linguistic-cultural cleavage had already been activated. The strategic question, therefore, was whether to attempt to *repress* or to *accommodate* this preexisting, politically activated diversity.

“State-nation” is a term that we introduce to help us think about democratic states that do not—and cannot—fit well into the classic French-style “nation-state” model based on a “we-feeling” resulting from an existing or forged homogeneity. For a summary of the difference between the “nation-state” and “state-nation” as opposing ideal types that shape policies, norms, and institutions for recognizing and accommodating diversity, see Table 1 below.

As a diverse polity approximates the state-nation ideal type, we expect it to have the following four empirically verifiable patterns: First, despite multiple cultural identities among its citizens, there will be a high degree of *positive identification* with the state and pride in being citizens of that state. Second, citizens will have *multiple but complementary* political identities and loyalties. Third, there will be a high degree of *institutional trust* in the most important constitutional, legal, and administrative components of the state. Fourth, by world standards, there will be a comparatively high degree of positive support for democracy among all the diverse groups of citizens in the country, and this will include support for the specific statewide democratic institutions through which the polity is governed.

To be sure, these patterns do not simply exist right from the beginning. It all depends on crafting and is very much an outcome of deliberate policies and designs. We turn now to the question of how such “state-nation” behavior and values can be crafted and supported.

State-Nation Policies

On both theoretical and empirical grounds, we contend that there can be a nested set of policy and institutional choices which reinforce each other and help to facilitate the emergence and persistence of a state-nation. This set includes:

- 1) An asymmetrical, “holding-together” federal state, but *not* a symmetrical, “coming-together” federal state or a unitary state;
- 2) Both individual rights *and* collective recognition;
- 3) Parliamentary *instead of* presidential or semipresidential government;
- 4) Polity-wide *and* “centric-regional” parties and careers;
- 5) Politically integrated but *not* culturally assimilated populations;
- 6) Cultural nationalists in power mobilizing *against* secessionist nationalists;
- 7) A pattern of multiple *but* complementary identities.

We describe these policies as “nested” because each one tends to depend for its success on the adoption of the ones preceding it. Thus the second policy, “group recognition,” is normally nested within the first, federalism (especially asymmetrical federalism). The fourth policy, which has to do with having the kinds of parties and politicians who are

**TABLE 1—TWO CONTRASTING IDEAL TYPES:
“NATION-STATE” AND “STATE-NATION”**

	NATION-STATE	STATE-NATION
<i>Preexisting Conditions</i>		
Sense of belonging or “we-ness”	There is general attachment to one major cultural civilizational tradition. This cultural identity corresponds to existing state boundaries with minor exceptions.	There is attachment to more than one cultural civilizational tradition within the existing boundaries. However, these attachments do not preclude identification with a common state.
<i>State Policy</i>		
Cultural policies	There are homogenizing attempts to foster one core cultural identity, particularly one official language. Multiplicity of cultures is not recognized. The goal is unity in oneness.	There is recognition and support of more than one cultural identity (and more than one official language) within a frame of some common polity-wide symbols. The goal is unity in diversity.
<i>Institutions</i>		
Territorial division of power	The state is unitary or, if a federation, it is mononational and symmetrical.	There is normally a federal system, and it is often asymmetrical. The state can be unitary if aggressive nation-state policies are not pursued and de facto multilingualism is accepted. Federacies are possible.
<i>Politics</i>		
Ethnocultural or territorial cleavages	Such splits are not too salient.	Such splits are salient, but are recognized as such and democratically managed.
Autonomist or secessionist parties	Autonomist parties are normally not “coalitionable.” Secessionist parties are outlawed or marginalized in democratic electoral politics.	Autonomist parties can govern in federal units and are “coalitionable” at the center. Nonviolent secessionist parties can sometimes participate in democratic political processes.
<i>Citizen Orientation</i>		
Political identity	Citizens feel that they belong to the state and to the same cultural nation at the same time.	Many citizens have multiple but complementary identities.
Obedience and loyalty	Citizens believe in obedience to the state and loyalty to the nation.	Citizens feel obedience to the state and identification with its institutions; none of this is based on a single national identity.

ready to form coalitions, is greatly facilitated if the choice of the third policy is parliamentarism because under that form of government the executive is a “shareable good.” And the success of the seventh policy, multiple but complementary identities, relies heavily on the prior success of the previous six.

Each of the recommended choices requires some explanation. To be-

gin with, a federal as opposed to a unitary state is appropriate for a state-nation because federal structures will allow a large and territorially concentrated cultural group with serious nationalist aspirations to attain self-governance within that territory. But why do these federal arrangements need to be asymmetrical? In a symmetrical federal system, all

If almost all parties draw the vast bulk of their votes from their own respective ethno-territorial units, the sense of trust in and identification with the center will probably be low.

units have identical rights and obligations. It is possible, however, that some culturally distinct and territorially concentrated groups might have acquired prerogatives that they wish to retain or reacquire. It is also possible, for example, that some tribal groups controlling large territories (such as the Mizos in India's northeast) would agree to join the federation only if some of their unique land-use laws were respected. Bargains and compromises on these issues, which might be necessary for

peace and voluntary membership in the political community, are negotiable in an asymmetrical system, but are normally unacceptable in a symmetrical system.

Second, why does a state-nation need both individual rights and collective recognition? A polity cannot be democratic unless throughout its whole extent the rights of individuals are constitutionally inviolable and protected by the state. This necessary function of central government cannot be devolved. But certain territorially concentrated cultural groups, even nations, may need some collective recognition for rights that go beyond classic liberal rights (or what Michael Walzer calls "Liberalism 2") in order for members of those groups to be able to thrive culturally or even possibly to exercise fully their classic individual liberal rights.⁵ Walzer argues that Liberalism 2 "allows for a state committed to the survival and flourishing of . . . a (limited) set of nations, cultures and religions—so long as the basic rights of citizens who have different commitments or no such commitments are protected."⁶ There may well be concrete moments in the crafting of a democracy when individuals cannot develop and exercise their full rights until they are active members of a group that struggles and wins some collective goods common to most members of the group. These group rights might be most easily accommodated by a federal system that is asymmetrical. For example, if a large territorially concentrated group speaks a distinct language, some official recognition of the privileged right of that language to be used in government institutions, schools, and the media might be necessary to enable the members of this group to act upon their own individual rights.

If there are territorially concentrated minority religions in the polity, the identification of their practitioners with the center may well be reduced

if there is only one established religion throughout the territory. In such cases, identity with the state-nation may be encouraged if, instead, all religions are officially recognized and possibly even financially supported. The financial support of religions, majority and minority, is of course a violation of classic U.S. or French doctrines of separation of church and state, but it is not a violation of any person's individual human rights.⁷

Third, why the need for parliamentarism? In a presidential or semi-presidential system, the highest executive office is an "indivisible good"—it can only be held by one person, from one nationality, for a fixed term. A parliamentary system, by contrast, creates the possibility of a "shareable good." That is, there is a possibility that other parties, composed of other nationalities, could help to constitute the ruling coalition. If no single party has a majority, parliamentarism is coalition-requiring. Also, because the government may collapse unless it constantly bargains to retain the support of its coalition partners, parliamentarism often displays coalition-sustaining qualities as well. These "shareable" and "coalition-friendly" aspects of a parliamentary executive might be useful in a robustly multinational society.

If almost all parties draw the vast bulk of their votes from their own respective ethnoterritorial units, the sense of trust in and identification with the center will probably be low. Many analysts would call such parties "regional-secessionist." Yet if there are major polity-wide parties that regularly need allies from regional parties to help form a government at the center, and if the polity-wide parties often help their regional-party allies to form a majority in their own ethnofederal units, then the logic of incentives makes these allegedly "regional-secessionist" parties actually "centric-regional" parties, because they regularly share in rule at the center. This coalitional pattern is possible only if both the polity-wide and the regional parties are "nested" in a system that is both federal and parliamentary.

The importance of "polity-wide careers" can be grasped by considering India as an example. There, English serves as an all-India *lingua franca* that makes it possible for educated members of regional groups who do not speak the majority language (Hindi) to pursue careers in law, communications, business, and the federal civil service. Citizens whose careers are "polity-wide" rather than regional will likely feel strong incentives not to "exit" from the polity-wide networks that such careers open up for them, and upon which their careers in turn depend.⁸

Fifth, it is important that political integration be able to go forward independent of cultural integration. In a state-nation, many cultural and especially ethnonational groups will be educated and self-governing in their own language. They will thus probably never be fully culturally assimilated to the dominant culture in the polity. This is a reality of "state-nations." If the ethnofederal group sees the polity-wide state as having helped to put a "roof of rights" over its head, however, and if the "centric-regional" parties are "coalitionable" with polity-wide parties

and regularly help to form the government at the center, and if many individuals from the ethnofederal group enjoy polity-wide careers, then it is a good bet that the ethnofederal group and its members will be politically well-integrated into the state-nation.

Sixth, what do we mean by saying that cultural nationalists in power will mobilize against nationalists who embrace secession? Ernest Gellner forcefully articulated the position of many theorists of the nation-state when he famously asserted: “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent . . . Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle . . . A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.”⁹

Thus, we are constantly admonished not to advocate state-nation policies because all nationalism inevitably becomes “secessionist nationalism,” with eventual demands for independence. Yet there can be a situation in which a “cultural nationalist” movement, nested within an asymmetrically federal and parliamentary system, wins democratic political control of a federal territorial unit; educates the citizens of this territory in the language, culture, and history of their own nation; and also stands ready to join coalitions at the center. If such a cultural nationalist group in power is challenged by secessionist nationalists who use force or threaten its use to pursue independence, the ruling nationalist group faces the loss of treasured resources. Under such circumstances, the “cultural nationalists” will likely mobilize the political and security resources under their control to defeat the “secessionist nationalists.”¹⁰

Finally, what do we mean by talking about multiple but complementary identities? In the polity-wide system produced by the six nested policies and norms that we have just discussed, it is possible that citizens could strongly identify with and be loyal to *both* their culturally powerful ethnofederal unit *and* the polity-wide center. They would have these complementary identities because the center has recognized and defended many of their cultural demands and, in addition, has helped to structure and protect their full participation in the larger political life of the country. Such citizens are also likely to have strong trust in the center because they see it (or the institutions historically associated with it) as having helped to deliver some valued collective goods such as independence from a colonial power, security from threatening neighbors, or possibly even a large and growing common market. Thus the pattern of multiple but complementary identities that is likely to obtain is no accident, but an outcome earned by deliberately crafted policies.

The Case of India

India would seem to present one of the most difficult tests for our argument that multiple and complementary identities, as well as demo-

cratic state-nation loyalties, are possible even in a polity with robustly multinational dimensions and a plethora of intense linguistic and religious differences. Let us briefly document how extensive these diversities actually are.

One of the greatest points of conflict in multicultural and multinational polities, whether federal or not, is language. When India gained independence in 1947, it had in addition to its most widely spoken single language (Hindi), ten additional languages that were used by at least 13 million people each. Many had their own unique scripts.¹¹ Added to this linguistic complexity was an enormous diversity of religious beliefs and practices that alone would make the country a case of special interest to students of comparative democratization. India has large communities of almost every world religion, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. In 2009, India's Muslim minority amounted to about 161 million people, the world's third-largest Islamic population, exceeded only by those of Indonesia and Pakistan.¹² At a time when too many scholars and political activists see Islam as being in deep cultural conflict with democracy, it is worth pausing to reflect that the world's largest Islamic community with extensive democratic experience is in multicultural, multinational, federal, and consociational India.

India's longstanding democracy enhances the "scope value" of the state-nation concept by showing that the model can be applied not only to rich but also to very poor countries. Of the world's four longstanding multinational federal democracies—Belgium, Canada, and Spain are the others—only India lacks an advanced industrial economy. To put it in rough terms, in 2008 Belgium, Canada, and Spain all had purchasing-power parity (PPP) per capita Gross National Income of more than US\$30,000 per year. The comparable figure for India was a bit less than a tenth of that.¹³ Given its extraordinarily deep diversity, India could never have created a French-style democratic nation-state. But it has managed to craft a democratic state-nation, supported by all religions, all socioeconomic groups, and many states that once experienced secessionist movements. In our forthcoming book, we devote the better part of three chapters to showing how Indians imagined, negotiated, and crafted their longstanding democratic state-nation. What follows here is an abbreviated discussion of three key paths followed by India's emerging democratic communities; their long and creative political, ethical, and constitutional search for policy formulas more appropriate than the classical nation-state model for reconciling deep diversity and democracy; their choice of asymmetrical federalism to help them solve the problem of self-governance in the context of many languages and the special needs of tribal populations; and their creation of a new model of secularism as a way of accommodating India's religious heterogeneity and its great intensity of religious practice.

The building of a state-nation in India was no accident or afterthought. The state-nation model was implicit in the idea of India forged by modern Indian political thinkers, nurtured by the freedom movement, enshrined in the Indian Constitution, sustained by the first generation of postindependence leadership, and institutionalized in competitive politics. In that sense, our “state-nation” model is best seen not only as a new analytic ideal type, but also as a theoretical defense of what political thinkers and practitioners in India knew for more than a century. Here we can only illustrate this with reference to an early episode in India’s long and creative search for institutional designs more appropriate than the classical nation-state model for reconciling deep diversity with democracy.

By the mid-1920s, more than two decades before independence, the Indian National Congress (INC) had already begun to look in detail at the question of which political institutions and practices would best serve a self-governing India. The INC rejected the British-drafted Simon Commission Report, and appointed its own committee under the leadership of Motilal Nehru, the father of Jawaharlal Nehru, to outline a constitution for a free India. The Nehru Report, approved by the All Parties Conference in Lucknow in 1928, foreshadowed many provisions of the Indian Constitution of 1950. The definition of citizenship in the Nehru Report was very state-nation-friendly in that it was absolutely inclusive and territorial: “The word ‘citizen,’ wherever it occurs in this constitution, means every person who was born, or whose father was either born or naturalized, within the territorial limits of the commonwealth” (Article 3). The Nehru Report also laid down that independent India would have parliamentary government (Article 5) and a bicameral, federal system (Articles 8 and 9). All this was incorporated into the Indian Constitution. As we argued above, a parliamentary federal system is the most supportive combination for the emergence of “centric-regional” parties that may be a useful alternative to “exit” for parties with different linguistic majorities.

The radical “state-nation” reconfiguration of India that allowed each large linguistic community to have a state of its own and to govern itself in its local majority language did not fully occur until 1957; however, it was strongly supported at the 1921 INC meeting in Madras and endorsed in the Nehru Report, which held that “the redistribution of provinces should take place on a linguistic basis on the demand of the majority of the population of the area concerned” (Article 86). This formula allowed independent India to respond democratically to the presence within its borders of numerous territorially based linguistic majorities. (At present, 22 languages enjoy “official” constitutional status.) This is a classic feature of the state-nation style of “holding-together” federalism, and by that token unthinkable in a U.S.-style “coming-together” federation. Also supportive of a relatively strong “holding-together”

federalism (and again, quite unlike U.S. practice) was the Nehru Committee provision (Article 49) that gave the Supreme Court of the Union “original jurisdiction” in almost all matters. The choice of asymmetrical federalism also allowed for the creation of some small states with tribal majorities, like Mizoram, to preserve tribal cultures by means of special, constitutionally embedded prerogatives that allowed only Mizos to vote in local elections or to buy land. These prerogatives were crucial to the 1986 Mizo Accord that not only helped to end a secessionist war but contributed as well to the building of the “multiple and complementary” identities that our surveys reveal.

On the all-important question of religion, the Nehru Report was also supportive of state-nation policies. Under the section on “Fundamental Rights,” it clearly ruled out an established religion and supported a religiously impartial state, but unlike the U.S. Constitution, it also implied the admissibility of state aid for religious educational establishments (Article 4). The Indian Constitution duly reflected this spirit. The relationship between religion and the state that the Indian Constituent Assembly crafted later was a highly original creation with strong affinities to our state-nation model. All religious communities were recognized and respected by the state. All religious communities, for example, could run schools, organizations, and charities eligible for state financial support. The norms and practices of this model are now so pervasive that even when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party of Hindu nationalism, headed the government coalition, it did not dare break with the tradition of paying extensive state subsidies to help Muslim citizens make the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca. Every single nation-state in Western Europe has some paid compulsory public holidays for the majority Christian religion (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Germany alone have 39) but none of them has a single compulsory public holiday for a non-Christian minority religion. India has five such holidays for the majority Hindu religion, but ten for minority religions, including five for Islam.¹⁴

Thus, when the Constituent Assembly formally set about its tasks in 1946, there was little doubt that it would adopt provisions for the protection of linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity. The institutional structures and norms that the Constituent Assembly agreed upon facilitated a broad set of policies conducive to the crafting of a robust state-nation on the Indian subcontinent.

India’s Experience: Examining the Evidence

Was the “idea of India” described above confined merely to the high traditions of political theory and legal constitutional texts? Or did this idea find resonance among ordinary Indian citizens across different religions, regions, communities, and classes? Fortunately, we can begin

to answer this question about ordinary citizens' attitudes because India has been included in all four rounds of the World Values Survey. In addition, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in Delhi regularly carries out some of the world's largest social-scientific surveys of political opinions and attitudes. The latest such survey, the National Election Study of 2009, had a nationwide sample of 36,169 people.¹⁵

In our book, we present in detail and in comparative perspective the Indian evidence on diversity and democracy as seen in the mirror of public opinion. In particular, we look at the four empirical attributes mentioned above that we expect from a successful state-nation: the degree of *positive identification* with the state and pride in being its citizens; the existence of *multiple but complementary* political identities and loyalties; the degree of *institutional trust* in the most important constitutional, legal, and administrative components of the state; and the degree of positive *support for democracy and for polity-wide democratic institutions* among all the diverse groups of citizens in the country.

We do not shy away from many of the continuing problems of India's development that can and must be better addressed: Nearly half of India's women are illiterate, and half its children are underweight; a quarter or more of the population lives below the official "poverty line," with this proportion being higher among Muslims. We analyze human-rights violations and the still unresolved secessionist conflicts in Kashmir and Nagaland. We discuss the lethal Hindu-nationalist pogrom that swept the state of Gujarat in 2002, and we consider the Naxalite movement. Notwithstanding these failures on the developmental and human-rights fronts, the evidence regarding the four measures of state-nation success is highly impressive indeed. A large majority of citizens, despite their great linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity, positively identify with and trust the Indian central state while supporting India's democracy.

For example, let us compare the level of national pride in India with the attitudes of the citizens of the other ten longstanding federal democracies (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States). The World Values Survey routinely asks citizens whether they feel "great," "some," "little," or "no" pride in being a member of their country. In 2002, 67 percent of Indians expressed "great pride," a figure exceeded only in the United States (71 percent) and Australia (70 percent). Another important state-nation indicator is whether citizens, despite a possible strong sense of identification with an ethnic, linguistic, or cultural minority unit of the federation, nonetheless still trust the central government. Only Switzerland recorded a higher level of trust in the central government (50 percent) than did India (48 percent). It is crucial in a multinational, multilingual, multicultural polity that citizens trust the overall legal system; the three countries in our set of eleven whose citizens were most prone

to express trust in the legal system were India (67 percent), Switzerland (65 percent), and Austria (58 percent).¹⁶

A Few Questions

A classic and frequently used battery of questions concerning democracy asks respondents which of the following three statements is closest to their own opinion: 1) "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government"; 2) "Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic one"; or 3) "For people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or a nondemocratic regime." If a respondent opts for the second or third statement, it is coded as an explicitly authoritarianism-accepting response. The percentage of respondents who gave such a response in India (12) is far lower than the comparable figure from five other countries that feature prominently in the democratization literature: Brazil (47), Chile (46), South Korea (38), Uruguay (18), and Spain (17).¹⁷ Using the National Election Study of 2004, which had more than three-thousand Muslim respondents, we were able to evaluate how similar or dissimilar Muslims were from Hindus in this respect. The shares of Indian Muslims and Hindus who chose as their response "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government" were virtually the same at 87 and 88 percent, respectively.¹⁸

Some political observers fear that growing religiosity among Hindus and Muslims alike will create new challenges for democracy in India. We tested this by creating a low-medium-high index of "the intensity of religious practice" that we could place alongside an index measuring "support for democracy." We found that for Hindus and Muslims alike, the greater the reported intensity of religious practice, the greater the professed support for democracy.¹⁹ This evidence not only robustly disconfirms the proposition that religious intensity threatens Indian democracy, but also suggests that the Indian state-nation is currently holding its own even in the arena of the greatest contestation of our times, religion.

Let us now shift from surveys and attitudes to policies and outcomes. Let us specifically contrast how India, following state-nation policies, politically integrated its Tamil population in the south, and how nearby Sri Lanka, which pursued nation-state policies toward the Tamil population in its own northeast, barely avoided state disintegration and has just terminated by force a civil war in which approximately a hundred-thousand people were killed.

Sri Lanka provides a counterfactual example that we analyze at length in our book. The main point can be summarized here. India arguably started in a more difficult position in this nearly "matched pair" because the Indian Tamils were involved with the Dravidian movement, which briefly flirted with the idea of secession from India. Indeed, there had

been a long series of conflicts between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in what is now the state of Tamil Nadu at India's southern tip. We can thus say that there was a robust multinational dimension to politics in Tamil Nadu, although many Tamils felt great attachment to the polity-wide independence movement led by the INC.²⁰

In comparative terms, Sri Lanka actually started in an easier position vis-à-vis its Tamil minority. For a century before independence in 1948, there had been no politically significant riots between Sinhalese, who were largely Buddhists, and the Tamils, who were primarily Hindu. In fact, the first president of the Ceylon Congress Party was a Tamil. Tamils had done well in English-language civil-service exams in Ceylon, and though they were interested in greater power-sharing, it is still true to say that at independence there had been no Tamil demands for devolution or federalism, much less independence. Ceylon also had a much higher per capita income than India, and could have made modest side payments to some Sinhalese groups, especially the Buddhists, who had been marginalized during the period of British colonial rule.

Yet 35 years after independence, the potential issue of Tamil separatism in India had become a nonissue, while the Sri-Lankan nonissue had become a bloody civil war for secession that raged for a quarter of a century. What explains such sharply different outcomes?

Much of the explanation, we believe, is related to the radically differential application of the nested policies that we discussed earlier. Table 2 highlights the state-integrating state-nation policies followed by India and the state-disintegrating nation-state policies followed by Sri Lanka.

Extending the Argument

Let us conclude by touching upon three questions that we have not yet addressed. First, can some state-nation policies be of use in unitary states that are not nation-states? We believe that this is quite possible, for we can imagine geopolitical and domestic contexts where *neither* full state-nation policies *nor* full nation-state policies offer plausible ways to manage the multinational dimensions of a polity. Why?

There may be some geopolitical contexts, especially in a country bordering a powerful state that has some irredentist tendencies toward said country, in which asymmetrical federalism (or indeed any type of federalism) would present dangers for the nurturing of a new democratic political community via this classic state-nation policy. The safest solution might be a unitary state. At the same time, if the domestic context includes politically significant populations deeply divided over cultural policies (for example, large territorially concentrated parts of the state where most of the populace hews to a distinct language and culture), it would be democratically dangerous and politically implausible to try to

TABLE 2—CONTRASTING STRATEGIES OF INDIA AND SRI LANKA TOWARD THEIR RESPECTIVE TAMIL MINORITIES

Policy	India	Sri Lanka
<p>1. An Asymmetrically Federal, but <i>not</i> a Unitary or Symmetrically Federal State</p>	<p>The constituent assembly creates an asymmetrical federal system that enables state boundaries to be redrawn and eventually allows regional cultural majorities to rule these states in their own languages. A Tamil-speaking state called Tamil Nadu is carved out of Madras State.</p>	<p>No constituent assembly is held, but the parliament approves a constitution that declares Sri Lanka a unitary state. After 1956, the Sinhalese-Buddhist majority increasingly advances majoritarian state policies. No significant devolutionary policies are ever implemented.</p>
<p>2. Individual Rights and Collective Recognition</p>	<p>Language: In 1965, after intense mobilizations and political negotiations, plans for implementing Hindi as the official language of the Indian Union are abandoned. Education becomes the domain of a “three-language” formula. Tamil becomes the official language of Tamil Nadu, and the state is not obliged to use Hindi in its communications with the Union. Religion: All major religions are constitutionally recognized, and minority institutions are eligible for state funds.</p>	<p>Language: In 1956, Sinhalese is made the only official language and English and Tamil are no longer accepted. Religion: Article 9 of the 1978 Constitution assigns Buddhism “the foremost place” among religions. State subsidies favor Buddhists.</p>
<p>3. Parliamentary <i>instead</i> of Semipresidential or Presidential Systems</p>	<p>Parliamentarism makes the executive a “shareable good,” which allows regional, even potentially secessionist, parties to help form ruling coalitions at the center. Since the late 1970s, the ruling coalition at the center has included one of the Dravidian parties from Tamil Nadu.</p>	<p>In 1978, Sri Lanka creates a semipresidential system in which the president has more powers than in France. From then until now, no northern-based Tamil party joins any coalition at the center.</p>
<p>4. Polity-Wide and “Centric-Regional” Parties (and Careers)</p>	<p>Tamil-centric regional parties, due to their great coalitional ability with polity-wide parties, enjoy substantial presence in the Indian parliament and a disproportionate share of powerful ministries. After the mid-1970s, no significant “regional-separatist” parties exist, and all Tamil parties become “centric regional.”</p>	<p>Tamils, especially after 1956, lose virtually all their coalitional ability in polity-wide politics and government formation. No elected Tamil from the north becomes a federal minister after 1957. After the mid-1970s, no major “centric-regional” Tamil parties exist, and all subsequent major Tamil parties are “regional separatist.”</p>
<p>5. Politically Integrated but <i>not</i> Culturally Assimilated Minorities</p>	<p>Tamils integrate politically into the Indian polity but maintain strong pride in Tamil culture. Different governments in Tamil Nadu aggressively take up the promotion of Tamil language and culture, including in state schools and educational curricula.</p>	<p>In 1948, “Indian Tamils” are disenfranchised. In 1983, all members of pro-autonomist Tamil parties must leave parliament. By the mid-1980s, Sri Lanka is “politically multinational” with Tamil guerrilla leaders beyond hope of integration.</p>
<p>6. Cultural Nationalists vs. Territorial Nationalists</p>	<p>Cultural nationalists achieve many of their goals. Territorial nationalists, advocating separatist goals, virtually disappear.</p>	<p>By the late 1970s, violent nationalist guerrillas with explicitly separatist goals become the leaders of the Tamil community in the northeast.</p>
<p>7. Earned Pattern of Complementary and Multiple Identities</p>	<p>Strong Tamil identities remain, but polity-wide Indian identity grows. Trust in the central government is higher in the state of Tamil Nadu than it is in the rest of the country.</p>	<p>Marginalized in electoral politics, and facing growing state discrimination and repression, Tamils in the northeast opt for conflict. The ensuing civil war kills 100,000 (most of them Tamils) before ending with the Tamils’ defeat in 2009.</p>

impose such classic nation-state policies as a single language. Trouble, even violence, would be the likely result.

If such a combination of geopolitical and domestic factors exists, classic state-nation federal policies will not work. Yet some elements of state-nation policies nonetheless seem a must. But is it possible to follow state-nation policies in a unitary state? We believe that some such policies can be employed. In the hypothetical example above, a key state-nation policy that might be appropriate would be to allow the different cultural or linguistic zones to use their own respective languages at the start of the democratization process.

In our book we analyze the case of Ukraine, which upon its independence from the USSR in 1991 found itself a multinational society, but not a robustly multinational polity. If it had pursued aggressive nation-state policies, such as legally permitting only the Ukrainian language to be used in schools or communications with public officials, Russophones in eastern Ukraine who self-identified as Russians—and especially some of their political leaders—would most likely have become secessionists (much as the Tamils had in Sri Lanka). Some Russians in the east and Crimea could well have requested, and received, Russian military backing for their breakaway efforts.

A second question asks if a democratic, unitary nation-state can use constitutionally embedded federal guarantees in order to respond to the presence of a territorially concentrated minority that has radical cultural differences with the majority population. We propose a revised theory of *federacy* to tackle this situation. Our new ideal-type definition of a federacy holds it to be a political-administrative unit in an independent unitary state with exclusive power (including some legislative power) in certain areas that is constitutionally or quasi-constitutionally embedded and cannot be changed unilaterally, but whose inhabitants have full citizenship rights in the otherwise unitary state.

In the penultimate chapter of our forthcoming book, we examine how this formula has actually been applied to the democratic management of robustly multinational problems by the otherwise unitary nation-states of Finland (in the case of the Åland Islands) and Denmark (in the cases of both Greenland and the Faroe Islands). We also show that the “scope value” of these kinds of arrangements has extended to the postwar reconstruction of Italy with regard to the once-separatist South Tyrol region (with an 86 percent German-speaking population), as well as to the revolutionary context of 1975 Portugal and its efforts to deal with an emerging secessionist movement in the Azores. The federacy formula also proved useful in negotiating the August 2005 Helsinki Agreement that brought a relatively consensual, peaceful, and inclusionary end to the civil war in Aceh in Indonesia. We also argue that if China ever were to become democratic, a federacy formula could conceivably be of use with regard to Tibet, Hong Kong, and possibly even Taiwan.

Finally, why have we had so little to say about the still-influential federal model presented by the United States? The founders of the United States did not see that country as a multinational polity, and crafted a constitution for what they saw as an emerging nation-state. Indeed, they constitutionally embedded features that make the U.S. model particularly ill-suited to the flexible policy management of robustly multinational societies. Symmetrical U.S.-style federalism would be of no help in managing small, territorially concentrated religious or linguistic minorities such as those found in the Indian state of Mizoram. And U.S.-style presidentialism lacks the coalition-facilitating qualities of parliamentarism, which have often been crucial, as in Tamil Nadu, in helping to promote the evolution of regional-separatist parties into “centric-regional” parties that can join polity-wide coalitions.

Symmetrical federalism and presidentialism have been enormously successful in maintaining stable democratic rule in the United States, a country that, although composed of immigrants from many lands, is not robustly multinational: For all its diversity, the United States does not contain territorially based, politically significant groups mobilizing nationalist demands for independence. But many of the world’s democracies are unavoidably confronted with the task of governing robustly multinational societies, and these countries have much more to learn from the experience of India than from that of the United States.

NOTES

1. See the classic account of these policies in Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976). Most nineteenth-century progressives and democrats, particularly those associated with the French Revolution, were profoundly opposed to federalism.

2. See the chapter titled “Stateness, Nationalism, and Democratization,” in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 34, as well as Figure 2.1.

3. We accept Robert A. Dahl’s definition of federalism as “a system in which some matters are exclusively *within* the competence of certain local units—cantons, states, provinces—and are constitutionally *beyond* the scope of the authority of the national government; and where certain other matters are constitutionally outside the scope of the authority of the smaller units.” Robert A. Dahl, “Federalism and the Democratic Process,” in *Democracy, Liberty, and Equality* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986), 114.

4. For more details on “asymmetrical” and “holding-together” federalism, see Alfred Stepan, “Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model,” *Journal of Democracy* 10 (October 1999): 19–34.

5. See Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

6. The quote from Michael Walzer is from Gutmann, *Multiculturalism*, 99.

7. See Alfred Stepan, "The World's Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the 'Twin Tolerations'" in his *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 213–54.

8. However, the systematic effort by an ethnocultural group to monopolize access to careers, even in their own ethnofederal unit, runs counter to the nurturing and preservation of a state-nation.

9. All quotes are from the influential opening paragraphs of Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1. Emphasis in the original.

10. At the same time, a convergence between cultural and secessionist nationalists on some issues cannot be ruled out if the secessionists come into conflict with the central state over the use of force.

11. For an analytic discussion of these figures, see Jyotirindra Das Gupta, *Language Conflict and National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 31–68.

12. Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population," 7 October 2009, 14. Available at <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=450>.

13. See the World Bank's World Development Indicators Database.

14. For the Indian model in comparative perspective and the question of paid holidays, see Alfred Stepan, "Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes," in Craig Calhoun and Mark Juergensmeyer, eds., *Rethinking Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

15. Survey archives at the CSDS go back to 1965. Yogendra Yadav, one of the authors, has been involved with directing, designing, and analyzing these surveys, including the National Election Study series. Since 2003, the other two authors have worked with the CSDS team to design some questions for the surveys. For an overview of the CSDS tradition of survey research, see Lokniti Team, "National Election Study 2004: An Introduction," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 December 2004, 5373–82.

16. All the data for these 11 longstanding federal democracies come from various rounds of the World Values Survey coordinated by Ronald Inglehart and his colleagues at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan.

17. Data on Latin America come from the 2008 Latinobarómetro, on Spain from the 1992 Eurobarometer, on Korea from the 2004 Korea Democracy Barometer, and on India from the previously cited 2004 National Election Study.

18. According to a Pearson's chi-square test, the findings for all religious communities are statistically significant (p -value $< .001$). Thus, the probability of this occurring by chance is less than one in a thousand.

19. Full methodological details will appear in the forthcoming book from which the present essay is adapted. Our regression indicates that a one-unit increase in the index of religiosity (controlling for other factors) predicts approximately a 3.5 percent increase in the probability of support for democracy.

20. For excellent discussions of some secessionist tendencies in what is now Tamil Nadu, see Narendra Subramanian, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).