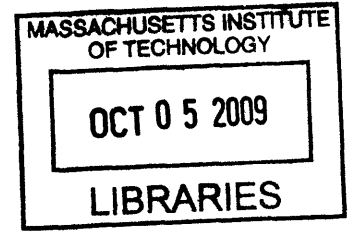Rule of Law and Party Systems:
A Study of Regional Political Parties in India

by

Adam W. Ziegfeld
A.B., Government, Dartmouth College (2002)

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science at the
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Abstract

Where do party systems come from? The first part of this dissertation argues that party system formation depends on the rule of law, which is defined as the extent to which the state uniformly implements and enforces its laws and policies. When the rule of law is weak, voters form attachments primarily over politicians, and voters cast their ballots for whichever party their preferred politician chooses to establish or join. Consequently, politicians ultimately shape party system formation, since their decisions about party affiliation determine whether a political party succeeds or fails. By contrast, when the rule of law is strong, voters form attachments directly over political parties; voters therefore determine which parties constitute the party system.

The second part of the dissertation applies the argument about party system formation under weak rule of law to the case of regional political parties in India. This project explains the success of regional parties in a weak rule of law democracy such as India by focusing on why so many politicians choose to establish and join regional parties. The two factors that explain the extraordinary success of Indian regional parties are 1) the geographic concentration of caste groups (and to a lesser extent, other types of politically salient groups) and 2) frequent coalition government at the national level. The geographic concentration of caste groups raises the costs associated with establishing a national party by forcing politicians from various caste groups to coordinate with one another. Meanwhile, frequent coalition government increases the benefits associated with membership in a regional party by allowing regional parties to participate in national-level government. Empirically, this dissertation is based on 17 months of field research and over 550 interviews with state- and local-level politicians across three Indian states: Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.

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Acknowledgments

Chapter 1. Rule of Law and Party Systems

Political parties are fixtures in nearly every representative democracy. But, party systems— understood as the number and type of party—often vary considerably from place to place. Some party systems have many parties; others have few. Some have left-wing parties or catch-all parties or personalistic parties, while others do not. A party system's shape profoundly influences politics. Party systems can determine the stability and duration of cabinets (Taylor and Herman 1971; Powell 1981), government's accountability to its citizens (Powell 2000), important public policy outcomes (Huber and Stephens 2001; Kohli 1987; Chhibber and Nooruddin 2004; Meyersson 2009), and the substantive choices available to citizens when they exercise the franchise (Yadav 2004). How do polities get the party systems that they do? What explains variation in party systems from one country, state, or city to another? Addressing these questions is this dissertation's central concern. To do so, I focus on a specific type of party (regional parties) in a single country (India), asking: *Why do regional political parties figure so prominently in the Indian party system?* In answering this question, this study contributes more generally to how political science understands party systems, particularly in developing countries.

This dissertation has two complementary goals: to contribute to party systems theory and to explain important developments in Indian politics. First, from the point of view of political science theory, I provide a new framework for thinking about the formation of party systems in contexts where the rule of law is weak. This research suggests an alternative to traditional party systems theory, which emphasizes how voters' preferences, which are shaped by social cleavages and electoral institutions, shape party systems. In contrast, I argue that in weak rule of law democracies elite decision-making shapes party systems. Focusing on a weak rule of law democracy such as India illustrates precisely why existing theory is inadequate. Conventional arguments about party system formation cannot account for the prominence of regional political parties in the Indian party system. The success of regional parties in India only makes sense when treating the party system as an outcome of politicians' decisions rather than as a function of the electorate's ideological predilections.

Second, from the perspective of contemporary Indian politics, this dissertation explains one of the most important political trends in the last twenty years—the rise of regional parties. Today, regional parties win nearly half of all votes cast in India, far more than in other ethnically diverse federations such as the United States, South Africa, Malaysia, or Brazil. But, existing theories in political science are ill equipped to account for the Indian experience. A new approach is needed. Taking into account the nature of party system formation under conditions of weak rule of law yields new and more satisfying claims about when and why regional parties achieve electoral success in India.

In the pages that follow, I advance three claims. The first two pertain to a general theory about how the rule of law influences party system formation. These two claims contend that:
  1. Weak rule of law produces a highly candidate-centered brand of electoral politics, while strong rule of law promotes far more party-centered politics; and

2. When the rule of law is weak and politics is therefore candidate-centered, then elite-level behavior (i.e., the behavior of politicians) shapes party systems far more than mass-level preferences.

Focusing on politicians rather than voters as the shapers of party systems represents a major departure from the existing literature.

Together, these two claims provide a framework for understanding party systems in weak rule of law democracies. Applying this framework to the phenomenon of regional parties in India yields the third claim, which is that:

3. Regional parties figure prominently in the Indian party system because of a) the geographic concentration of caste (and to a lesser extent other types of groups) and b) frequent national-level coalition governments.

Taken as a whole, these three claims can be viewed in two very different ways. The first is to read these claims as part of a theoretical argument about party systems that also happens to have a useful application to contemporary Indian politics. The second way is to read this dissertation as an argument about Indian politics that has implications for party systems that extend far beyond India. Both readings reflect the dissertation's two over-arching goals, which wed political science theory to the study of contemporary Indian politics.

I begin this chapter by discussing how political science has traditionally approached the study of party systems (Section 1) and regional parties (Section 2). Next, I describe the dissertation's three claims in greater detail (Section 3). I then turn to the study's research design and close the chapter with a roadmap, outlining the content of subsequent chapters (Section 4).

1. Political science and the study of party systems

Political science has devoted considerable attention to understanding where party systems come from and what factors shape them. Much of the literature has focused on either the number of parties in a party system (Duverger 1954; Rae 1967; Riker 1976; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Amorim Neto and Cox 1997) or the success of different types of parties, usually defined in terms of ideology or message (Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Kitschelt 1989; Kalyvas 1996; Bartolini 2002; Grzymala-Busse 2002; Golder 2003; Chandra 2004; Van Cott 2005; Art 2006), though sometimes not (Scheiner 2006; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007; Meguid 2008).

The vast majority of the literature on party system formation rests on the theoretical foundations laid by Downs (1957) and Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Though very different in their approaches to understanding politics, both works presume that voters' political interests and beliefs shape party systems. This commonsensical notion continues to inform research on party systems decades later (Stoll 2004). So long as it is true that voters' preferences represent an integral part of party system formation, then the existing literature provides valuable insights into the formation and origins of party systems. However, as soon as this assumption breaks down, then political science is left with very few theoretical tools for understanding what factors shape party systems and party formation.

Downs (1957) is perhaps the single most important piece of research in the study of parties and elections. His spatial model of voting underpins decades of research on electoral politics.

Downs' model arrays voters on a policy space according to their policy preferences, or ideal points. Voters then cast their votes for the party whose policy positions are located closest to theirs on the policy space. For Downs, a given distribution of preferences can only support a certain number of parties (123). The ideological tenor of parties in the party system also depends on the distribution of voters along a policy, since parties place themselves in locations where they can capture voters. Not surprisingly, Downs concludes that "the basic determinant of how a nation's political life develops is the distribution of voters along the political scale" (139).

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) approach the problem of party systems from a different point of view, but they similarly treat parties as a response to mass preferences. Lipset and Rokkan famously explain party systems in Western Europe as the results of the social cleavages engendered by critical junctures in history (such as the Reformation or the Industrial Revolution) that shaped citizens' interests and political preferences. These social cleavages generated groups in opposition to one another from which political parties subsequently arose. Unlike Downs, who treats political preferences as largely exogenous to politics,[1] Lipset and Rokkan explain where preferences come from. However, like Downs, they pay little attention to how issues and preferences are politicized and brought into the sphere of party politics. Subsequent research has taken up precisely this task. Efforts to understand how and when preferences translate into parties have fallen mainly into two camps, one that examines the politicization of voters' preferences and the other that addresses how institutions shape the expression of preferences.

The first strain of research recognizes that interests and identities are constructed and that preferences must be activated before they can become the basis for political behavior. For instance, Przeworski and Sprague (1986) note in their study of socialist and social democratic parties that "the division of society into classes does not necessarily result in the organization of politics in terms of class" (9), while Kalyvas (1996) argues that "[t]he transition from a Catholic *social* identity to a Catholic *political* identity" (10) was hardly inevitable. In other words, the facts of social class and religious belief must somehow become politically salient before they can serve as the bases for voting behavior and party formation. Frequently, elites lead the processes that politicize citizens' interests, identities, and political preferences and convert these preferences into voting issues and the bases of party attachments. These processes can involve turning previously non-political mass organizations (such as churches) into the bases for political parties (Kalyvas 1996), raising the salience of certain identities (Wendt 2009) and issues (Meguid 2008), or giving a credible political voice to an ideological position that was previously ignored (Art in progress).

The second major strain of research explains how formal institutions influence the expression of preferences. Although voters in different societies may have similar preferences, different institutional settings may induce them to express their preferences in different ways. Electoral rules have traditionally been the focal point of this literature. Research in this vein shows how voters vote strategically, taking into account how electoral systems convert votes into seats (Cox 1997). The institutional literature speaks mainly to the number of parties in a party system and has less to say about which kinds of parties populate a party system. However, newer research

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[1] Downs admits that existing parties shape mass preferences and that the distribution of preferences can change. However, the emphasis in his model is not on how a society arrives at a particular distribution of policy preferences, but rather on what happens given a particular distribution of voters.

has begun taking into account institutions other than electoral rules, paying special attention to the centralization of power in the national government (Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Brancati 2008; Hicken 2009).

An interesting and widely overlooked tension emerges over the matter of preferences when juxtaposing research on party systems with research on clientelism and patronage. As discussed above, in the literature on party systems mass preferences and social cleavages are the raw materials that underlie party systems. Even if elites can politicize interests and identities, they are ultimately constrained by what voters are willing to endorse or accept. And although formal institutions influence how voters express their preferences at the polls, institutions play only a mediating role. The preferences inputted into these institutions are still important. However, a large and growing body of work on clientelism shows how politicians can either buy votes (Magaloni 2006) or induce voters to vote against their preferred party (Stokes 2005). More generally, this literature suggests that voters do not cast their ballots based on their preferences over public policy as is traditionally assumed in research following in the Downsian tradition (Chandra 2004; Posner 2005; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007).

Curiously, research on party systems and research on clientelism have developed almost entirely independently of one another. Scholars who produce excellent studies on patronage and clientelism have tended to address questions other than party system formation. For instance, Magaloni (2006) discusses how a hegemonic party like Mexico's Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) politicized access to state goods and services in order to stay in power. Stokes (2005) determines which kinds of voters are most likely to succumb to the attempts of Argentina's Partido Justicialista (the Peronist party) to buy their votes. Patronage politics is also an important background condition in Chandra's (2004) argument about when ethnic parties succeed in India and in Posner's (2004) book about the shifting dimensions of ethnic politics in Zambia. Focused on other important questions, none of this work concerns itself with party system formation; party systems are usually taken as exogenous.

Meanwhile, party systems theorists have largely ignored clientelism and failed to incorporate it into considerations of party system formation. Several important contributions on Latin America (Seawright 2006; Leiras 2007), Africa (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005; Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2007, Riedl 2008), and Asia (Chhibber 1999; Hicken 2009) notwithstanding, much of the work on party systems—classic and more recent alike—focuses on Europe (Kirchheimer 1966; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Sartori 1976; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Lijphart 1994; Caramani 2004; Tavits 2005). If voters do not vote on the basis of policy, then on what basis do parties form, and how do party systems emerge? Political science has little to say on this subject.

A small amount of recent work has advanced arguments about party system formation in which elites play a far more prominent role than voters (Mainwaring 1999; Brancati 2008, Hicken 2009). Brancati argues that political decentralization provides politicians with incentives to form regional parties, while Hicken shows that concentration of authority within the national government—what he calls horizontal centralization—induces politicians to form national parties. Although both authors focus on the incentives of elites, neither Brancati nor Hicken choose to make more general cases for why party systems theory should focus on elites rather than voters. Mainwaring makes just such a theoretical point, suggesting that elites play a much

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more prominent role in poorly institutionalized party systems in "third wave democracies." However, Mainwaring's explanation for Brazil's weakly institutionalized party system is highly specific to Brazil. Like Mainwaring, this study argues that there is good reason to think that politicians constitute the driving force behind party system formation in certain democracies. But, it goes beyond Mainwaring's claims inasmuch as this dissertation explains why voters have a more direct influence on party system formation in some countries and why politicians shape party system formation in other countries.

2. Regional parties in India

Aside from contributing to a general understanding of party systems, this dissertation's other principal aim is to explain a specific empirical phenomenon. Over the last ten to fifteen years, regional parties—parties enjoying success in a limited portion of the country—have become extraordinarily prominent in the Indian party system. Though one motivation for investigating the rise of regional parties is its substantive importance for the world's largest democracy, another motivation is theoretical. One of the overarching questions with which I began this chapter was: What explains variation in party systems? Often, political scientists ask questions about party system variation at the level of the country, but party system variation occurs not only between countries, but within them as well. Regional parties are the main source of this variation. If all parties in a party system were perfectly national, then a country's party system would look the same everywhere. From a theoretical perspective, therefore, regional parties are important for understanding within-country variation in party system. Perhaps equally important, their practical impact on Indian politics is hard to understate.

Since independence, regional political parties in India have won at least 20% of the vote in every national election. More recently, that percentage has risen dramatically; in each of the last four national elections (1998-2009) regional parties have won more than 40% of the vote. They have also participated in the last six national governments (1996-present). At the state level, regional parties currently govern, either alone or in coalition, more than half of India's states. In spite of their prominence in the Indian party system, however, regional parties have received relatively little systematic attention within the study of Indian politics. Though the increasing regionalization of the party system has been noted (Chhibber and Nooruddin 1999; Sridharan 2002; Yadav and Palshikar 2003), most studies of regional parties have treated specific parties or states (Franda 1971; Katzenstein 1979; Pandian 1992; Subramanian 1999) rather than the phenomenon as a whole. Instead, scholars have devoted more of their energy to the study of the once-dominant Indian National Congress and its subsequent decline (Brass 1965; Weiner 1967; Kochanek 1969; Kohli 1990; Chandra 2000), as well as to the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (Graham 1990; Jaffrelot 1995; Hansen 1999; Chhibber 1999).

The success of Indian regional parties is not only neglected within the study of Indian politics, but it is also puzzling in the context of comparative politics. First, the nature of regional parties in India is unusual. The regional parties that receive the most scholarly attention—those in Spain, Belgium, United Kingdom, Italy, Canada—almost uniformly demand greater decentralization or autonomy as a way to redress the perceived wrongs visited upon their region by the central government (de Winter and Türsan 1998; van Houten 2000; Keating 2001; de Winter; Gómez-Reino and Lynch 2006). While many Indian regional parties also adopt similar demands and

rhetoric, many do not. Indian regional parties are an eclectic mix of parties whose members can trace their origins to a variety of sources: national parties, religious authorities, caste associations, movie star fan clubs, and underground communist movements. On a related note, the second puzzling feature about regional parties is the geography of regional party success in India. Regional grievances, whether of an ethnic or economic nature, are thought to fuel regional parties (Hechter 1975; Levi and Hechter 1985; Fearon and van Houten 2002; Brancati 2006). But, ethnic distinctiveness and regional wealth (or poverty) do not correlate with the places where regional parties are strongest. States in the ethnic core of India, the Hindi heartland, as well as on the ethnic periphery, exhibit tremendous variation in the success of regional parties. And, for every poor state in which regional parties are strong, there is an affluent one in which they perform just as well.

Third, the trajectory of regional party success in India is unusual. The regionalization of Indian politics over the course of the last decade and a half runs counter to the historical trend towards the nationalization of party systems (Caramani 2004).[2] Furthermore, the recent growth of regional parties cannot be traced to institutional change. The political institutions that are most often linked to regionalized party systems, federalism and decentralization (Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Brancati 2008), have remained nearly constant over time. Fourth and finally, the magnitude of regional party success is hard to explain. With the exception of a handful of countries that have no national parties to speak of—Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, St. Kitts and Nevis—India's party system is just about the most regionalized in the world.[3] It is far from obvious that the environment in India is so propitious for regional parties that they should so far out-perform regional parties in other countries. On the one hand, India's size and ethnic diversity would seem to augur well for the success of regional parties. But, on the other hand, India is a relatively centralized federation (Rao and Singh 2005), which confounds important theories that link decentralization to the regionalization of the party system.

In the end, the puzzle that India's party system poses for existing theory might not prove as puzzling as it first seems. Much of the existing theory in the literature assumes that regional parties exploit the regional grievances or region-specific interests of the electorate. Or, it assumes that institutions matter because they shape how voters calculate whether they wish to vote for a regional party or a national party. But, suppose for a moment that the link between voters and parties is not based on parties' representation of voters' policy views. Suppose that the parties in a party system do not necessarily reflect the interests of different social groups or the politicization of certain issues. Even suppose that voters are nearly indifferent to the type of party for which they vote. If these things are true, then why should existing theories about party systems provide leverage on the question of regional parties in India? They answer is that they should not. Instead, a new way of thinking about party systems would be required.

3. Argument

At its simplest, this dissertation argues that under certain conditions, namely weak rule of law, parties and their policy positions matter far less to voters than do the identities of individual

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[2] In the United States, where scholars have debated the extent of the nationalization of the electorate, see Claggett, Flanigan, and Zingale 1984; Kawato 1987; Vertz, Frendreis, and Gibson 1987.

[3] See Chapter 4 for more on the strength of Indian regional parties in comparative perspective.

politicians. In such cases, a party system's shape depends less on mass preferences than it does on the choices that politicians make about what types of parties they wish to found or join. The implication for the study of regional parties is that regional parties need not be evidence of the politicization of regional issues or grievances; they may simply reflect elites' career decisions. More concretely, I develop three principal claims throughout the dissertation:

1. Weak rule of law produces a highly candidate-centered brand of electoral politics, while strong rule of law promotes far more party-centered politics.
2. When the rule of law is weak and politics is therefore candidate-centered, then elite-level behavior (i.e., the behavior of politicians) shapes party systems far more than mass-level preferences.
3. Regional parties figure prominently into the Indian party system because of a) the geographic concentration of caste (and to a lesser extent other types of groups) and b) frequent national-level coalition governments.

The first two claims address party systems generally. The third addresses a specific case of a weak rule of law party system, using the previous two claims as the basis for identifying the sources of regional party success in India.

3.1. Claim #1—Weak rule of law and candidate-centered politics

Rule of law is strong when the state routinely and uniformly implements its laws, regulations, and policies. The individuals involved in the day-to-day implementation of policy act in accordance with the state's policies, and so it is rules that determine the outcomes of state action. When implementation is neither uniform nor routine, then the rule of law is weak. Individuals determine the outcomes of state action by either circumventing or selectively enforcing the rules. Any number of factors can contribute to the state's failure to implement policy routinely and uniformly: low state capacity (either in absolute terms or relative to what it sets out to do)[4], poorly designed institutions, corruption, or lack of political will. What matters is that from the citizen's perspective, policy implementation is uncertain, as policies that are formulated and passed into law may or may not be implemented as intended. When rule of law is weak, the better way for citizens to influence state action is to focus on the policy implementation process rather than the policy formulation process.

The candidate-centered nature of politics under weak rule of law stems from the role that individual legislators play in the implementation of public policy. The politician's influence over policy implementation can come either directly or, more likely, indirectly through her[5] ability to control bureaucrats in charge of policy implementation. Either way, a voter's most effective strategy for influencing policy implementation is to influence which politician is in power and casting his ballot for the candidate whom he believes will implement policy in ways that benefit him.

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[4] Some states can be described as low capacity in absolute terms because the state lacks the capacity to do much of anything. However, some states might not be low capacity in absolute terms but may nevertheless have insufficient capacity to carry out the policies that they say they will. If a state sets an ambitious policy agenda to intervene in every aspect of daily life, then even a state with moderate capacity in some absolute sense (in terms of financial and human resources) might fail to implement policies with regularity and uniformity.

[5] Throughout, to easily differentiate between voter and politician, I refer to the voter using the masculine pronoun and to the politician using the feminine pronoun.

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Voters formulate expectations about which candidate is most likely to implement policy in their favor based on a politician's attributes. For example, voters may consider a politician's ethnicity or place of origin on the assumption that she will favor co-ethnics over non-co-ethnics and fellow villagers or townspeople over those who originate from another town or village. Voters may also consider characteristics such as the politician's reputation for honesty or hard work, believing that an honest and hard working politician will be more likely to help the voter in his time of need. Importantly, this weak rule of law model of voting does not require a clientelistic exchange of goods and services. Voting is instead akin to taking out an insurance policy. Voters do not necessarily receive any benefits for casting their votes based on a politician's attributes, nor does the politician necessarily monitor voters to prevent them from reneging on the clientelistic bargain. Rather, voters simply do what they can to maximize the likelihood that the politician in power will be receptive to the voters' requests for assistance, in the event that they need help in securing favorable policy implementation.

The candidate-centered nature of politics under weak rule of law contrasts sharply with the party-centered politics common to strong rule of law settings. Under strong rule of law, politics approximates the familiar Downsian model of spatial politics, and the most effective way for voters to influence the outcomes of state action is to influence the policy formulation process. Voters seek to influence the policy formulation process because they expect that once laws are formulated and passed into law, they will be uniformly and routinely implemented. Unlike policy implementation, which can be heavily influenced by individual politicians, the policy formulation process relies on large groups of politicians—legislative majorities. Typically, parties are central to the construction of legislative majorities. Therefore, for voters concerned with influencing the policy formulation process, parties and their stated policy preferences are the key considerations. Furthermore, party labels provide rich informational cues to voters concerning the types of policies politicians are likely to formulate.

3.2 Claim #2—Candidate-centered politics and party systems

The candidate- or party-centered nature of politics has profound implications for the logic of party system formation. Under weak rule of law, when politics is candidate-centered, voters vote on the basis of specific politicians and their attributes. Since politicians usually accrue support thanks to their own attributes rather than by way of their party label, a politician can succeed in a variety of contexts—on an established party label, on a new party label, as an independent candidate, or switching between labels. In other words, voters decide which candidate to vote for, and the party in whose tally that vote goes depends on the party that the politician previously chose to join. Parties are therefore best thought of as aggregations of politicians, each of whom brings her own supporters to the party label. In this way, a party's success depends on its ability to attract politicians who will in turn attract support from voters. Thus, the shape of the party system is a function of politicians' decisions about the type of parties they choose to establish and join.

By contrast, under strong rule of law, voters form direct attachments to parties, not indirect ones via their preferences for specific politicians as under weak rule of law. These direct party attachments are frequently the result of the policies that a party advocates and the issues it politicizes. Elites can shape agendas, raise issues, and try to convince voters of the merits of their

policy proposals and their parties' managerial competence, but ultimately voters have the final say in determining which types of parties find their way into the party system. In the end, voters must be willing to buy what a party is selling. In sum, the crucial difference between weak rule of law party systems and strong rule of law party systems is the set of actors on which party formation depends. Under weak rule of law, the most important shapers of party systems are the politicians, since their decisions about party membership decide which party wins the support of their followers. But, under strong rule of law, voters themselves vote directly for parties and effectively decide whether a party will succeed or fail.

3.3 Claim #3—Regional parties in a weak rule of law party system

Before discussing the third claim in detail, it is important to clarify how it relates to the previous two. The first two claims about how the rule of law shapes party system formation are entirely unspecific to regional parties. They say nothing about what to expect about why regional parties fare so well in India. What they do say is where one should look for an answer. To determine the causes of regional party success in a weak rule of law country such as India, one must look to politicians and understand why so many of them prefer establishing and joining regional parties. The two factors that this study identifies as being most important in leading politicians to establish and join regional parties in India are 1) the geographic concentration of caste groups (and other groups, but to a lesser extent) and 2) the frequency with which multi-party coalitions form the national government. Together, these two conditions ensure that the costs of establishing regional parties are low, while the benefits to membership in such a party are high. Consequently, large numbers of politicians establish and join regional parties, resulting in highly successful regional parties.

First, the geographic concentration of India's caste groups ensures that the costs associated with establishing and maintaining regional parties are low relative to national parties. Caste is the most salient social and political cleavage in India, and it is frequently the basis on which voters decide which candidate is most likely to implement policy on their behalf and the basis around which parties often form. But, since caste groups are geographically concentrated, a party that wishes to be national in scope must aggregate politicians who belong to various region-specific castes. Knitting together a patchwork of regionally distinct caste groups necessarily imposes significant coordination costs on a party. These costs can be avoided—or at least substantially reduced—through the formation of a regional party. The geographic concentration of caste groups means that political entrepreneurs can potentially establish regional parties without aggregating politicians belonging to multiple castes and suffering the coordination costs involved in doing so. The relatively low cost of establishing a regional party explains the relatively high levels of support that Indian regional parties have enjoyed. In addition to castes, several other types of groups, such as language groups and groups oriented around popular mass leaders, are also geographically concentrated, which further diminish the costs of regional party formation and raise the costs of national party formation. Within the Indian context, the geographic concentration of caste (as well as most other groups) does not change over time. Therefore the geography of caste can only explain the persistence of a constant baseline level of regional party success over time.

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The second important factor is national-level coalition government, which is responsible for increasing the benefits associated with membership in a regional party. Coalition government allows small parties significant access to national power. Because regional parties tend to be small, the advent of coalition government in India dramatically equalized the payoffs associated with joining regional and national parties. Prior to the advent of coalition government, the payoffs associated with membership in a regional party were comparatively low because regional parties had neither enjoyed the benefits of power at the national level, nor were they expected to do so in the near future. However, after coalition government, regional parties acquired far more power and leverage at the national-level because of the pivotal part they began to play in government formation. Vote shares for regional parties reflect the changing benefits associated with membership in a regional party. Prior to the coalition era, India's regional parties consistently won around 20-25% of the vote. Shortly after the beginning of the coalition era, regional parties experienced a major upsurge in support and currently win around 45% of the national vote.

These two variables explain the tremendous success of regional parties in India. However, India is geographically large, has a federal structure, and elects its legislators through a single-member district system that permits independent candidacies. In the absence of concentrated caste groups or coalition government, these other factors might well be sufficient to ensure that regional parties continued to exist in some shape or form in India. The argument here is not that regional parties cannot constitute a part of the party system absent concentrated groups or coalition government. Rather, the claim is that without the concentration of groups and coalition government, regional parties could never attain the level of success that they have. In a counterfactual world, with an India of dispersed groups and persistent single-party majority government, regional parties would be nowhere near as strong as they are today or even as they were forty years ago. In this way, the two conditions identified in this study are necessary for extreme regional party success in a weak rule of law democracy.[6]

Although group geography and coalition government are couched in terms specific to India, they provide broader insight into when and where regional parties should succeed in other weak rule of law democracies. Applied to other contexts, the more general claim is that regional parties should succeed when the preponderance of salient individual attributes is geographically concentrated and when small political parties enjoy access to significant national-level political power. In India, caste is salient and geographically concentrated, and coalition government is the vehicle through which regional parties have gained access to power. In other contexts, other types of groups may be salient and concentrated, and small parties may access power through other means.

4. Research design

This dissertation is based primarily on inductive field research in India. The starting point for the research was the inadequacy of existing theory for the Indian case. Therefore, my aim in

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[6] I shy away from the language of sufficiency because these two factors alone may not be sufficient to explain the extreme success of India's regional parties. Absent some of the institutional factors noted above—federalism, single-member districts—and structural factors, such as country size, regional parties in India might not have achieved such an important position in the country's party system.

conducting field work was not to test existing theories against one another, but rather to generate new theoretical insights about regional parties and party systems more generally. As such, my method was to select a diverse range of cases for study, learn about those cases (principally through interviews), and then use those cases as the basis for generalization.

4.1 Case selection

Although I explain the success of regional parties in the Indian party system as a whole, my field research focused on three Indian states. The party systems in Indian states vary tremendously, and the national party system does not resemble the party systems in any individual state. For this reason, the Indian party system has been described as an aggregation of state party systems (Yadav and Palshikar 2008; Sadanandan forthcoming), and studying the party system purely at the national level makes little sense. I therefore focus on three state-level party systems. I chose to study three states primarily for the sake of feasibility. Three states capture much of the variation in state-level party systems while still permitting detailed study. I chose the states of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.

I chose my cases from among India's fifteen large states, those with more than 20 million inhabitants. I excluded Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh because they were formed only in 2000. From this universe of cases, the main criteria that I used to select these states were their current and historical experiences with regional parties. I wanted to select cases that varied not only in how successful regional parties have historically been but also in terms of the type of regional party in the party system, whether regionalist or not.[7] For the purpose of theory testing, selecting cases based on values of the dependent variable (in this case, the performance of regional parties in state-level party systems) is problematic because of the potential bias introduced into estimates of the causal effects of an independent variable. However, in studies aimed at theory generation selecting cases based on values of the independent variable is often an impractical strategy, particularly in field-based research in which the number of cases is limited (Brady and Collier 2004). Furthermore, because I was confident that existing theory was insufficient to explain regional party success in the Indian party system, selecting cases based on previously identified independent variables was not a viable option. This left only the dependent variable as a basis for selection. Given these circumstances, I accepted the risks inherent in selecting on the dependent variable.

Although I was confident that existing independent variables would provide little leverage in explaining the tremendous success of regional parties in India, I wanted to ensure that I did not rule out finding evidence in favor of existing theories simply as an artifact of my case selection. I therefore selected my cases to give the two most prominent alternative hypotheses every chance to succeed. I selected my cases in such a way that they appear to confirm the hypotheses that ethnic distinctiveness and comparative wealth cause voters to support regional political parties. If, even under these most favorable conditions, my research turned up no evidence in support of these theories, then I could be confident in ruling them out.

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[7] Regionalist parties are those that articulate a platform associated with the defense or interests of a particular region (de Winter and Türsan 1998).

The main criteria for case selection were therefore: 1) regional party success (past and present), 2) regional party type, 3) ethnic makeup, and 4) wealth. I divided states into three groups on both ethnic and economic dimensions. The ethnic dimension was divided into Hindi belt, periphery, and Dravidian. The "core" ethnic group consists of the Hindi belt states. Hindi speakers account for more than 40% of India's population, making them the largest linguistic group in India. Hindi is the dominant language in nearly a third of the country's states and Union territories (including the national capital), whereas most other languages are spoken in only one state. For a majority of its history, independent India has had a Hindi-speaking prime minister. Additionally, the caste system in the Hindi belt conforms most closely to the idealized caste system as outlined in the Vedas.

The "intermediate" category on the ethnic dimension consists of the periphery—the periphery of the Hindi heartland. These are states that speak languages related to Hindi. Though somewhat culturally similar to Hindi-speaking North India (and in some cases, very culturally similar), these states often have caste systems that differ somewhat from the caste hierarchy in the Hindi belt. Finally, the "ethnically distinct" group consists of the states in South India that are dominated by speakers of Dravidian languages. The south is culturally distinct from the rest of India, and the languages spoken in this part of India belong to a language family completely unrelated to Hindi. The caste system also differs tremendously from that of North India. On the economic dimension, I similarly divided states into three income groups, this time based on per capita income in 2003-2004 in constant 1993-1994 prices.[8] States with per capita incomes below Rs. 10,000 were classified as poor, over Rs, 15,000 as rich, and those with per capita incomes in between as middle.

Since I was choosing three states, I wanted to select one state with strong regionalist parties, another state with strong regional parties that were not particularly regionalist, and a third state with weak regional parties. (Table 1 summarizes the universe of cases and their values on the dimensions of interest). Ideally, the first case, with strong regionalist parties, would be ethnically distinct and wealthy; the last case, the one without regional parties, would be dominated by the country's "ethnic core" and poor; and the middle case would be somewhere in between on both the ethnic and economic dimensions. No state met all three criteria for the first case; however, two states—Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh—came close. Both are states with successful regionalist parties. They are ethnically distinct, but middle-income states, rather than high-income. Between these two, I chose to study Tamil Nadu because it has the longest tradition in India of successful regional parties. Additionally, although Tamil Nadu's per capita income places it in the middle swathe of states, its performance on human development indicators are among the best in India, far better than would be predicted based on its per capita income (Singh in progress).

For the third case, two states met all the criteria. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have never had successful parties; they are part of the Hindi belt, and both are poor. The choice of Rajasthan over Madhya Pradesh was largely arbitrary on my part. Finally, for the second, intermediate case, only one state fit all four criteria. Seven states in India have successful non-regionalist regional parties. Among those, only two fall into the "intermediate" ethnic category of the

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[8] Data come from the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Chandigarh Administration and were accessed through Indiastat.com.

heartland periphery: West Bengal and Orissa. While Orissa is one of the poorest states in India, West Bengal is a middle-income state. I therefore selected West Bengal.

4.2 Field research

The field research for this dissertation consisted mainly of interviews in the three states noted above. As part of the field research, I conducted approximately 550 interviews with elected officials and party functionaries, primarily in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. These interviews were supplemented by detailed analysis of election reports from the Election Commission of India, individual-level survey data collected by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in New Delhi, documents gathered from party offices, and secondary sources.

My study of each state comprised two parts: constituency-level studies and state-level studies. For each state, I selected multiple state election constituencies for in-depth study: three in West Bengal, four in Rajasthan, and five in Tamil Nadu.[9] These election constituencies were selected to maximize my exposure to different political parties, political histories, and regions of each state. A majority of the constituencies I studied are predominantly rural, which was my intention, since more than 70% of the Indian electorate resides in villages. Interviews for the constituency case studies were predominantly with local-level party officials, elected officials in municipal government, and former candidates in both local- and state-level elections. The aim of these interviews was to understand the micro-level dynamics of local party systems.

The second phase of my research consisted of state-level studies, based in Jaipur, Kolkata, and Chennai, the state capitals of Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, respectively. Interviews in the capitals were conducted primarily with state-level party officials and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), India's state legislators. Having investigated local-level party systems in the earlier phase of my research, these interviews were intended to help me understand the construction of state-level party systems. In the first phase of research, most interviews were conducted in Hindi, Bengali, or Tamil, with the assistance of a translator. In the state capitals, many interviews were conducted in English. Preliminary interviews and some follow-up data collection were also conducted in New Delhi.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the dissertation's first claim, that weak rule of law leads to a highly candidate-centered politics. Chapter 3 addresses the second main claim, linking candidate-centered politics to party systems. Together, these two chapters lay out a general argument meant to apply to party systems around the world. Chapter 4 then turns to the question of regional parties in India, describing the phenomenon—how I measure regional parties, their history in India, and why existing hypotheses are insufficient to explain this success. Chapter 5 explains how the geographic concentration of salient groups, namely caste groups, has contributed to the success of regional

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[9] One of the constituencies in Tamil Nadu was actually in the Union territory of Puducherry. Puducherry consists of four tiny, non-contiguous enclaves. The two largest enclaves, which together account for more than 90% of Puducherry's population of about a million people, are entirely surrounded by Tamil Nadu. In the realm of politics, Puducherry is therefore treated almost like an extension of Tamil Nadu. My case study of Puducherry focused on Puducherry district, which is the largest of the enclaves that comprise the territory.

parties in India, while Chapter 6 examines the role of coalition politics. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes by discussing some of the implications of this research.

Table 1.1 Case selection

	Regional parties	*Regionalist parties*	*Ethnic makeup*	*Wealth*
Tamil Nadu	**Y**	**Y**	**Dravidian**	**Middle**
Andhra Pradesh	Y	Y	Dravidian	Middle
Maharashtra	Y	Y	Periphery	Rich
Punjab	Y	Y	Periphery	Rich
Assam	Y	Y	Periphery	Poor
Karnataka	Y	N	Dravidian	Middle
Kerala	Y	N	Dravidian	Middle
West Bengal	**Y**	**N**	**Periphery**	**Middle**
Orissa	Y	N	Periphery	Poor
Haryana	Y	N	Hindi belt	Rich
Bihar	Y	N	Hindi belt	Poor
Uttar Pradesh	Y	N	Hindi belt	Poor
Gujarat	N	--	Periphery	Rich
Madhya Pradesh	N	--	Hindi belt	Poor
Rajasthan	**N**	**--**	**Hindi belt**	**Poor**

<u>Note</u>: Fieldwork states are in bold.

Chapter 2. Rule of Law and Electoral Politics

Electoral politics varies tremendously from one place to another. In some places, electoral politics involves a stable set of ideologically distinct political parties. In other places, parties tend to be fluid and ideologically indistinct, and politics is hyper-personalized. This chapter and the next help explain some of the observed variation in the tenor of electoral politics. More specifically, this chapter explains how the rule of law influences whether politics revolves around candidates or political parties. It explores the dissertation's first main claim: Weak rule of law produces a highly candidate-centered brand of electoral politics, while strong rule of law promotes far more party-centered politics.

The first half of the chapter, sections 1 through 3, explains in abstract terms how the rule of law shapes electoral politics. Since I use the term "rule of law" differently from many others, I devote considerable time in Section 1 to defining the concept. The next section, Section 2, details how the rule of law influences whether electoral competition revolves around candidates or parties. Section 3 describes attribute voting, which is how I conceptualize voting under weak rule of law. Section 4 briefly addresses two important alternatives—electoral institutions and cabinet government—that may also explain voters' propensity to care about candidates over parties.

The second half of the chapter turns to evidence to support these claims. It begins with Section 5, which justifies the classification of India as a weak rule of law democracy, using cross-national indicators as well as evidence specific to India. Section 6 provides evidence from a small survey in Kolkata, West Bengal, suggesting that voters pay more attention to particularistic service performed by politicians than to parties' policy positions. Sections 7 and 8 then compare India to two strong rule of law democracies, the United States and the United Kingdom, showing how politics is more politician-centered in India than in either the U.S. or the U.K., as evidenced by the nature of particularistic service (Section 7) and the frequency of party switching and independent candidacies (Section 8). Section 9 concretely illustrates the dynamics of weak rule of law politics by describing the career of an Indian politician in the state of Rajasthan whose lengthy political career demonstrates the primacy of politicians over parties in India. Finally, Section 10 concludes with an example of attribute voting from Luni state legislative constituency in Rajasthan.

As a caveat, the second half of the chapter does not exhaustively test the claims from the chapter's first half. Additionally, no single piece of data represents a "smoking gun" that proves the veracity of the chapter's theoretical claims. The empirical section of the chapter instead aims to accumulate multiple pieces of evidence, all of which are consistent with the claim that the rule of law determines the party- or candidate-centered nature of politics. The totality of the evidence should provide some confidence of the argument's empirical plausibility. Since this dissertation primarily constitutes a theory-building exercise, future research will focus on more directly testing the observable implications of the argument linking the rule of law to electoral politics.

1. Defining rule of law

I define the rule of law as the extent to which the state uniformly and routinely implements its laws and regulations. The term refers to the gap between what a state says it is going to do and

what it actually does. When the state makes policy commitments and then does not meet them, the gap is large, and rule of law is weak. When a state makes policy commitments and honors them, then the gap is small; rule of law is strong. Put in other terms, the rule of law is the level of certainty with which citizens expect to see policy outcomes that are consistent with the content of policy. When there is little certainty that policies will translate into outcomes, then rule of law is weak; when certainty is high, rule of law is strong.

For simplicity, I use the terms "strong rule of law" and "weak rule of law" as ideal-types, signifying, one the one hand, a society in which the letter of the law is always followed and, on the other hand, a society in which enforcement and implementation cannot ever be counted on to occur as intended. Although I refer to the rule of law like a dichotomous variable (with two values: strong and weak), it should be thought of as a continuous variable, with societies lying not only at the extremes on a scale of rule of law, but also in the middle. In reality, few countries sit at the extremes. Isolated incidents of failure in policy implementation occur in strong rule of law societies, while some types of policies and laws may be effectively implemented even in weak rule of law democracies. Furthermore, weak rule of law should not be confused with the total absence of rule of law. If laws are never implemented or enforced, then there is no rule of law—a condition tantamount to state failure. Even under weak rule of law, laws and policies are sometimes implemented. The difference between weak rule of law and no rule of law is that under weak rule of law, implementation and enforcement occur but are so erratic and uneven that citizens cannot count upon them. Since this study focuses on elections, which are seldom held in failed states, I do not consider cases of no rule of law.

I use the terms law and policy interchangeably to include the full range of formal rules and obligations associated with the state: mandated public policy (e.g., social welfare or fiscal policy), regulation (e.g., labor or health standards), and legal statutes (e.g., criminal law). Policy implementation is the set of actions taken by the state in domains over which it has chosen to make policy. Proper policy implementation occurs when bureaucratic action is consistent with formal laws and regulations. Improper policy implementation occurs when state action is inconsistent with laws and can result from either state inaction or the state flouting its own laws. Implementation of policy is distinct from the formulation of policy, which is the process of crafting policies and passing them into law, whether through legislation, executive fiat, or some bureaucratic process.

1.1 Differentiating weak rule of law from other concepts

Another way of more precisely identifying what I mean by rule of law is to clarify what the rule of law is not. The first important differentiation is between how I use the term rule of law and how others use it. Some studies treat the rule of law as either the product of a specific institutional arrangement, such as judicial independence (Chavez 2004), or as interchangeable with what I would consider to be only a small piece of the overall concept of rule of law, such as contract enforcement or property rights (Barro 2000). My definition is more encompassing than these; it includes the full range of a state's activities and can be the product of multiple factors. Other uses of the term connote a normative condition, such as government through open, democratic processes (O'Donnell 2004). As I use it, rule of law represents a purely empirical outcome. If a country's laws and policies are effectively carried out throughout a country, then

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the rule of law is strong, even in a country with an authoritarian government or poorly crafted and oppressive laws.

A second set of distinctions delineates the rule of law from concepts that are related but narrower in scope: corruption, discretion, predatory states, and low state capacity. All of these concepts should be highly correlated with weak rule of law, precisely because they are potential explanations for why a state fails to implement its laws properly. But each concept on its own is too narrow to account for the overall level of certainty with which citizens can expect to see the law translated into outcomes. For instance, a corruption-free country, a country with very low levels of discretion among government officials and bureaucrats, or a state that could not be classified as predatory could nonetheless suffer from weak rule of law if the state lacks the human or material resources to enforce laws. Judges and policemen could be honest, hard working, and efficient; but if the state cannot afford to hire enough of them, then the rule of law might be weak because the state does not have the capacity to enforce laws. By the same token, a country with high state capacity might have sufficient material resources to meet its obligations but may suffer from poorly designed institutions or an overly politicized bureaucracy that prevents the state from accomplishing its goals.

A second source of differentiation is between concepts that are often associated with weak rule of law but still compatible with strong rule of law. These include discretion and patronage. Usually some measure of discretion is intentionally built into every political system and is therefore compatible with strong rule of law. Consider the example of pork-barrel spending. Decisions about where to place public works and infrastructure often involve a high degree of discretion. If the use of discretion in allocating pork does not violate any laws, and if the public works are actually provided in the locations where it is decided they should go, then the rule of law is not breached. Citizens know which types of infrastructure are placed through a discretionary process; they know who the decision makers are; and they know that, once made, the decisions will be honored. A similar argument applies to patronage. Patronage, like pork, can be legal and entirely compatible with strong rule of law. For instance, Iceland was, for many decades, a system in which patronage was rampant, in large part because no laws against it existed. However, once patronage was outlawed, it disappeared (Kristinsson 2001). In this case, the failing was not the state's implementation or enforcement of its laws; the issue in Iceland was the scope of the law. The law did not censure behavior believed by many to be undesirable.

Finally, more than any other concept in political science, Midgal's (1988) "weak state" most closely approximates what I mean to capture by the term weak rule of law. Migdal writes that "weak states are on the low end of the spectrum of capabilities" that are intended "to achieve the kinds of changes in society that their leaders have sought through state planning, policies, and actions" (4-5). The crucial difference between weak rule of law and a weak state is that the idea of a weak state implies an absolute level of capabilities with no reference to what the state aims to accomplish. A weak state with the inability to penetrate society and exert social control could in theory choose to limit the arenas in which it intervenes to those in which it can effectively implement policy. In so limiting itself, a state that is weak in absolute terms could nevertheless ensure strong rule of law.

1.2 What determines whether rule of law is strong or weak

It is beyond the scope of this research to identify which factors actually cause weak (or strong) rule of law and which are merely symptoms. However, something more general can still be said about the determinants of rule of law. Since the rule of law represents the gap between what the state says it will do and what it actually does, the rule of law can be traced either to the state's stated policies (i.e., what it says it will do) or its implementation of policy (i.e., what it actually does).

On the one hand, a state's policies determine what it must live up to in order for the law to be implemented routinely across time and uniformly across all people. Holding constant a state's capacity to implement laws and policies, a more interventionist state with "more law" should be more likely to suffer from weak rule of law because the state sets out for itself a greater number of tasks at which it might fail. Strong rule of law does not necessarily imply a strong or capable state in an absolute sense, only a state that is strong or capable enough to regularly implement the laws on its books. The same applies for weak rule of law; weak rule of law does not imply an absolute level of weakness, only a failure relative to that which the state commits itself. Thus, the volume of law or the extent of a state's intervention can determine the strength of rule of law in a society. Similarly, the types of laws and the policy domains in which the state intervenes may also matter in determining the strength of rule of law. Rule of law can vary across different policy domains, and this variation may be systematic. Some types of policies may be easier to implement than others.

On the other hand, given a fixed set of commitments or laws, the strength of rule of law depends on the implementation of policy by bureaucracies. Bureaucracies can suffer from any number of ills that could lead to weak rule of law. Poverty (lack of material or financial resources with which to complete assigned tasks) and incompetence (inadequate human capital) often preclude states from implementing the law because of a dearth of needed resources. Bureaucratic lethargy (insufficient incentives to ensure bureaucratic performance) and corruption (susceptibility to citizens' threats and inducements that dissuade bureaucrats from doing their jobs) indicate a failure in the bureaucracy's will to complete its assigned tasks, irrespective of the level of resources available. Finally, politicization (subordination of the bureaucracy to the whims of elected officials) can prevent even capable and motivated bureaucracies from implementing the law.

2. Rule of law and politics

With a clear definition in mind of what the rule of law is, this section explains what impact the rule of law has on voters. More specifically, it discusses how the rule of law determines to what end voters wish to use their vote. How voters wish to use their vote in turn determines what factors voters take into account when they vote. In a nutshell, this section argues that when the rule of law is weak, voters vote to influence the implementation of policy, which leads them to focus their attention on the individual politicians running for office. By contrast, when the rule of law is strong, voters vote to influence the formulation of policy, leading them to focus their attention on political parties. Table 2.1 summarizes the argument made in this section.

2.1 What voters wish to influence with their vote

I start with the assumption that voters care about how the state's actions affect society. Many citizens may be indifferent to the state's actions; however, I assume that those who are indifferent to the state's actions are unlikely to vote and are therefore not "voters." A voter's interest in policy outcomes could be self-centered and based on his own welfare, or it could be other-regarding and based on a desire to see a "just" society, however that may be defined. Elections present voters with an opportunity to influence the state's actions by selecting the parties and individuals who will constitute the government.

If a voter is concerned with the state's impact on himself and on society, then in voting he must consider the link between his vote and policy outcomes. Enter the rule of law. When the rule of law is strong, then voters can infer policy outcomes from the content of government policy. The way to influence outcomes is therefore to influence what government policy will be. A voter can do this by voting for parties or candidates whose stated policy preferences match the voter's own and who will push policy in the voter's preferred direction (or maintain the *status quo* if that is what the voter prefers). This is the traditional Downsian model of party politics based on voters' ideal points and party's policy positions. Downs' framework has been modified in a number of ways—incorporating ideas like incumbency and the personal vote, retrospective voting, valence issues, and strategic voting. Nevertheless, the idea that parties' policy positions and the distribution of voter preferences on a policy dimension shape party competition is an enduring one that continues to inform contemporary research.[10]

Under weak rule of law, outcomes cannot be inferred from the content of government policy. The link between voting for politicians who pledge to shift the content of policy in the voter's desired direction and actual outcomes of state action is an extremely tenuous one. Because of the large potential for failures in policy implementation, voting for a politician with similar policy preferences does not necessarily produce the desired outcome, even if the preferred politician is elected and constitutes part of a legislative majority. Instead of trying to influence policy formulation, the more certain route to influencing outcomes for a voter is to influence policy implementation. A hypothetical example concerning land-ceiling legislation illustrates this point.

Suppose a country is contemplating passage of land reform legislation that would place a ceiling on the amount of land that any single person can own. Large landlords oppose the legislation and prefer to keep it off the books, while landless laborers and tenants prefer the land-ceiling legislation. In a strong rule of law setting, landlord and tenant alike will each vote for parties that share their respective views on the legislation. In a weak rule of law setting, the situation is different. For both the landlord and the tenant, the more important considerations are not whether the legislation will pass, but instead who the local political authority will be and on whose behalf she is likely to act.

Suppose that the land-ceiling legislation passes, but in a particular area the local elected officials are all landlords. A similar situation prevailed in much of India after independence, when land reform was officially mandated by the government but frequently blocked at the local level (Bandyopadhyay 1986; Kohli 1987; Bandyopadhyay 1993). Under pressure from local

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[10] See Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007: 1-2) for a brief summary of policy-based party-voter linkages.

politicians, local bureaucrats routinely looked the other way as landlords registered various tracts of their land under false names and sub-divided their holdings amongst their family members in order to avoid expropriation. In spite of the laws formally on the books, powerful politicians in the area essentially blocked implementation of the law. Now suppose that in the hypothetical example land-ceiling legislation fails, but all of the local politicians are tenants. Now, when tenants refuse to pay rent on their lands or the landless squat on land that is not theirs, the police do not enforce the law because of pressure from local politicians. The police fail to evict tenants who do not pay their rent or who squat on others' lands, and local bureaucrats falsify land ownership certificates.

In both examples, the fortunes of landowners and tenants depend more on the identity of the politicians in office than on the content of the law. The landowners' first choice is to have fellow landowners as local politicians and for land-ceiling legislation to fail, since, all else equal, the passage of land-ceiling legislation can only increase the likelihood of expropriation. But, the politician's second most preferred option is the success of land-ceiling legislation but the election of fellow landlords as local politicians. The landlords prefer this option to the prospect of land-ceiling legislation failing but tenants and landless laborers being elected as local politicians. Although voters are not entirely indifferent towards the content of policy, given the uncertainty of implementation, the content of policy is a secondary concern that takes a backseat to concerns about which politicians will be elected and how they will use their power to implement policy.

In most settings, bureaucracies are responsible for implementing state policy. Since bureaucracies are not electorally accountable to the public, voters should not in theory be able to influence policy implementation with their votes. Indeed, for precisely this reason, voters under strong rule of law do not often try to influence policy implementation. However, when rule of law is weak, voters can take advantage of the conditions associated with weak rule of law in order to use their votes to influence policy implementation. Under weak rule of law, bureaucracies are typically corrupt, resource-poor, and politicized. By contrast, politicians are usually powerful and resource-rich and therefore particularly well situated to take advantage of bureaucratic failings. Politicians can influence the course of policy implementation by bribing, threatening, and cajoling a pliant, overworked, poorly paid bureaucracy accustomed to corruption.

As a concrete example, in India it is difficult to fire bureaucrats, but politicians can influence a bureaucrat's chances of promotion and transfer. Politicians can threaten to stall bureaucrats' careers or to transfer them to undesirable posts, which include posts in remote locations or with little opportunity to benefit from bribery or graft. In this way, a politician can influence policy implementation. Since politicians are held accountable to the public through voting, then voters can use their votes to try to influence policy implementation through elected politicians.

2.2 Weighing parties and candidates

So far, I have argued that voters under strong rule of law wish to influence the policy formulation process, and voters under weak rule of law wish to influence the policy implementation process. The voter's preference to influence either policy formulation or policy implementation has

important ramifications. This sub-section explains why voters who wish to influence policy formulation cast their votes primarily based on considerations about political parties. By contrast, when rule of law is weak and voters wish to influence policy implementation, then they cast their votes primarily based on individual politicians.

A politician's activities fall into two general categories. The first is legislative activity, which pertains to the policy formulation process. It includes anything related to the passage of laws— meetings with lobbyists, attending hearings, drafting legislation, participating in parliamentary debates. The second is particularistic service, which pertains to the policy implementation process. Particularistic service entails any use of the politician's influence, power, or resources on behalf of an individual constituent or some *ad hoc* group of constituents, as opposed to a class of citizens specifically targeted by a policy or law.[11] In a strong rule of law setting, particularistic service often involves a politician using her staff, know-how, and access to the bureaucracy to help constituents resolve problems related to the occasional bureaucratic failing. In weak rule of law settings, particularistic service often includes far more than putting a staff member on the case of solving the problem of a missing social security check. It often involves breaking the law or coercing bureaucrats to bend rules on behalf of constituents. In other words, particularistic service in a weak rule of law context often entails a politician exerting power and influence well beyond that with which she is formally invested by the rules of the political system.

Voters who seek to use their votes toward different ends tend to focus on different factors when deciding for whom to vote. Voters who care about policy formulation focus on factors that relate to a politician's legislative activity, whereas voters who care about policy implementation focus on factors that relate to a politician's particularistic service. Herein lies the difference between strong rule of law voters who care about parties and weak rule of law voters who care about individuals. While parties largely dictate a politician's legislative activities, politicians are typically in control of their own particularistic service.

Although many of the ancillary aspects of legislative activity can be undertaken individually, the ultimate outcome of legislative activity—legislation itself—is a collective enterprise in most modern democracies. Voters who care about a politician's legislative duties care about party far more than they care about individual politicians. This is true for three reasons. First, in many democracies, parties dictate a legislator's legislative duties. Politicians must adhere to the party's whip and cannot stake out individual policy positions. Once in the legislature, legislators become nearly interchangeable with one another. Sometimes, the rules of the legislature forbid legislators from defying a party whip. When the rules do not permit parties to formally enforce discipline in the legislature, they can often enforce it informally by denying dissenting politicians positions of power within the party or access to the party's financial or human resources. Even when party discipline is low and party membership is not a binding constraint on a politician's behavior, party membership should still serve as an important informational cue for voters. Politicians

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[11] Pork-barrel projects constitute an ambiguous activity that sometimes qualifies as particularistic service and at other times as legislative activity. In settings in which a politician can herself allocate public goods on a case-by-case basis without coordinating with other politicians, then pork falls under particularized service. However, if pork-barrel projects and spending must be attached to legislation, then pork falls under a politician's legislative activities, since it, like any other legislation, requires the consent of a majority in the legislature.

presumably sort into parties for a reason, one of which is often ideological affinity. Ideologically similar politicians should frequently vote together, even if not compelled to do so, ensuring that party conveys important information about how a politician is likely to behave in fulfilling her legislative activities.

Second, parties are the building blocks of legislative coalitions. Legislation cannot be passed without a majority. If voters wish to see policy change, then they cannot consider a candidate in isolation from all other candidates. Parties can credibly claim to have a reasonable chance of being pivotal in policy formation, either as the sole party making policy or as one of a small number of parties in a coalition. In contrast, a politician cannot credibly claim to her constituents that she alone can influence the content of legislation and formulate policy. A single politician is very rarely pivotal in policy-making decisions, let alone routinely so. Typically, she can only claim to influence policy formulation from within the context of a political party.

Third, party is an important source of information for voters interested in a wide range of policy issues. Parties often espouse encompassing ideologies that can provide clues to how they will respond to new issues. They also possess long track records of dealing with various types of issues that may be similar to those that could arise in the future. Individuals however possess shorter track records and are more prone to unforeseen idiosyncrasy in how they respond to events as they happen. For voters, party therefore provides more information about a wider range of potential issues than individuals possibly can.

In contrast to legislative activity, parties do not usually govern a politician's particularistic service. The particularistic service that the politician undertakes and the resources and energy that she devotes to this service depend almost entirely on herself. Since most policy implementation—whether formulated at the national level or not—takes place at the local level, decisions about particularistic service are usually the politician's alone.

The importance of party in determining a politician's legislative behavior and her relative autonomy with respect to particularistic service do not mean that individuals are entirely irrelevant to considerations regarding policy formulation or that party is entirely irrelevant to concerns about particularistic service. Indeed, individuals can matter in policy formulation. High-level party leaders are likely to wield disproportionate influence in formulating the policies to which other legislators must adhere. If a legislature employs a committee system, then individual legislators can exercise considerable agenda setting power in determining the fate of specific pieces of legislation. Particularly astute politicians or those with a great deal of seniority may be better at inter-party bargaining and at winning policy concessions from coalition partners. These same politicians might also be better at getting pork-barrel projects added to legislation. Furthermore, in some contexts politicians can stake out their own policy positions, which ought to lead voters to place more weight on individuals when considering how they wish to deploy their vote to influence policy formulation. By the same token, party can at times impinge on the performance of particularistic service. Whether a politician's party is part of the government or the opposition can influence her ability to perform particularistic service.

The broader point remains, however, that the *relative* weight of voters' concerns should vary depending on whether a voter aims to influence policy formulation or policy implementation.

With respect to policy formulation, parties are virtually always crucial to the process, influencing it in fairly predictable and reliable ways. Meanwhile the importance of individuals in policy formulation is highly variable across political systems. And, even where they matter, their influence is often contingent and unpredictable. With respect to policy implementation, even if party constrains a politician's ability to engage in particularistic service, parties can rarely oversee all of their politicians' every move. Even when party matters, individuals retain a high degree of autonomy in influencing policy implementation under weak rule of law.

3. Voting under weak rule of law

Section 2 argued that under weak rule of law voters care about influencing the policy implementation process, which requires focusing on individual politicians far more than on political parties. This section describes a model of voting under weak rule of law that I call *attribute* voting. I refer to voting under strong rule of law as *policy* voting and treat it as equivalent to the Downsian spatial model of voting, according to which voters vote for the party located closest to them on a policy space.[12] Since a vast literature already addresses spatial voting, I do not discuss it here. Instead, I focus on attribute voting under weak rule of law.

If voters under weak rule of law wish to use their vote to influence policy implementation, how do they actually formulate a vote choice? Instead of voting to move policy in one direction or another as they would under strong rule of law, voters under weak rule of law use their vote to take out a kind of insurance. This insurance takes the form of a politician who is likely to help the voter by either enforcing or circumventing the law; it is meant to protect voters against the uncertainty with which policy is implemented. Formulating a vote choice therefore requires that voters determine which candidate in an election represents the best insurance policy, or which candidate is most likely to assist them with particularistic implementation of policy—either enforcing or circumventing the law on the voter's behalf.

In some cases, candidates and parties openly say which voters they will favor, as in the case of an ethnic party that openly champions the interests of a particular ethnic group. A candidate's open identification with a specific group of voters eliminates much of the uncertainty and guesswork surrounding a voter's calculation of which candidate represents the best insurance policy for him. However, many parties and candidates, perhaps most, avoid openly identifying with some groups to the exclusion of others for fear of unnecessarily alienating voters and jeopardizing their chances of electoral victory. Moreover, even parties that advocate policies such as economic redistribution, which have clear beneficiaries, do not typically couch their appeals in terms of their willingness to selectively circumvent the law or their intention to enforce the law more rigorously for some voters than for others.

For these reasons, parties and candidates may be intentionally ambiguous about which voters they would favor,[13] leaving the voter to extrapolate who a candidate is likely to favor once in

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[12] Recent research has shown that voters can strategically vote for non-proximate parties—that is, parties whose policies are not located closest to the voter's ideal points—in order to achieve policy goals (Kedar 2005; Duch, May, and Armstrong 2008; Bargsted and Kedar 2009).

[13] See Chandra 2004, in which she discusses how parties can use ideology and issues as a "cover" in order to retain flexibility to adapt strategies over time and to local conditions.

office. In the absence of better information, voters use a candidate's attributes to formulate expectations about their likelihood of benefiting from the politician's particularistic implementation of policy. Voters use candidate attributes as a way to differentiate between candidates and to calculate which is the most likely to implement policy on their behalf. Hence the term *attribute* voting, since this model of voting entails a voter formulating his vote choice by considering candidates' attributes rather than by considering parties' policies.

The following analogy illustrates the voter-politician dynamic when there is attribute voting. Imagine every voter in a constituency lining up outside a politician's door, each with a favor to ask, some policy to be implemented, or some law to be bent. The voters know that the politician will begin granting favors in the morning and stop some time in the evening. Those at the front of the line are more likely to have their favors heard and, hopefully, granted. Voters therefore care about: 1) where they stand in line relative to other constituents, 2) how long the politician will continue to hear favors, and 3) the politician's propensity to grant the favors that she hears. But, voters do not line up randomly. The politician gives some voters priority and moves them to the front of the line. The likelihood that the politician helps a particular voter is therefore a function of 1) to whom the politician gives priority in line, 2) how many voters the politician will meet in the course of a day, and 3) the politician's propensity for addressing her petitioners' problems. For the voter wishing to have his favor heard and granted, the voter wants to maximize the likelihood that the politician in office will 1) move him to the front of the line, 2) hear a large number of petitions, and 3) agree to help most of those whom she hears.

This view of the politician-voter interaction assumes that voter demand for particularistic implementation outstrips the politician's capacity to deliver it. If a politician could reasonably meet the demands of all her constituents, then voters would have no expectation that some constituents would be privileged over others. They would expect instead that any politician could meet any demand and would have would have no reason to calculate the likelihood of politicians implementing policy on their behalf. [14] But, where bureaucratic failures are pervasive, demand should outpace supply. Not only should legitimate grievances be widespread, but knowing that the rule of law is weak, voters may also bring "illegitimate" grievances to their politicians— demands for circumvention of the law. The politician's ability to implement policy particularistically is also limited. She only has a certain amount of time that she can spend meeting with constituents, a certain amount that she can demand from bureaucrats, [15] and only a certain amount of illegal activity that she is willing to undertake. Therefore, a politician must make decisions about whom to prioritize in allocating her efforts at policy implementation, even if she is intent on serving her constituents as broadly as possible in an effort to secure re-election.

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[14] Under strong rule of law, this may be precisely what voters assume. Bureaucracies are sufficiently efficient that politicians are capable of dealing with the fallout of bureaucratic failings. If voters expect that all politicians will implement policy in the same way (that is, by helping everyone who comes to them), then policy implementation should not be a basis on which to differentiate between politicians under strong rule of law.

[15] Past a certain point a bureaucrat may risk transfer to a less desirable post rather than submit to a constant barrage of demands from a politician. The politicization of bureaucracies often rests on the implicit threat of punishment by politicians. However, a bureaucrat may doubt the politician's ability or willingness to make good on this (implicit) threat. So long as the politician keeps her requests reasonable, the bureaucrat may not call her bluff. But if her demands are excessive, then he might rethink this calculation.

A variety of attributes may matter in helping a voter decide whom a politician will assist and whom she will not. Although some types of attributes may be systematically more important to voters than others, I leave theorizing about this to future research. Instead, I note that voters consider a variety of attributes and that the attributes that matter to voters will vary depending on context, either societal or local. At the societal level, attribute salience may vary dramatically. For instance, in a country with high income inequality, income or class may be important attributes. Where income equality is low, class and income may be irrelevant to most voters. At the local level, variation in attribute salience can also occur if candidates possess identical attributes. When this is the case, then voters cannot use these attributes to differentiate among candidates. Regardless of whether the attribute conveys to a voter the belief that these candidates will help him or not, it does not help him adjudicate between the candidates. When candidates possess the same attributes, they represent identical insurance policies.

I divide attributes into two types: valence and non-valence. Valence attributes are those that are universally regarded as positive and that virtually all candidates claim to have. They also include some component of moral judgment—a person who embodies a valence attribute is believed to be superior to someone who does not. Examples of valence attributes include wisdom, fairness, honesty, and hard work. For example, nearly everyone perceives wisdom as a positive quality; a lack of wisdom almost always reflects poorly on a candidate; and virtually no candidate would claim not to have it. For voters, the challenge with valence attributes is discerning which candidate best embodies them. Since virtually all candidates claim to have these attributes, voters must discern for themselves whose claims are more credible.

Non-valence attributes, by contrast, are those on which candidates often differ. No universal moral judgment inheres with non-valence attributes; and no single attribute on a dimension is universally regarded as better or worse. Non-valence attributes are usually personal characteristics of the candidates, often ascriptive, such as her language, place of residence, place of origin, social class, ideology, etc. For example, being a francophone rather than an anglophone is not universally regarded as either better or worse, and language does not imply any judgment about the bearer's character. Furthermore, candidates openly claim to have different mother tongues; they do not always claim to all speak the same language. For voters, determining a candidate's non-valence attributes is often straightforward, since candidates have fewer incentives to obfuscate, and knowledge of these attributes is often easily observable and widely agreed upon.

Just as the particular attributes that voters take into account may vary, so to do the mechanisms that underlie voters' beliefs about why a politician will help some voters but not others. Although I do not rule out additional mechanisms, I identify three in particular: altruism, *noblesse oblige*, and community. First, when a candidate helps a voter out of a sense of moral obligation, the mechanism underlying the candidate's behavior is altruism. She helps her constituent because he is in need and merits assistance. Valence attributes are particularly useful in determining a candidate's predisposition for altruism. Second, *noblesse oblige* links the politician to the voter through ties of dependency. Whereas altruism represents a universal obligation to those in need, the mechanism of *noblesse oblige* refers to vertical ties between people. The politician assists a voter because he is dependent on her, whether because she is his boss, his landlord, a traditional community elder, or a member of a family known as local patrons. A combination of valence and

non-valence attributes may help voters determine whether a politician will consider *noblesse oblige* as she engages in particularistic policy implementation.

Finally, the third mechanism is community, which operates when individuals feel a sense of solidarity or obligation to other individuals who belong to the same community, howsoever defined. Essentially, a politician will help voters "like her" (i.e., members of her community) before she helps those who unlike her (i.e., those form other communities). Unlike *noblesse oblige*, the mechanism of community relies on horizontal links between people. Based on a mechanism of community, voters match their attributes to those of the candidate, assuming that the more attributes they share, the more they constitute fellow community members. Non-valence attributes are most often the sources of community—attributes such as class, ethnicity, or membership in a common organization (e.g., a political party).

3.1 Differentiating attribute voting from clientelism

Attribute voting is distinct from the traditional Downsian framework, or policy voting. In the latter, voters mainly consider a politician's policy positions. Perhaps less clear than the distinction between policy and attribute voting is the difference between attribute voting and clientelism. The main difference between the two is that clientelism (and, by extension, clientelistic voting) assumes an exchange whose terms are enforced. Clientelism is a strategic interaction in which the patron provides a service, or promises to provide a service, in return for the client's vote (Stokes 2007). Since goods and services are often provided prior to an election, it falls on the patron to enforce the bargain she strikes with the client and ensure that the client votes for her.

The model of attribute voting differs both from the perspective of the voter and the politician. From the voter's perspective, voting is an insurance policy not a currency, as it is with clientelism. Under attribute voting, voters do not necessarily have to receive any goods or services in advance of their vote or be certain that they will receive such goods and services in the future. Their vote is therefore not a currency with which they purchase goods and services. Instead, they vote to maximize the likelihood that the politician in power will oblige them in the event that they need particularistic policy implementation—either to enforce laws that are poorly implemented or to circumvent laws that have been inconveniently enforced. In other words, voters are not certain that policy will be implemented in their favor, but they do the best that they can to assure this outcome by voting for whomever they believe is most likely to help. In many contexts, attribute voting is, from the voter's perspective, a more realistic model of voting than clientelism. Surveys of voters in highly clientelistic polities often report that relatively few voters actually receive clientelistic goods (Lawson 2008; Breeding 2009), certainly far fewer than the total voting population. If this is the case, then it is unclear how clientelism informs vote choice. By contrast, attribute voting does not require that voters actually receive goods and services, only that they use their vote to maximize that future likelihood.

From the politician's perspective, she does not bear the burden of enforcing the clientelistic bargain under attribute voting. Absent a bargain, there is no need for monitoring individual vote choice. A potential problem with the clientelistic model of voting is how it reconciles the secret ballot with the need to monitor vote choice. With attribute voting, no such monitoring is

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necessary since a politician does not perform service contingent upon the vote. If service does not depend on vote choice, then how do politicians decide to whom to allocate particularistic policy implementation? Clientelism assumes that this choice is always done strategically, either to persuade hostile or indifferent voters or to shore up hard-core supporters (Stokes 2005; Dunning and Stokes 2008; Nichter 2008). I presume a significant non-strategic component.

The non-strategic component of a politician's particularistic policy implementation could stem from the fact that politicians are not single minded. In general, they perform as much particularistic service as they can in order to maximize their chances of re-election. But, because the demands for service are greater than their capacity to meet that demand, they must make decisions about whom to serve first. In making this decision, strategic considerations are only part of the equation. The needs of constituents as well as the politician's own needs and biases also come into play. A politician may prefer some constituents over others for reasons other than electoral calculation.

Another reason why strategic considerations may not shape a politician's behavior in this instance is because politicians cannot determine what the proper strategic behavior is. One possibility is that most voters do not have strong leanings in favor of one candidate or another. Assistance from a politician may be enough in most cases to assure a constituent's vote at a later date. In that case, any constituent is a potential supporter, and a politician would have no basis on which to decide which constituent represents a better strategic bet. If so, it falls upon the politician to make the decision based on some other criterion, such as altruism, *noblesse oblige*, or community. Another possibility is that voters possess particular leanings, but that it is beyond the politician's capacity to know these leanings. In this case, she again has no way of strategically differentiating between constituents.

Distinguishing between clientelistic voting and attribute voting does not preclude the possibility of clientelistic voting. Clientelism is, after all, a fact of life in many polities. But, I would classify clientelistic voting as a form of attribute voting in which "clients" have a greater expectation or likelihood of cashing in on the insurance policy that they take out with their vote. Clientelistic voting would affect only a subset of attribute voters who actually enter into a clientelistic bargain. The relevant attribute on which the voter bases his vote is the politician's status as his patron, something therefore akin to the mechanism of *noblesse oblige*. But, instead of *noblesse oblige* leading politicians to help voters, it is the gift of a vote that obligates the politician to help.

4. Alternative hypotheses

Having laid out arguments for why weak rule of law leads voters to care about policy implementation, why caring about policy implementation leads voters to care about individual politicians over parties, and how voters vote when politics is highly candidate-centered, I now turn to two important alternative hypotheses. Both of these can potentially explain why politics is highly candidate-centered. The two alternative explanations are electoral systems and cabinet government.

4.1 Electoral systems

Electoral systems undoubtedly matter in how party- or candidate-centered electoral politics is. Electoral rules provide voters different opportunities to voters to cast their ballots for specific candidates. All electoral systems permit voters to vote directly for their preferred party. Every vote is associated with a party label, even if that party label is a candidate's unique identifier—her name. However, electoral systems differ in how they combine, if at all, party-based and candidate-based voting. Electoral systems can:

1. Require a vote for a party list but not allow votes for individual candidates (closed list proportional representation, party block voting);
2. Allow two simultaneous votes, one for a party list and another for a candidate (mixed member majoritarian and mixed member proportional representation);
3. Allow a single vote that permits a vote for a party list as well as for an individual candidate (open list proportional representation); or
4. Require a vote for an individual candidate but not allow votes for party lists (single-member districts including double ballot systems, single transferable vote, single non-transferable vote, alternative vote, and bloc voting).

In all but the first, voters can vote directly for candidates and can choose to behave as though parties do not matter at all. Approximately 64% of the world's democracies allow voters to directly vote for candidates.[16] In the first scenario, voters cannot vote directly for candidates. They can only express preferences for individual candidates indirectly by voting for the party list to which their preferred candidate belongs in order to increase the number of seats that the party will win and thereby improve the preferred candidate's chances of election. Different types of electoral systems therefore encourage voters to focus on either a smaller number of candidates as the object of their electoral choice (in many cases just one) or on a larger number as in the case of party lists. These incentives certainly influence the weight that voters place on voters and parties. Even so, the rule of law still matters.

The next chapter provides suggestive empirical evidence that electoral systems matter. But, even within countries that have the same electoral systems, differences persist between strong and weak rule of law countries. Intuitive examples of this variation include the United Kingdom and Argentina. Although the United Kingdom has one of the most candidate-centered electoral systems (single-member districts), party is widely believed to drive electoral outcomes (Johnston and Pattie 2006). Conversely, even though Argentina has a very party-centered electoral system with a list PR system, recent elections have highlighted the importance of individual candidates. Conventional wisdom suggests that voters use the candidates at the head of the lists to decide for

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[16] In the 2007 Polity IV dataset (Center for Democratic Peace 2007), there were 109 countries with polity scores greater than 0 in the year 2006. I matched all of these countries to the list of electoral systems compiled by the International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). International IDEA listed an electoral system for 107 of these countries; however, it did not differentiate between open- and closed-list PR. I used data from the World Bank's Database of Political Institutions (DPI) (Beck et al. 2001) to arrive at a list of countries using closed-list PR. In doing so, I incorporated two changes made in Chang and Golden (2006). However, the DPI data did not include seven countries that Polity IV lists as democratic. This left 100 countries, of which 36 use electoral systems in which no candidate preference can be directly expressed.

whom to vote (Fraga 2009).[17] Thus, electoral systems do not *force* voters to focus on either parties or candidates; voters in a candidate-centered electoral system can still make their decision largely based on party, while voters in a party-centered electoral system can still take politicians into account.

4.2 Cabinet government

Another important alternative hypothesis is suggested by Cox (1987): cabinet government. Cox argues that the advent of cabinet government in the United Kingdom created the country's modern party-based political system. Yet, many countries with cabinet government, such as India, have highly candidate-centered politics. Indeed, India is a case where Cox's argument should apply, since most legislation comes from the bureaucracy at the behest of the government; individual parliamentarians have very little role in the policy-making process.

Rule of law may explain why variation in the importance of party exists among countries with cabinet government. Assuming strong rule of law, cabinet government may be an important prerequisite for strong parties and a party-based politics. But, it is hard to see why cabinet government should matter in the context of weak rule of law. If voters are uncertain about whether policies will be implemented, then the origin of the policy should not matter. Whether a policy comes from the cabinet or from a rank-and-file parliamentarian, the voter cares more about how that policy will be implemented.

5. India as a weak rule of law democracy

With this section, the chapter now turns away from abstract theorizing to evidence, drawn mainly from India. Before proceeding any further and showing how weak rule of law in India produces a highly candidate-centered brand of politics that differs from strong rule of law democracies, it is necessary to demonstrate that the rule of law is indeed weak in India. Compared to many other poor post-colonial countries, India has an enviable political record. It has been a functioning democracy for over sixty years. The military has never interfered in civilian affairs; the judiciary has repeatedly exercised its independence from the other branches of government; and the national-level bureaucracy is highly selective and recruited through meritocratic competition. India does not conform to the caricature of a "Third World" state—aid-dependent, incapable of feeding its population, and with no meaningful state apparatus aside from a kleptocratic ruling class or a meddlesome military. Yet, the rule of law in India is weak.

5.1 Cross-national indicators

No cross-national indices of which I am aware measure rule of law as the state's failure or success in meeting its policy, regulatory, and legal commitments. Consequently, in order to situate India in a cross-national perspective and to highlight India's weak rule of law, I must rely

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[17] Recent high profile contests that conform to this received wisdom include the 2005 senatorial race and the 2009 congressional contest in the province of Buenos Aires. The former featured two competing Peronist lists, one headed by first lady Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and the other by former first lady Hilda González de Duhalde. In the latter race, former Peronist president and current first gentleman Nestór Kirchner was pitted against businessman Francisco de Narváez, a dissident Peronist with support from Propuesta Republicana.

on a number of measures that imperfectly capture my conceptualization of rule of law. Perhaps the most wide-ranging measures related to the rule of law are the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2008).[18] These indicators aggregate a wide variety of measures into six broad indicators of what the authors refer to as governance. Of these six indicators, three are relevant for understanding the rule of law:

- Government effectiveness: "the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies"
- Rule of law[19]: "the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence" and
- Control of corruption: "the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as 'capture" of the state by elites and private interests."

Together these three Worldwide Governance Indicators (which I refer to as WGI3) capture a substantial portion of state action and should therefore capture a reasonable share of what I mean by strong and weak rule of law.[20] Since the next section will draw comparisons between India and the United States and the United Kingdom, Table 2.2 provides the WGI3 scores for these three countries for the last five years of available data, 2003-2008. WGI3 scores are meant to range from -2.50, indicating the worst outcome, to 2.50, indicating the best.[21] On all three of the indicators included, scores for the U.S. and the U.K. are relatively close to one another, while a wide gap separates both countries from India. India compares unfavorably not only to the U.S. and the U.K. but also to most of the world's stable democracies. Among the 46 countries that averaged a polity score in the Polity IV dataset of 9 or higher during the period from 2003-2007,[22] India's score of -0.08 places it thirty-ninth, well below the mean score of 0.92.[23]

Useful though wide-ranging measures like the Worldwide Governance Indicators are, they have their limitations. First, the Worldwide Governance Indicators are perception-based measures.

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[18] The Worldwide Governance Indicators are available at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp.
[19] Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi's conception of the rule of law is far narrower than mine. Theirs applies specifically to the judicial system.
[20] The other indicators are voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, and regulatory quality. I exclude these measures because they are not applicable to my understanding of the rule of law. "Voice and accountability" better measure freedom and democracy rather than the state's success in meeting its commitments. Rule of law can be strong even in non-democratic societies. I exclude "political stability and absence of violence" because several of the components of the measure are either unrelated or tangentially related to state action or state policy commitments. For example coup attempts, political assassinations, and the presence of extremist groups do not necessarily enhance or diminish a citizen's certainty about whether the state will implement its policies and regulations. Finally, I do not include "regulatory quality" because this indicator focuses on the regulatory climate for the private sector, thereby relying on measures of competitiveness and liberalization, which are unrelated to the state's fulfillment of its policy promises. A state could be highly uncompetitive and have a highly controlled economy but still have strong rule of law.
[21] In a small number of cases, scores fall outside of the 2.50 to -2.50 range.
[22] Polity IV data for 2008 are not yet available.
[23] The highest score was 2.18 (Denmark) and the lowest -0.92 (Papua New Guinea). Israel and Slovenia (0.95) were closest to the mean.

Perception-based measures are particularly problematic for India because the country plausibly benefits from a "halo effect" thanks to its lengthy history of consolidated democracy, an elite (if tiny) corps of national-level civil servants,[24] and the comparatively poor performance of its South Asian neighbors (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan). Together, these factors might artificially inflate perceptions of the Indian state's efficacy. At the same time, perceptions regarding the laggards within a region in which the rule of law is generally strong (e.g., Europe) might suffer from artificially deflated perceptions of state efficacy. Second, measures such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators are hard to meaningfully interpret. What does it mean to go from a 2.16 (Finland) to 1.26 (Chile), and is this 0.9 difference between Finland and Chile the same as the 0.9 difference between Chile and Poland (0.36)?

Other measures are somewhat narrower in scope but more easily interpretable. I briefly examine four. The first two are the number of police and number of professional judges and magistrates per 100,000 inhabitants (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2004).[25] They capture the resources available for enforcing laws and punishing lawbreakers. Without a sufficient number of police and judges, the state is unlikely to be able to uniformly enforce the law. The third measure is the percentage of prisoners who are pre-trial detainees (Walmsley 2007),[26] while the fourth is the number of days required to resolve business disputes (World Bank and International Finance Corporation 2008).[27] Both capture judicial efficiency, which is important for the rule of law because an inefficient judiciary does not provide a sufficient deterrent to breaking the law. The number of pre-trial detainees indicates the slow resolution of court cases as the accused languish in prison while awaiting trial. Similarly, inefficient judiciaries take a great deal of time to resolve business disputes. On all four measures, India performs poorly, again not only relative to the U.S. and the U.K. (see Table 2.2) but relative to all countries. Police and judges are too few, and cases are resolved slowly.[28] Only nine countries have a greater percentage of pre-trial prisoners (Andorra, Bolivia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Timor-Leste) and only five resolve business disputes more slowly (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Suriname, and Timor-Leste). As a result, the disincentives to breaking the law in India are small, and the state's ability to enforce the law is comparatively low.

5.2 Evidence from India

Research specific to India corroborates what the data from cross-national indices reveal: India is a weak rule of law society. The state makes extensive policy commitments yet is pervasively unable to meet them. On the one hand, the Indian state sets out a considerable policy burden that includes leveling India's social and economic hierarchies. The preamble of the constitution outlines the state's directive principles, asserting the state's obligation to provide to Indians:

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[24] The selectivity of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) often obscures several important facts. First, the IAS is tiny, comprising fewer than 3,500 members for a country of 1.1 billion people. Second, most actual policy implementation takes place through the state-level civil services, which are far less selective. Third, the IAS, in spite of its elite reputation, suffers from severe allegations of corruption.

[25] Available at http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Seventh-United-Nations-Survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html.

[26] Available at http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/icps/downloads/WPTRIL.pdf.

[27] Available at http://www.doingbusiness.org/ExploreTopics/EnforcingContracts/.

[28] Wilkinson (2004) also provides state-by-state data on the number of police. His figures are broadly consistent with the national level figures cited here.

"Justice, social, economic, and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity" (Government of India 2008).[29] By all accounts, the Indian state has attempted, as far as formal legality is concerned, to meet its constitutional obligations as stated in the directive principles. For example, Kapur and Mukhopadhyay (2007) points out that the number of poverty alleviation programs continues to increase as the state continually devises new schemes. More generally, the state has never shied away from regulating the social sphere. This has included recent laws prohibiting domestic violence and child labor, restricting the sale of alcohol (including complete prohibition in one state), regulating religious conversion, and banning films from showing cigarette smoking on screen.

In the economic realm, India's Five Year Plans were originally a system of massive state controls colloquially referred to as the "license-permit-quota *raj*." In the third through sixth Five Year Plans, a majority of planned investment in the organized economy went to the public sector, and in 1981, the public sector employed 68% of the workforce in the organized economy (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987: 23).[30] After economic liberalization began in earnest in the early 1990s and the private sector began to flourish, the percentage of the workforce employed by the state still did not decline (Chandra 2004: 117). Whether in the economic or social spheres, there has never been a shortage of law in India. In legislating over a vast array of policy domains, the Indian state sets a high bar for itself to ensure that the rule of law is strong.

After having set a high bar for itself, the Indian state does not have the material or institutional means to meet its policy commitments. The cross-national measures on the criminal justice system highlight India's problems with resource poverty and judicial inefficiency. In addition, the bureaucracy suffers from multiple problems that make routine policy implementation difficult. One of the problems is bureaucratic lethargy; there are few incentives for performance in the Indian bureaucracy. Bureaucrats are hard to fire, even if job performance is poor. Pay is low at all levels of the bureaucracy, diminishing incentives to advance through good job performance. Because of the pervasiveness of corruption, instead of being motivated by increased pay, coveted bureaucratic posts are often those that offer the greatest opportunities for graft and corruption.

Widespread bureaucratic politicization further exacerbates bureaucratic lethargy. Advancement, promotion, and transfer often depend on a bureaucrat's pliability to a politician's wishes rather than on job performance. Since bureaucrats cannot easily be fired, politicians wield influence over a politicized bureaucracy by threatening transfer to an undesirable location or an undesirable post. Wilkinson (2004) cites one example from the state of Madhya Pradesh when the state's Chief Minister at the time, Arjun Singh, "reportedly bought off the internal party opposition from Congress MLAs loyal to the Sethi and Shukla factions by allowing each MLA the right to make four major transfers of civil servants and several minor ones" (77).

The combination of a state that sets out to accomplish a great deal but that also suffers from a highly dysfunctional bureaucratic apparatus produces unsurprising results: For the average Indian, corruption is a well-accepted fact of everyday life. Even the most basic goods and

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[29] The English version of India's constitution is available at http://lawmin.nic.in/coi/coiason29july09.pdf.
[30] The organized sector accounted for only 10% of the total labor force, with 23% involved in small-scale and cottage industries and petty trade, and 67% working in agriculture.

services—certificates verifying death, birth, caste identity, and income; water and electricity connections; and pensions—require bribes. Raman (2002) describes a local-level politician who admitted to having run for panchayat president (the equivalent of a rural mayor) explicitly for the extra income she expected to earn from bribes. Novelist Anita Desai writes in an essay that "In the present time in which the laws and whims of politicians and bureaucrats are as pervasive and as powerful as those of the gods, not only must a minister be propitiated before he will issue a license, allot a house, or award a pension, but so must every clerk through whose hands the relevant file passes" (1991).

6. What voters know and care about in Kolkata, West Bengal

This chapter's argument about the rule of law and electoral politics is premised on the assumption that voters bring a different set of concerns to the table depending on whether they find themselves in a weak or strong rule of law setting. This section provides some suggestive evidence that voters in Kolkata, West Bengal, pay more attention to the parties' record of solving local problems than they do to policy positions.

In November 2006, I carried out, with the help of three research assistants, a small survey of voters in the city of Kolkata, the capital of the state of West Bengal. All 125 respondents were selected through a stratified random sampling procedure, virtually identical to the one used by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in their post-election voter surveys (Lokniti Team 2004).[31] The sample included twenty-five voters each in five of Kolkata's state legislative constituencies (Bow Bazar, Dhakuria, Entally, Kabitirtha, and Maniktola). The setting for this survey is ideal for uncovering the concerns of voters. If there is any place in India where voters would know or care about policy issues, it is in Kolkata. The state of West Bengal is one of the most highly politicized in India, known for the frequency of strikes and political demonstrations, particularly in Kolkata, where the survey was conducted. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) has led seven successive state governments since 1977 and is both highly organized and highly ideological.

To measure levels of political knowledge, the survey asked respondents two questions, both of which required voters to identity a party's position on a particular issue. The first question asked about the CPI(M)'s stance on globalization, whether it opposed or supported it or took no position. Opposition to globalization is an important and long-standing theme for the CPI(M), as it has opposed lifting caps on foreign direct investment and has adopted a strident anti-American

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[31] CSDS uses a four-stage random stratified sample. The four stages are: parliamentary constituency, assembly constituency, polling station, and respondent. At each stage a certain number of units (constituencies, polling stations, and respondents) are randomly selected. From within those randomly selected units, the next stage is randomly selected. Since the city of Kolkata is comprised of three parliamentary constituencies and a small part of a fourth, I omitted the first stage of randomly selecting parliamentary constituencies. Instead, I sampled assembly constituencies from all the parliamentary constituencies, selecting two assembly constituencies from Kolkata North East, two from Kolkata South (and the small part of Jadavpur constituency that falls within the city of Kolkata) and one from Kolkata North West. The number of assembly constituencies selected reflects parliamentary constituency populations. Within each assembly constituency, I then randomly selected two polling booths, within which I randomly selected voters from the state's electoral rolls. Enumerators were given a long list of randomly selected respondents. If a respondent could not be contacted, they selected the next respondent on the list.

posture over the past several years, particularly over the invasion of Iraq, Iran's nuclear program, and the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal.

The second question asked whether the All India Trinmool Congress (AITC), the CPI(M)'s main opponent in Kolkata, opposed or supported the state government's acquisition of agricultural land for the building of a car factory. At the time of the survey in late 2006, land acquisition in and around the town of Singur was the most salient political issue in West Bengal. The Trinamul Congress had staked out a very clear position against the acquisition of agricultural land, arguing that farmers had been coerced into selling their land to the government and that the state government was wrong in selecting such fertile land for the project. The issue was highly contentious, resulting in violence between CPI(M) and Trinamul activists in Singur, a semi-successful general strike in Kolkata, a hunger strike by Trinmool leader Mamata Banerjee, and a violent altercation in the state legislature.

Because the Singur issue was immediately relevant, it is not surprising that far more respondents correctly identified the Trinamul Congress' position on the issue (35%) than the CPI(M)'s stance on globalization (14%). An additional 7% of respondents misidentified Trinamul's position on Singur, and 26% misidentified the CPI(M)'s stance on globalization. However, the majority of respondents on both questions (55% on Singur and 59% on globalization) answered that they did not know the party's position (see Figure 1).[32]

In light of research from many developed countries that underscores pervasive ignorance among voters, these findings may be unsurprising. What is noteworthy, however, is that respondents were not ignorant on questions across the board. When it came to identifying levels of local party activity, respondents provided far fewer "don't know" responses. The survey asked three questions related to party activities:
- Which, if any, political party is most active in your locality?
- Which, if any, political party is best at solving the problems of people in your locality?
- In some political parties, party workers only work at election time. In other parties, party workers work all the time. In your locality, which parties, if any, work all the time, not just at elections?

As the questions became more specific, the first being the most general and the third the most specific, the share of "don't know" responses increased from only 8% on the first question to 29% on the last question. Throughout, majorities on all questions responded to the question with specific party names. A small percentage of voters also responded by saying "no party," which might, for some respondents, indicate a general unawareness of politics. Regardless, the number of voters capable of articulating an opinion about which parties are most active in their constituency far outstrips the number who could articulate an opinion (let alone a correct opinion) about the parties' policy positions.

One might object that respondents felt more comfortable articulating an opinion about questions about party activity because these questions might not have obviously correct answers. However, the questions about local party activity are arguably as difficult as those tapping political knowledge. Whereas anyone with access to radio, television, or newspapers could passively

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[32] The remaining respondents refused to answer the question in any way.

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acquire information about the CPI(M)'s and Trinamul's positions on issues of the day simply by watching the news or glancing at a newspaper, formulating opinions about local party activity requires some measure of engagement with and attention to local politics. The results in this survey would be akin to respondents in the United States not knowing in 2006 whether the Republican Party supported or opposed the Iraq war but still expressing clear opinions on which party is most active in their local area.

What is also comforting about the results is that voters' responses about which parties are most active in their constituency correlate with the parties' electoral performances in these constituencies. In the three constituencies where the CPI(M) and its allies traditionally fare better, more respondents indicated that the CPI(M) and its Left Front allies were more active. The same trend appeared in the constituency in which the Trinamul Congress has been the most successful party of late. And, in the Kabitirtha constituency, where the vote is most evenly divided, more voters than in any of the other four constituencies cited both government and opposition parties as highly active.

The results of this small-scale survey reveal that voters were quite forthcoming with opinions on the activities and problem-solving abilities of the local parties, even though they frequently failed to articulate responses (let alone accurate responses) on the parties' positions on salient issues. While voters may not be paying as much attention to the party's positions on major issues of the day, they do seem to have opinions—and opinions that probably correspond to reality—about the parties' activities in their local areas. This provides suggestive evidence that even in a highly politicized environment like Kolkata, voters tend to pay far more attention to what parties do for them than they do about what parties say about policy.

Of course, this evidence is, at best, suggestive. The survey's small sample and limitation to a single city mean that the results are hardly representative of India as a whole. Furthermore, the survey questions do not differentiate between voters' attention to parties versus politicians and cannot therefore speak to that important aspect of the chapter's argument. Yet, the responses in this survey are consistent with the idea that voters pay far more attention to politicians' local activities on their behalf than they do to the policies that parties pledge to enact.

7. Particularistic service in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom

One important problem with relying on evidence from India alone, as the previous section did, is that it does not provide a comparison with a strong rule of law setting. For precisely this reason, this section compares the importance and nature of elected officials' particularistic service in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The first is a weak rule of law democracy, and the latter two are not (see Section 5 of this chapter).

Under strong rule of law, voters are more interested in a politician's legislative activity, which should lead her to attribute less importance to particularistic service. Under weak rule of law, particularistic service is a politician's primary focus, since that is what voters care about. This section shows how particularistic service in India comprises a greater portion of a legislator's duties than it does in either the U.S. or the U.K. The nature of particularistic service also varies. In the U.S. and the U.K., it frequently takes the form of rectifying unexpected bureaucratic

failures or advocating small policy changes. In India, particularistic service involves allocating scarce goods, addressing pervasive bureaucratic failures, and often breaking the rules.

The U.K. and the U.S. make for a fruitful comparison with India. India and the U.K. have very similar political institutions. Both are parliamentary democracies with weak upper houses that are not directly elected. Legislators are elected from single-member districts, and party discipline is reasonably high. If institutions alone were going to explain variation in particularistic service, then India and the U.K. should look very similar. But, if the rule of law matters, then politics in these two countries should appear very different. The U.S., by contrast, makes for a good comparison with India because it pushes the limit of how far an explanation based on the rule of law can go. Although the U.S. shares some institutions in common with India, most notably its electoral system, the two countries differ in important ways. The United States is a presidential system with low party discipline. Among advanced industrial democracies, American politics is widely regarded as being highly personalized and relatively non-ideological. If politics in any strong rule of law democracy were to resemble politics in India, an argument could be made that it should be the United States. But, if differences persist between India and the United States, then this constitutes strong evidence that Indian politics—and by extension, politics in weak rule of law democracies more generally—differs fundamentally from politics under strong rule of law.

7.1 Frequency of service

In their study of the personal vote in the U.S. and the U.K, Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1987) cite the average number of constituents requesting particularistic service as 71 per week for a member of the American Congress and 36 per week for a British MP (71).[33] Given an approximate average of 600,000 inhabitants per U.S. house district and 70,000 per U.K. House of Commons constituency, these figures work out to about 1 request per 10,000 inhabitants in the U.S. and 5 requests per 10,000 inhabitants in the U.K.

In India, the figures are higher. Chopra (1996) surveyed 207 state legislators from five Indian states—Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal—and found that the median legislator meets with between 25 and 50 constituents daily for every day she is in her constituency. (Presumably, all of these meetings entail some kind of constituent request). Nearly one third of the legislators surveyed reported meeting with 100 or more respondents daily. Taking the average number of constituency meetings to be about 45 and the average number of days that a legislator is in her constituency to be three per week, this works out to 135 requests for particularistic service per week.[34] If the average state legislative constituency is approximately 250,000 people (which is on the higher end of reasonable estimates), the average

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[33] The figure for Congress distinguishes case work—which I refer to as particularistic service—from project work, which is closer to pork or local development projects.

[34] Chopra reports his data clumped into five ranges. To calculate the average across his respondents, I took the midpoint of each category and multiplied it by the number of respondents that fall into that range. Because I want to calculate a conservative estimate, for the category 150+ for which there is no midpoint, I use 150 as the average for the group. Chopra does not provide data on how many days per week a legislator stays in her constituency. From my interviews, it seems that politicians try to spend as much time as possible in their constituency. I therefore estimate that three days per week is a fairly conservative figure.

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number of requests per week is approximately 5.4 per 10,000, roughly the same figure for the United Kingdom.

However, the estimate for India is an extremely conservative one. Most state legislators probably meet with constituents more than three times a week, and many come from much smaller constituencies. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina also note that British MPs field a disproportionate share of their constituents' demands because there are few other elected officials to whom a constituent can turn. India more closely resembles the U.S., where a voter is represented by a number of different politicians: local, state, and national. It is telling therefore that for only one layer of politicians—those at the state level—the per capita incidence of constituent demands is, by the most conservative estimates, as high as the incidence for British MPs. Meanwhile, the Indian figure is much higher than that for the United States, where voters also have many politicians from whom to choose when seeking particularistic service.

As an additional data point, I conducted interviews in February and March 2006 with 21 of the 75 municipal councilors in the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan.[35] In these interviews I asked the municipal councilors how many constituents typically came to them daily for assistance and what the most frequent requests were. Of the 21, fourteen provided estimates of the number of constituents who came to them seeking assistance. Of these fourteen, the mean response was 20-25 constituents daily. The lowest estimate was five to seven per day, while the largest was 50-100 per day (see Table 2.3).[36] Using even the lowest of these estimates, five requests per day, times five days a week, means that a Jaipur municipal councilor receives a weekly average of 25 requests. Using the mean figure of about 20 per day implies about 100 requests per week.[37] The city of Jaipur has roughly 2.3 million inhabitants. With 75 municipal wards, the average constituency size is about 30,000 inhabitants, meaning that the average number of weakly requests ranges from 8.3 per 10,000 inhabitants (at the low end) to 33 per 10,000 (using the mean figure) or more. This figure is enormous relative to the United States and the U.K., especially considering a municipal councilor's relatively limited power and influence.

The evidence supplied so far comes from legislators, but responses from citizens paint a similar picture. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina state that in 1958 in the United States 3.5% of respondents reported that their current representative had helped the respondent or someone in the respondent's family. By 1978, that figure had risen to 9.9% when respondents were asked if they or a family member had ever contacted the sitting member of Congress to request help with a problem (102-103).[38] Following the 1996 general election in India, the Centre for the Study of

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[35] All of the municipal councilors represented wards within what were then the Jaipur Rural and Johri Bazar assembly constituencies, constituencies on which I was then doing case studies.

[36] Considering that all respondents came from neighboring wards in the same city, the variation in response is high. A number of factors could account for this: how many days per week a councilor meets with her constituents (fewer days per week, more requests per day), needs of the ward (greater need, more requests), the councilor's openness and willingness to devote time to constituency requests, inaccuracy (since no councilor appeared to have a system for keeping track of constituent requests), or exaggeration for the sake of self-aggrandizement.

[37] Arguably, calculations assuming five days of constituent meetings per week are questionable. In general, Saturday and Sunday are not treated as days off for politicians. Furthermore, because these are municipal councilors, there is no question of time spent in the constituency versus time spent in capital, as for MLAs and MPs.

[38] Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina define casework to include both help with problems and personal favors and services as well as requests for information. Requests for information came from 1.1% of respondents in 1958 and 7.7% in

Developing Societies (CSDS) administered a survey of over 9,000 eligible voters from across India asking a similar question. According to the CSDS survey, 15.1% reported having met a political leader to resolve a need or a problem, and 21.6% reported personally knowing a leader.[39]

Because of differences in question wording, comparison between the U.S. and India figures is difficult. On the one hand, the CSDS question does not ask respondents about a specific type of politician (e.g., MP, MLA, municipal councilor), while the data cited by Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina ask specifically about the incumbent representative (i.e., member of Congress). This would seem to suggest that the CSDS figures are inflated relative to Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina's since they may reflect constituents' experiences with multiple types of representatives. On the other hand, the data presented by Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina ask only about the experience of the respondent and his family, whereas the CSDS question asks about only the respondent himself. If the Indian figure asked whether anyone in the respondent's family had ever met with a politician for help, then the Indian figure would certainly be much higher, particularly since the CSDS survey polls roughly equal numbers of men and women. Given existing gender norms in India, particularly in rural areas, women should be far less likely than men to have met with a politician.

7.2 The nature of service

In addition to the frequency of particularistic service, the nature of particularistic service should also vary between strong and weak rule of law democracies and therefore between the U.S. and the U.K. at one end of the spectrum and India at the other. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina's prototypical examples of case work are a British MP campaigning to get noise barriers erected along a stretch of highway and a Congressional staffer helping an injured shipyard worker to get disability compensation. In the British case, the politician succeeded in winning the noise barriers through patient lobbying and drawing attention to the apparent irrationality of a bureaucratic decision. Meanwhile, the Congressional staff persuaded a federal agency to reclassify the worker as eligible for disability compensation and persuaded the worker's creditors to work out a program of re-payment to allow the worker to repay the debts he accrued before he received his disability payments. In this instance, the staff did not persuade bureaucrats to bend the rules or forget them altogether, but instead took advantage of instances when bureaucrats could exercise discretion. More generally, Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina describe casework as "an opportunity for elected representatives to help constituents challenge the decisions of bureaucrats" (58).

A more recent example of constituency service occurred when the United States began to require passports for American citizens' re-entering the country from Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean when traveling by air. The new rules greatly increased demand for passports, leading to long lines and extensive delays. Many citizens turned to their elected officials for help, but resolution of the problem came less in the form of particularistic service and more in the form of policy change. In response to the problem of backlogged passports, the State Department offered

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1978. The comparable question that I will refer to from the 1996 CSDS survey clearly asks respondents only about what Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina would call personal help, not information.

[39] The CSDS survey question does not present a clear time dimension as to when request for help were made.

a temporary reprieve, allowing travelers to re-enter the United States so long as they had proof that they had applied for passports. This compromise "follow[ed] prodding by many members of Congress whose offices [had] been deluged with protests from their districts" (Blumenthal 2007). Faced with their constituents' ire, Senators and Representatives "wrote to Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff" and "appealed to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to permit travelers waiting for passports to show birth certificates or alternate identification." As with the above examples, the politicians' response to their constituents' complaints was to use their position to appeal to top-level bureaucrats to re-consider a decision with which their constituents disagreed.

In places like the United States and the United Kingdom constituents often approach their representatives for requests unrelated to particularistic service. For instance, Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina note that a large number of constituents contact their legislators' offices to acquire information rather than ask for a favor that requires use of the legislator's power and influence. Additionally, constituent requests often take the form of policy demands. For instance, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) report that in a 1984 survey 18.6% of 45-59 year olds had written to their Congressmen. [40] Typically, letters to legislators concern policy issues. Rosenstone and Hansen cite examples as diverse as concerns over Supreme Court nominees, calls to impeach Richard Nixon after the Watergate scandal, the federal budget, and social security.

Among the Jaipur municipal councilors that I interviewed, 19 provided answers to my questions about the most common requests that they received when constituents came to them for help. Most councilors provided more than one response, so the total number of type of requests was 71 for the 19 councilors. As Table 2.4 shows, many of the requests, 33 of the 71, were for small-scale public infrastructure (sanitation, public lighting, water, and roads) that would benefit people in a specific neighborhood or street. The remaining 38 were purely private requests, with no broader public impact. Of these 38, there were 23 mentions of requests to redress bureaucratic problems, including obtaining a variety of certificates and documents required to access state services. These requests could entail either righting a wrong committed by an inefficient or incompetent bureaucracy or bending the rules to help ineligible constituents obtain documents required to access services to which they were not rightfully entitled. Finally, the remaining 15 mentions were for personal problems relating to schools, the police, and medical care. None related to broader policy issues.

My findings are similar to Chopra's (1996) findings from the MLAs he surveyed. Chopra asked MLAs whether the requests they received were nearly all personal requests, mostly personal requests, equally personal and public requests, or mostly public requests. Personal requests meant "recommendations for employment, [job] transfers, and help in resolving police cases" as well as "matters relating to land affairs and land revenue" (103). Meanwhile, "public" requests were for pork and community development—essentially the types of local infrastructure demanded by residents of Jaipur from their municipal councilors.

Among Chopra's 207 MLAs, 63.8% said that nearly all or most of the requests were private, while 16.9% said requests were just as much private as public. Only 18.8% cited mostly public

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[40] In their presentation of the data, Rosenstone and Hansen do not state if the survey question indicated a time frame for when the constituent contacted his member of Congress.

demands. Interestingly, throughout an otherwise exhaustive study of the characteristics, attitudes, and activities of Indian MLAs, Chopra never inquired about constituents contacting their MLAs about policy issues. This is probably not an oversight on Chopra's part. Rather, it more likely reflects the fact that the type of letter writing and lobbying for policy changes that many Americans and British constituents engage in is very uncommon in India. My own fieldwork turned up no evidence of constituents routinely contacting politicians for the purposes of trying to influence policy formulation. Instead, their requests were uniformly related to policy implementation, as indicated in Chopra's data.

8. Party switching and independent candidacies

The previous two sections discussed two ideas, first that voters in weak rule of law democracies care more about policy implementation than they do about policy formulation and second, that the demands for policy implementation fall heavily on politicians. If both are true, then party should matter less to voters and politicians should be freer under weak rule of law to contest as independent candidates or switch parties than they would be under strong rule of law. A candidate's independent status should not bother voters who are unconcerned about her influence on the policy formulation process and care only about local policy implementation. Nor should party switching matter to voters since the inconsistent signal it sends about the policies that the candidate supports is relatively unimportant to the voter.

For comparison to India, I again turn to the U.S. and the U.K. To calculate the frequency of independent candidacies and party switching, I examined elections to the U.S. House of Representatives (1972-2006, 18 elections), the British House of Commons (1966-2000, 10 elections), and the Indian Lok Sabha (1977-2004, 8 elections). These raw data show that the majority of candidates in Indian parliamentary elections are independents (see Table 2.5), while only a tiny percentage of British and American candidates are independents. Most of these independent candidates in India are completely unsuccessful, but among all candidates winning at least 10% of the vote in their constituency, the percentage who are independent candidates is still more than seven times higher than in the United Kingdom and more than 50 times higher than in the United States.

Similarly, the frequency of party switching is also far higher in India. I counted a party switch as any time when a candidate contests on different party labels (including as an independent) in two consecutive elections in the same constituency.[41] In India, more than 18% of all repeated candidacies observed in the data involved a party switch, more than eleven times more than in either the U.S. or the U.K. The complete electoral data from the national level are consistent with Chopra's smaller sample of state legislators. From among his 207 MLAs, approximately 27% had switched parties at least once. These data, along with those on independent candidates, suggest that politicians in India are far more willing to eschew party labels and switch parties

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[41] I do not count a change in party affiliation if the candidate remained with her original party even if the original party changed its name. If a party changed its name or merged wholesale into another party, then I do not count this as a change in party affiliation since the candidate did not decide to switch parties. However, in instances of party splits, the candidate has a choice about whether to remain with the original party or to move to the splinter party; therefore I count it as a party switch if a politician joins a party that split from her original party.

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with impunity. This could happen for many reasons, but it suggests that the penalties for doing so are not inordinately high.

Indeed, when politicians switch between party labels and independent labels, their vote shares exhibit less change in India than they do in the U.S. or the U.K. (see Figure 2.2). In other words, in the strong rule of law democracies, politicians tend to lose more of their vote share when the switch from being a partisan to an independent and gain more when they move from an independent label to a party label. This is consistent with the idea that party carries more weight among voters in a strong rule of law democracy than in a weak rule of law one.

Several caveats about these data merit mention. First, these data come from only three countries. Though they share electoral systems, they differ on other dimensions that are not taken into account here. Second, the data could suffer from selection biases. For instance, it could be that Indian politicians lose less support when they leave a party label to contest as an independent because only strong candidates confident of retaining their support would opt to contest as independents. Weaker candidates might choose not to contest elections if deprived of their party label.[42] Third, the options available to switch parties differ across these countries. In the U.S. there are only two main parties. A candidate therefore has few options if she is dissatisfied with her party. This could influence her likelihood of switching parties or contesting as an independent. By contrast, in the U.K. and India, politicians have more options. Although India's national legislature is highly fragmented, most states have between two and four major parties, meaning that the major options available to Indian politicians are not all that different from the number available to the British, where that number is between three and four. However, the fact that differences persist between the U.K. and India is reassuring evidence that the number of parties in the party system is not entirely driving variation in the frequency of party switching.

9. Devi Singh Bhati: An illustration of a politician under weak rule of law[43]

Up to now, the empirical sections of this chapter have attempted to identify patterns in weak and strong rule of law democracies. Voters in weak rule of law polities focus on implementation of policy rather than its formulation; weak rule of law politicians focus more on particularistic service and appear less dependent on parties for their voters. This section turns to a concrete illustration of what weak rule of law politics looks like. To do so, it describes the career of a state-level politician in Rajasthan, Devi Singh Bhati. This example highlights the candidate-centered nature of politics, relative unimportance of party, and centrality of individual-level attributes.

Devi Singh Bhati is a seven-time member of the Rajasthan legislative assembly from the Kolayat assembly constituency in Bikaner district. He hails from a landed Rajput[44] family, and his family's traditional standing in the area aided him upon his entry into politics. He says:

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[42] However, one could also argue that parties usually re-nominate strong candidates, suggesting that those who contest as independent candidates may be disproportionately weaker. If so, then we should expect to see an even greater decline in vote share for politicians who leave parties for independent labels. Either way, there are potential selection biases when examining data on party switching.

[43] This section is based on my interview with Devi Singh Bhati on August 22, 2006 in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

[44] Rajputs are the traditional land-owning caste in Rajasthan.

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I am from a village. This village and the surrounding villages are my family's *jagir*.[45] It is in my blood to do something for others. After my graduation [from college], people came to me with their problems. I became *sarpanch* [equivalent of a rural mayor], running unopposed. Villagers came by the thousands to vote for me.

In 1980, Devi Singh Bhati decided to contest state legislative elections. Earlier that year, Indira Gandhi's Indian National Congress had won national-level elections, riding to victory in 18 of Rajasthan's 25 parliamentary constituencies. But, Devi Singh Bhati was uninterested in joining Congress, so he contested as a member of the Janata Party[46] and won his seat by a handsome margin. He contested again in 1985, also as a candidate of the Janata Party, which eventually merged into the Janata Dal, on whose label he contested and won in 1990.

However, prior to the 1993 election, Devi Singh Bhati joined the BJP. In the early 1990s, the Janata Dal had begun to fall apart, and many politicians in Rajathan left the party for either Congress or the BJP. By the time of the 1993 election, the Janata Dal was much reduced in size, though still a relevant player in Rajasthani politics. Had he wished to remain in the Janata Dal, Devi Singh Bhati could have; the party was no more marginal in 1993 than the Janata Party was in 1985. Instead, he joined the BJP, saying that "when the Janata Dal split, I was welcomed into the BJP even without an RSS background.[47] There is no ideology. Anyone can jump from party to party." His subsequent political trajectory amply illustrates his claim.

In late 2003, after having twice won his seat from Kolayat on the BJP ticket in 1993 and 1998, the BJP expelled Devi Singh Bhati from the party for "anti-party activities." The main source of conflict with the BJP appears to have been the issue of reservation (i.e., affirmative action) for poor members of the upper castes. The BJP only tepidly endorsed this policy, refusing to take substantive action to institute it, while Devi Singh Bhati was fervently in favor of it. In response to his expulsion, Devi Singh Bhati turned an organization that he had previously founded to agitate on behalf of upper caste reservation into a new political party, the Rajasthan Samajik Nyaya Manch (RSNM, Rajasthan Social Justice Platform). Devi Singh Bhati won his seat in late 2003 on the RSNM ticket. He was the only member of his party to win a seat.

In September 2007, Bhati rejoined the BJP. The then BJP Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje Scindia, said on the occasion of Bhati's re-entry that his "joining the party would strengthen our [the BJP's] position. All the 36 communities are now with the party" (Sebastian 2007). Presumably, Raje's reference to the 36 communities implies that without

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[45] At independence, indigenous princes directly controlled approximately 40% of what eventually became the state of Rajasthan, while vassals of these princes, *jagirdars*, owned the remainder. The *jagirdars* estates were called *jagirs*. The *jagirdari* system was abolished in the 1950s.

[46] According to official election results, Devi Singh Bhati's party label in 1980 was the Janata Party (JP) and in 1985 the Janata Party. These were, in fact, the same party. The "(JP)" following "Janata Party" in the 1980 election made clear the distinction between the rump Janata Party and the Janata Party (Secular), which had recently broken away from the original Janata Party.

[47] The RSS is the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, a Hindu organization that is officially non-political but closely linked to the BJP. The amount of control that the RSS exercises over the BJP is never clear and appears to shift over time. However, the RSS is thought to exert some influence over candidate selection in elections. A substantial number of state legislators and officeholders in Rajasthan were members of the RSS before becoming active in politics.

Bhati, the party did not have the full support of the Rajputs and therefore all of the (supposed) 36 communities that comprise Rajasthan.

This brief recounting of Devi Singh Bhati's career highlights two important observations. First, Devi Singh Bhati repeatedly switched party label (four times), with little apparent effect (see Figure 2.3). The electorate does not seem to have penalized him for his inconstancy. Instead, when he switched parties, his electoral support did not change perceptibly, and ironically his biggest slip in support occurred between the 1993 and 1998 elections, when he contested on the BJP label both times.[48] Second, Devi Singh Bhati appears to owe much of his support, especially initially, to his various individual attributes. He alludes to his landed background as the son of the local landlord and his obligation to help those living on his family's lands. His start in politics came when he became a kind of ombudsman, or problem-solver, for the local villagers. His caste identity has almost certainly been important as well. Vasundhara Raje obliquely referred to him as an important Rajput caste leader, a perception supported by the fact that the RSNM was a complete failure outside of Kolayat but for the modest support that it won among Rajputs elsewhere in the state.

Devi Singh Bhati happens to be a case that well illustrates the politics of weak rule of law, but his career is hardly an aberration. Though not all politicians switch parties, many do (see Section 8 above). Examples like Devi Singh Bhati abound and can be found throughout India. Another good illustration comes from the tiny Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, where Mohanbhai Sanjibhai Delkar won the Union territory's lone parliamentary seat six times running, only to lose in 2009. He began his parliamentary career in 1989 as an independent, ran on the Congress party label in 1991 and 1996, switched to the BJP in 1998, before running as an independent again in 1999. For the 2004 election he founded his own party, the Bharatiya Navshakti Party, only to return to Congress for the 2009 election. Across all of these elections his vote share never dipped below 40% (see Figure 2.4). Throughout, much of his support remained unfailing thanks to his position as a leader of constituency's largest tribal community and a former trade unionist, his alleged ties to organized crime, and the fact that his father was a former MP for Dadra and Nagar Haveli (Rawat 1998; Saiyed 2009). Together, these latter two factors positioned him as something akin to a local notable. Thus, Delkar's career closely resembles many aspects of Devi Singh Bhati's. As a politician under weak rule of law, he— rather than his party—are at the center of politics.

10. Luni constituency: An example of attribute voting

This final section discusses attribute voting, a topic to which the empirical sections of the chapter have so far paid little attention. While modest evidence in favor of the link between weak rule of law and candidate-centered politics can be fairly readily observed, evidence on the motivations of voters and the determinants of their vote choice is harder to discern without good individual-level data. To give a flavor for where the idea of attribute voting comes from, I recount the electoral history of Luni constituency, a state legislative constituency in India. In this constituency, neither party nor clientelism appears to explain the results of state-level elections in the constituency. Instead, the model of attribute voting more closely fits the bill.

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[48] The drop in support appears to have come about as a result of the entry of an important third candidate, Kanhaiya Lal Jhanwar, in 1998.

10.1 Luni constituency

Luni is a state-level legislative constituency in the northwestern state of Rajasthan. The constituency is located in the western portion of the state, in the district of Jodhpur. As of 2003, the constituency had approximately 160,000 eligible voters.[49] Although the constituency is entirely rural, it is adjacent to Jodhpur, a city of about 850,000 residents. Luni constituency first came into being in the 1957 Rajasthan state elections. Since then, the constituency boundaries in Rajasthan have been revised four times, ahead of the 1962, 1967, 1977, and 2008 elections. Given the constituency's entirely rural character, agriculture is the predominant economic activity, despite the dry conditions that prevail in this part of the state. However, the constituency's proximity to Jodhpur ties it closely to the city's economy.

The overwhelming majority of the population is Hindu, and at least 70% of the constituency's population belongs to one of five Hindu castes: Vishnoi (20%), Patel (20%), Jat (15%), Meghwal (15%), and Rajput (10%). Because the Indian census does not publish caste-wise population data, these figures represent my best estimates based on local interviews.[50] From among these five communities, Rajputs are the only community classified as "General Caste"—the residual category for all castes not classified as OBC, SC, or ST. Jats, Vishnois, and Patels are all classified as OBC, while Meghwals are an SC community. Traditionally, Rajputs have been the major land-owning community, but with independence and land reform, many of the traditional cultivating castes became landowners as well. Today, Vishnois, Jats, and Patels own much of the constituency's land. Although classified as "backward," Vishnois—and to a lesser degree, Jats and Patels—enjoy considerable influence in the constituency. Meghwals remain, for the most part, economically backward and do not wield much political influence. In addition to the five largest castes, there are also sizeable Brahmin and Muslim communities.

10.2 Clientelism and party in Luni

As in virtually all constituencies in Rajasthan, Congress and the BJP are the two main political parties in Luni. Although traditional clientelistic exchange cannot be ruled out as a major determinant of most voters' vote choice, the possibility seems remote. Luni is a good example of some of the problems that have dogged the study of clientelism. How does clientelism work if most voters do not actually receive goods and services? And, how do politicians monitor vote choice under the secrete ballot? Neither of the major parties or their candidates is in close contact with the electorate. Both parties are loosely organized in Luni. There is little political activity in the constituency outside of election time,[51] and, since the constituency has only small villages and hamlets, it has no party offices. The closest offices are located in Jodhpur. Most of the major candidates in the constituency also reside in Jodhpur. The current MLA, Malkhan Singh Vishnoi, owns a business in Jodhpur, and the former MLA, Joga Ram Patel, has a law practice in the city.

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[49] Thanks to delimitation, the borders of the constituency changed for the 2008 election. In the newly delimited constituency, there are approximately 210,000 eligible voters.

[50] These estimates are, almost without exception, lower than those offered by my interview respondents. In many instances, respondents described caste demographies whose percentages totaled more than 100%. I therefore revised down their figures to arrive at my own estimates.

[51] Based on 13 interviews conducted in and around Luni constituency from August 28-September 2, 2006.

In these circumstances—a rural constituency, remote candidates, and poorly organized parties—the constituency hardly represents the kind of political machine on which clientelism thrives (Scott 1969; Chubb 1972). It would seem unlikely that the parties routinely reach citizens to distribute goods or could monitor their vote choice.

Since the formation of the constituency, Congress has dominated elections, winning 10 of the 13 election contests held since 1957 and losing by relatively narrow margins of 5% or less in its recent losses (1993 and 2004).[52] The party's success suggests the possibility that party is, indeed, an important factor shaping vote behavior. But, there are several peculiar features of Luni's electoral history that do not square with the idea of an electorate voting based on party. First, the parties' vote shares have been highly volatile (see Figure 2.5). Congress' vote share spiked dramatically in 1985 and appeared to be on a downward trajectory for more than a decade, after which the party rebounded. The BJP's vote share, as well as that of its predecessor in the constituency, the Janata Party, has been consistently up and down, and third-party candidates have had wildly varying success in the constituency. Second, the fluctuations in vote share in the constituency do not map onto state-level trends. Figure 2.6 shows Congress' vote share in Luni and in Rajasthan as a whole. The figure demonstrates that the party's success in Luni does not mirror that of the party in Rajasthan. As often as not, the vote shares in Luni go up even as the party's fortunes in the state go down. The same applies to the BJP (not shown). Neither the extreme variability in party vote shares nor the apparent disconnect between constituency- and state-level party results are consistent with an electorate that votes primarily based on party label.

10.3 Caste voting in Luni

Instead of being caught up either in clientelistic networks or voting for party labels, voters in Luni appear to be voting based on the caste attributes of the candidates contesting elections. Although electoral results fluctuate considerably from year to year, there are considerable similarities across those elections in which the candidates' caste attributes are identical. Table 2.7 arrays election results by the caste profile of the candidates. When two Vishnoi candidates contest against one another with no other major candidates (1977, 1980, 1993), the contest is usually a close one, in which the two candidates divide the vote evenly. In fact, when the same two candidates, Ram Singh Vishnoi and Ram Narain Vishnoi, ran in 1977 and 1980, the vote shares were almost identical. In those elections when candidates from numerically small upper castes have run (1985, 1990, 2004), they have fared poorly, despite sometimes contesting on major party labels, such as the BJP. By contrast, when candidates from large OBC communities (Jat and Patel) contest, they make major dents in the vote, even if on a minor party label (RSNM, 2004) or as an independent (1998).

One of the puzzles presented by Luni's electoral history is the performance of the constituency's long-time legislator, Ram Singh Vishnoi. He was the Congress candidate from 1977 to 2003. Since his attributes remain the same and his importance in the constituency only increased with time, why would his vote share exhibit considerable variability, including a substantial decline over several elections? The answer lies in the attributes of his opponents. Ram Singh's vote share never dipped below one-third of the electorate, but the size of his vote share above that depended largely on who his opponents were. When facing only an upper caste candidate in 1985, he won

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[52] These 13 elections include a by-election held in 2004 after the death of the sitting MLA, Ram Singh Vishnoi.

a crushing majority, as the non-upper castes evidently preferred him to his upper caste opponent. And, when facing another Vishnoi as well as an opponent from a large OBC community (1998, 2003), Ram Singh won by very narrow margins.

The variability of the parties' vote shares is also noteworthy. Although the BJP fielded upper caste candidates in 1985 and 1990, when it then fielded Vishnoi candidates in 1993 and 1998, its vote share shot up. The party did not seem to carry the upper caste stigma that brought about its two previous electoral debacles. This is particularly interesting given the fact that the BJP's main state-level leader was Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, an upper caste Rajput. Additionally, the party's local cadre of workers probably changed very little during this time. These facts suggest that voters cared specifically about the attribute of the candidate, not about the caste profile of the party as a whole.

The example of Luni constituency cannot irrefutably prove that the model of attribute voting accurately captures the reality of how voters in Luni decide how to cast their ballots. However, election results in the constituency are entirely consistent with this explanation. It remains for further research to show that votes actually use these attributes to infer how politicians will selectively implement policy once in office.

Table 2.1 Argument summary

	Strong rule of law	*Weak rule of law*
Policy implementation is:	Certain	Uncertain
Voters wish to influence:	Policy formulation	Policy implementation
Which requires:	Legislative activity	Particularistic service
Which is governed by:	Parties	Individuals
Therefore, voters care about:	Parties	Politicians

Table 2.2 Rule of law indicators for the U.S., U.K., and India

	United Kingdom	*United States*	*India*
Worldwide Governance Indicators			
Government effectiveness	1.79 (13th)	1.69 (18th)	-0.05 (95th)
Rule of law	1.66 (15th)	1.55 (18th)	0.15 (92nd)
Control of corruption	1.86 (14th)	1.50 (18th)	-0.34 (114th)
WGI3	1.77 (14th)	1.58 (18th)	-0.08 (96th)
Other			
Police per 100,000	238.1	243.9	103.5
Judges and magistrates per 100,000	6.2	10.4	1.1
Pre-trial detainees (as % of total prison pop.)	16.5%	21.2%	69.7%
Contract enforcement (# of days)	404	300	1420

Sources: World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators for the years 2003-2008 (Kaufman, Kraay, and Mastruzzi 2009); Seventh United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (police, judges); International Centre for Prison Studies (Walsmsley 2007); World Bank and International Finance Corporation's Doing Business 2009.

Note: Raw figures for Worldwide Governance Indicators represent means for the years 2003-2008. WGI3 is the average across all three indicators. The country's rank is in parentheses. The total number of countries with scores calculated was 212 (government effectiveness), 211 (rule of law), 209 (control of corruption), and 212 (WGI3). The United Kingdom figure for pre-trial detainees is for England and Wales only. Scotland and Northern Ireland are not included.

Table 2.3 Number of constituents politicians in India meet daily

Number of constituents	0-19	20-49	50-99	100-150	150+	Total sample
MLAs from five states	19%	31%	16%	21%	13%	207
	(40)	(65)	(33)	(43)	(26)	
Jaipur municipal councilors	50%	29%	21%	0%	0%	14
	(7)	(4)	(3)	(0)	(0)	

Note: Each range represents the number of constituents that a politician meets with daily. Entries indicate the percentage of politicians (absolute number in parentheses) who fall into each category. Politicians from the Chopra sample are state legislators (members of legislative assembly, MLAs) from Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Politicians from the Ziegfeld sample are municipal councils in Jaipur from the former Johri Bazar and Jaipur Rural assembly constituencies.

Source: MLAs: Chopra (1996); municipal councilors: author fieldwork, Jaipur, Rajasthan, February-March 2006.

Table 2.4 Type of requests made by constituents to Jaipur municipal councilors

Type of request	# of mentions	Most common examples
Local infrastructure	33	Sanitation, lights, water, roads
Bureaucratic malfunction	23	Below poverty line cards, ration cards, pensions, certificates
Personal problems	15	Medical, police, school admission

Note: Nineteen Jaipur municipal councilors listed the most common types of requests made by constituents. Because most respondents gave more than one answer, the total number of request mentions sums to 71.

Source: Author fieldwork, February-March 2006.

Table 2.5 Party switching and independent candidacies

	U.S.	U.K.	India
Total repeated candidacies	6375	4666	9061
% contesting on different party labels	1.25%	1.63%	18.53%
Total independent candidacies	629	763	34,084
As a % of all candidates	2.48%	2.52%	60.59%
As a % of all candidates winning 10%+	0.06%	0.44%	3.29%

Notes: Data are from Lok Sabha elections in India, 1977-2004; the U.K. House of Commons elections, 1960-2001; and for the calculation of independent candidacies U.S. House of Representative elections, 1946-2006 and for repeated candidacies, U.S. House of Representatives elections, 1972-2006 for repeated candidacies. A repeated candidacy is counted if the same candidate contests in the same constituency in consecutive elections. I exclude repeated candidacies when electoral constituencies are redrawn or when the same candidate contests consecutive elections in different constituencies or in the same constituency in non-consecutive elections.

Source: India: Election Commission of India; the U.S.: Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives; the U.K.: Kimber 2000 (http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/edates.htm); author calculations.

Table 2.6 Election results in Luni assembly constituency, by candidate caste

	Vishnoi (INC)	*Vishnoi (BJP/JNP)*	*OBC*	*Upper caste*
Vishnoi v. Vishnoi				
1993	45%	50%	--	--
1980	57%	40%	--	--
1977	57%	42%	--	--
Vishnoi v. Vishnoi v. OBC				
2003	34%	18%	**33%**	--
1998	37%	35%	**25%**	--
Vishnoi v. OBC v. Upper caste				
2004	40%	--	44%	**12%**
1990	50%	--	25%	14%
Vishnoi v. Upper caste				
1985	83%	--	--	13%

Note: Candidates running on minor party labels are in bold. In the column for Vishnoi (BJP/JNP), the party labels are: 1977—JNP, 1980—JNP(S), 1993-2003—BJP. In the OBC column, the party labels are: 1990—JD, 1998—Independent, 2003—RSNM, 2004—BJP. In the upper caste column, the party labels are: 1985-90—BJP, 2004—RSNM.

Source: Election Commission of India; author fieldwork, Luni, Rajasthan, August-September 2006.

Figure 2.1 Survey of voter knowledge about issues and party activity in Kolkata
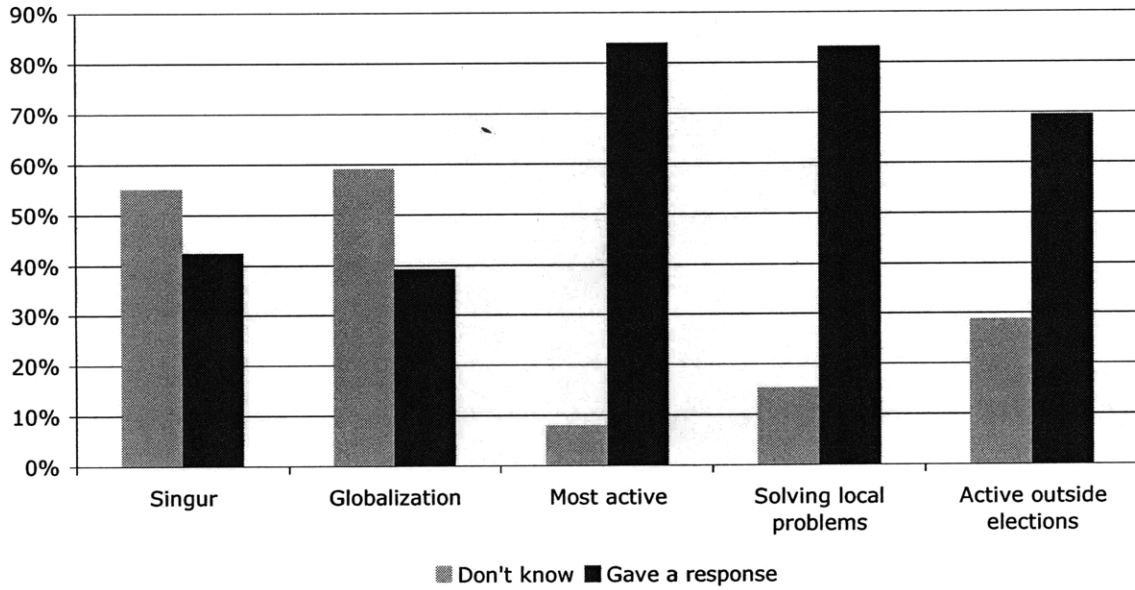
Notes: Percentages do not total 100%. The remaining respondents refused to provide any response.

Source: Author fieldwork, Kolkata, West Bengal, November 2006.

Figure 2.2 Average vote change among candidates switching to/from independent labels
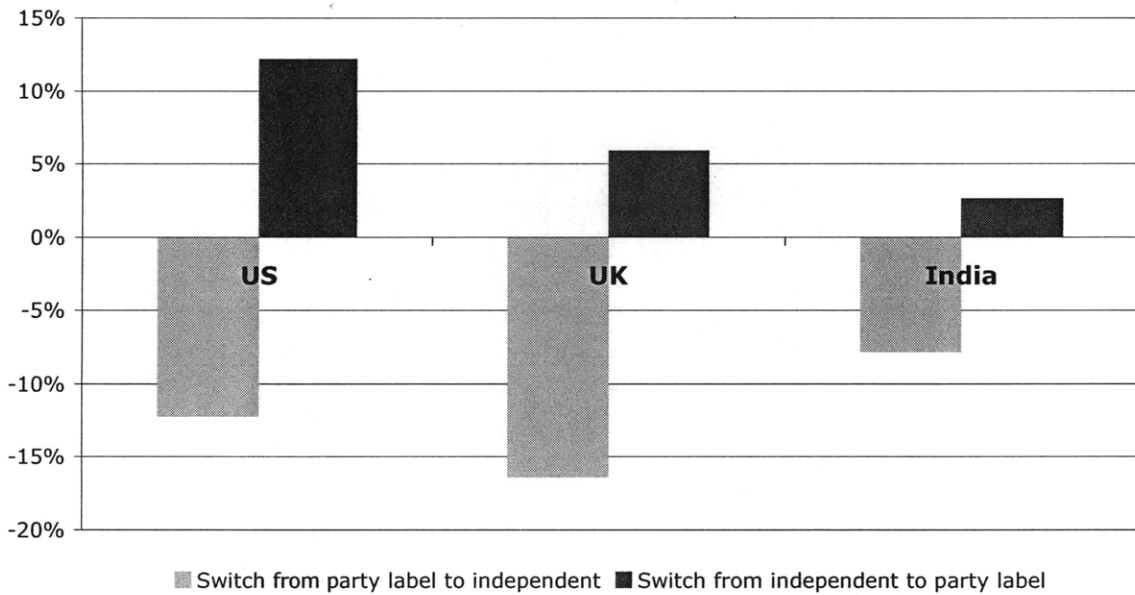
Note: Columns represent the average vote share gained or lost when candidates switch to/from party labels to/from contesting as independent candidates. Light grey columns represent the average vote share lost by candidates who switched from a party label to an independent label. Dark grey columns represent the average vote share gained by candidates switching from an independent label to a party label. Only repeated candidacies, as described in Table 2.5. are included.

Source: Author calculations based on data. For details on data, see Table 2.5.

Figure 2.3 Vote shares won by Devi Singh Bhati in Kolayat assembly constituency

JNP	JNP	JD	BJP	BJP	RSNM	BJP
1980	1985	1990	1998	1998	2003	2008
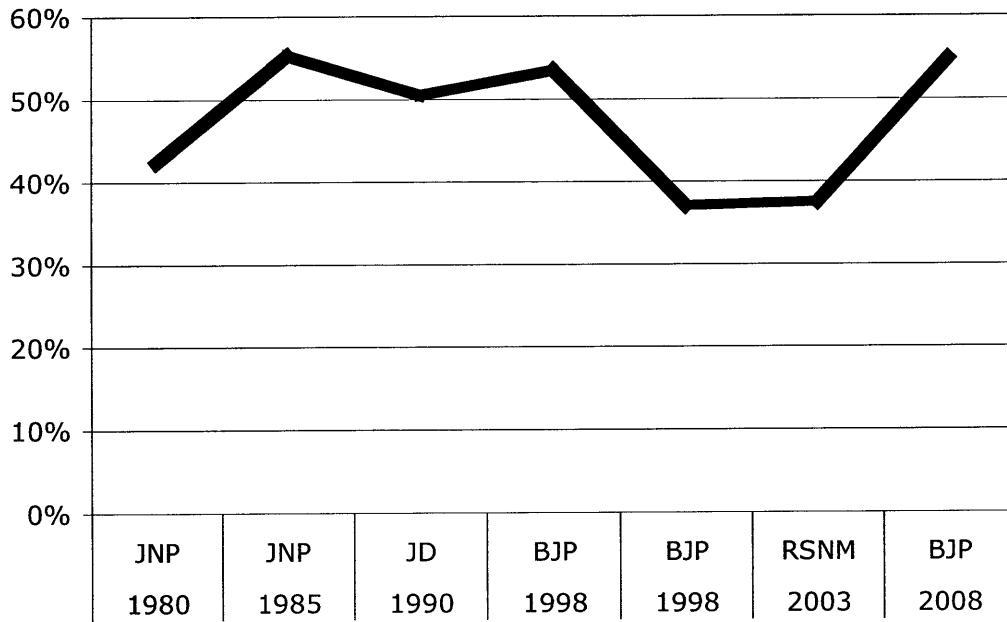
Note: The abbreviations above the election years represent the party labels on which Devi Singh Bhati contested.

Source: Election Commission of India.

Figure 2.4 Vote shares won by Mohanbhai Sanjibhai Delkar in Dadra & Nagar Haveli parliamentary constituency

	Ind	INC	INC	BJP	Ind	BNP	INC
	1989	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009
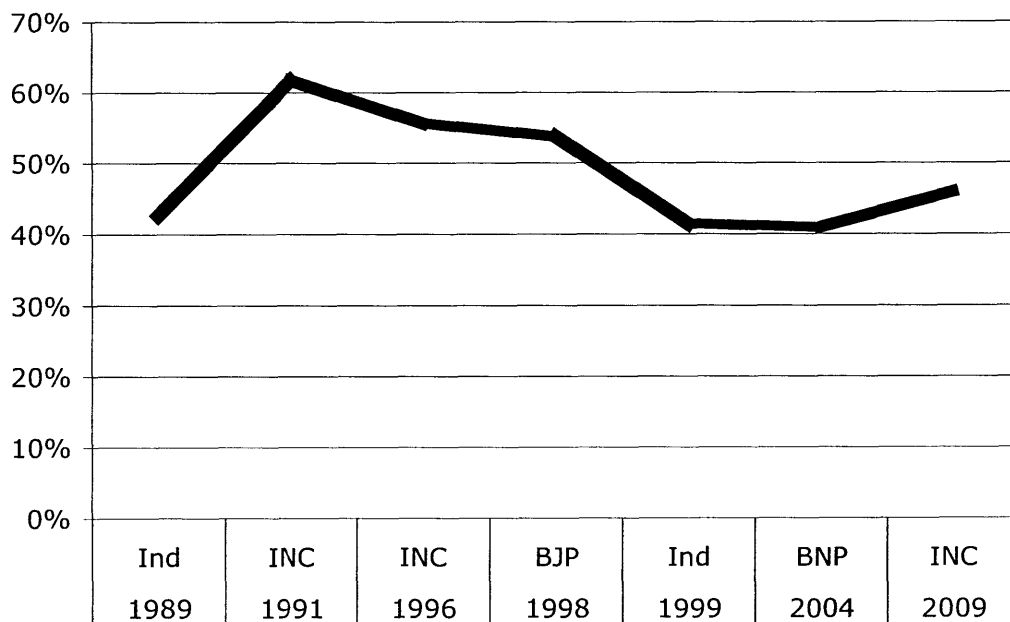
Note: The abbreviations above the election years represent the party labels on which Mohanbhai Sanjibhai Delkar contested.

Source: Election Commission of India.

Figure 2.5 Party vote shares in Luni assembly constituency
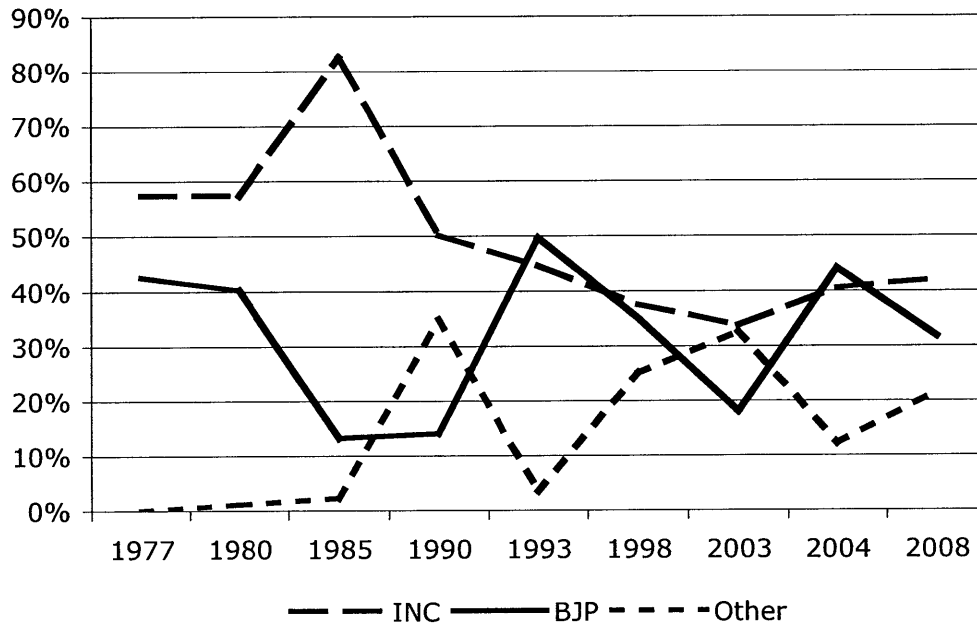
Note: The "other" candidates contested on the following party labels: Independent—1977-85, 1993-98; Janata Dal—1993; Rajasthan Samajik Nyaya Manch (RSNM)—2003-04; Bahujan Samaj Party—2008. In 1977 and 1980, the candidate whose vote share is included in the BJP line contested for the Janata Party and Janata Party (Secular), respectively.

Source: Election Commission of India.

Figure 2.6 Congress votes shares in Rajasthan state and Luni assembly constituency
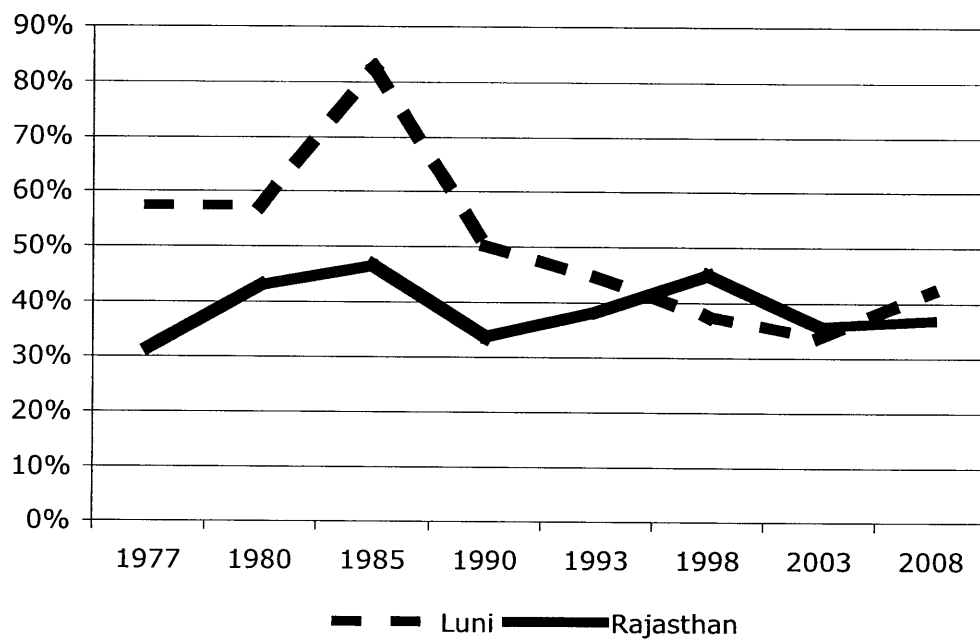
Source: Election Commission of India.

Chapter 3. Rule of law and party systems

A great deal of previous research on the personal vote (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; McCubbins and Rosenbluth 1995; Samuels 2002), pork-barrel politics (Ames 1995; Stratmann and Baur 2002); corruption (Chang and Golden 2006), and the incumbency advantage (Cox and Katz 1996; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002) has noted how politics in some places and at some times revolves more around individuals than it does at other times and in other places. Nevertheless, this fact has not found its way into the study of party systems and their formation. This chapter explores the implications of weak rule of law and candidate-centered politics for party system formation and argues the dissertation's second major claim: When the rule of law is weak and politics is therefore candidate-centered, then elite-level behavior (i.e., the behavior of politicians) shapes party systems far more than mass-level preferences.

Section 1 elaborates on why candidate-centered politics means that politicians' preferences rather than voters' preferences determine the shape of a party system. Section 2 discusses the implications of this argument for the study of parties and party systems. Section 3 provides cross-national evidence indicating that in weak rule of law countries parties' constituency-level vote shares are more heavily influenced by local factors than by national trends. This finding lends modest support to the claim that a party under weak rule of law is essentially an aggregation of politicians' support bases. Finally, Section 4 examines a constituency in Tamil Nadu, as well as survey data from across India, to further substantiate the claim that party systems are not products of voters' preferences for parties or policies as much as they are products of the decisions that politicians make about which parties to join.

1. From rule of law to party system formation

Chapter 2 linked the rule of law to candidate-centered politics. This section extends the argument by drawing out the implications of candidate-centered politics for party system formation. It first looks at traditional understandings of party system formation, which I show to be appropriate only for strong rule of law contexts. It then lays out an alternative logic for how to think about party system formation under weak rule of law.

1.1 Party system formation and strong rule of law

In a recent article, Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2008) state that:

> Classic theories of democracy as well as contemporary theories of voting behavior and political representation hold that voters assess politicians on the basis of their positions on issues of the day (Downs 1957; Key 1966). Candidates and parties announce positions on issues in order to win votes, and voters choose the alternatives that best represent their interests on those issues. Legislators and executives who are out of step with their constituents are voted out of office (e.g. Erikson and Wright 1993; Canes-Wrone et al. 2002). These assumptions undergird centuries of democratic theory and decades of spatial modeling (215).

These assumptions also undergird party system theory, which presumes a direct, policy-related link between voters and parties. Since voters form preferences over parties based on the policies

they advocate, then parties therefore rise and fall depending on those policies. For instance, prior to the wave of non-Western immigration in the 1980s and 1990s, anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe had a difficult time gaining a foothold in most party systems. It was only after the rising number of immigrants raised the salience of nativist attitudes that these parties became permanent parts of West European party systems (Wendt 2009). Or, in Scandinavia, as the rural population and agricultural economy has declined, centrist agrarian parties have found themselves under pressure to adopt new issues relevant to a wider swathe of the population, lest they become marginalized (Arter 2001). A great deal of ink has been spilled explaining where voters' preferences come from and how they come to be seen as politically salient.

Of course, a vast body of research has shown that preferences and issue salience do not translate automatically into parties. Much depends on the institutions that shape a party's likelihood of gaining entry into a legislature (Cox 1997) or of meaningfully influencing the policy-making process (Kedar 2005; Kedar 2009). But, the role of institutions is mainly to channel voters' preferences, not to determine them. In other words, institutions shape how voters turn an underlying preference into an actual vote choice. In the end, voters often vote strategically in order to assure that their vote pushes policy in the direction that they wish it to go (Kedar 2009).

Both strains of literature, the one that looks at preferences and the one that looks at institutions, rest on assumptions that fit only strong rule of law settings. Both literatures presume that voters ultimately vote to influence policy and that they form and then act on meaningful preferences over parties and policies. Throughout most studies of party system formation, politicians have no meaningful role apart from being interchangeable agents of their parties. The formal literature on parties and elections, for example, rarely models vote choice and party entry by including voters, politicians, and parties all as important actors. Either the world consists only of voters and parties but not politicians (Palfrey 1984; Adams 2001) or politicians and parties are identical, as in citizen-candidate models (Feddersen, Sened, and Wright 1990; Osborne and Slivinski 1996; Besley and Coate 1997). What happens when voters, politicians, and parties are all distinct entities? What if parties continue to exist as meaningful actors in politics but voters form meaningful preferences over politicians rather than over parties?

1.2 Party system formation and weak rule of law

When rule of law is weak and voters care more about politicians than they do about parties, then politicians are crucial intermediaries between voters and parties. Parties win support because of the politicians that belong to them, unlike under strong rule of law when politicians win votes because of the party to which they belong. Since voters formulate preferences over politicians, the party for which voters end up voting is often incidental to their vote choice or plays only a weak role in shaping it. Parties are essentially aggregations of autonomous politicians who accrue their support individually based on their attributes and can take much of that support with them from party to party.

In this world, a party does not depend for success on convincing voters that they should vote for it, adopting policies that will resonate with voters, or persuading voters that the party's positions are ideal. Instead, it depends for success on recruiting and retaining a large number of popular politicians, each of whom brings supporters to the party thanks to her own attributes. A party

system takes shape according to the choices that politicians make about which parties they elect to establish and join. Politicians' career decisions determine the array of candidates from which a party has to choose at election time. When many popular politicians join a political party, then the party can draw on a wide pool of credible candidates to field at election time. A party that fields popular candidates with attributes that are attractive to voters should occupy a significant place in the party system. Although one candidate might leave her original party for another party and take her supporters with her, a party with a vast well of aspiring politicians can potentially replace her with another candidate that is just as popular.

By popular candidates, I mean candidates with desirable attributes, be those valence or non-valence attributes. Since voters make decisions about which candidate will likely implement policy on their behalf, a credible candidate is typically one who is well known and either is widely liked, well respected, or has many attributes in common with her constituents. Finding any candidate to contest a seat is often easy; finding a credible candidate is often more difficult.

In saying that a politician attracts her own support, I do not mean to suggest that every vote cast for a politician represents the endorsement of a die-hard supporter who will support her under all circumstances. The support that the candidate enjoys may be circumstantial. The crucial distinction to be drawn between weak and strong rule of law contexts is that under weak rule of law, most of the support a candidate receives does not depend on the party.

Imagine a constituency in the state of Rajasthan where a Brahmin Congress candidate runs against a Rajput BJP candidate. In the election a Jat voter from the same village as the Brahmin Congressman supports the Brahmin because of their village connections. In the next election, the same two candidates run, but this time the Brahmin is denied the Congress ticket. Congress allocates the ticket to another Rajput, and the former Congress candidate runs on the label of the BSP—a minor party in the state. The Jat continues to support the Brahmin ex-Congressman, even on the BSP label because of their common village origins. In this way, one can say that the Brahmin's support is portable. It does not depend on his connection to Congress, but rather on the candidate's attributes. In this case, it is the candidate's village of origin that is most important for the Jat voter who is faced with candidates belonging only to the upper castes (i.e., Brahmin, Rajput).

Now suppose that a third election pits the BSP Brahmin (formerly of Congress) against the Rajput from the BJP, and now a Jat is on the Congress label. In this election, the Jat chooses to vote for his fellow Jat because he expects more from a fellow Jat than he does from a fellow villager. Although his support previously traveled with the Brahmin, irrespective of party label, his support is not necessarily robust to a completely new configuration of candidates. Thus, the support that a politician accrues on her own can be portable but still contingent.

Although I have argued throughout this and the previous chapter that parties are of only secondary importance to *voters* in weak rule of law settings, parties are still very important to politicians. Under strong rule of law, parties are almost indispensable for politicians, since it is hard to win an election without party membership. Under weak rule of law, parties are not indispensable since politicians can frequently win elections without a party label. However, parties still offer a great deal to politicians under weak rule of law. They offer finance and

manpower during elections as well as the opportunity for ministerial berths. Independent candidates typically rely on their own financing and manpower and rarely find themselves occupying key positions in a government.

Since parties have something to offer politicians, most politicians join political parties. When making that choice, they must consider the costs and benefits associated with membership. When the costs to membership in a party are low and the benefits high, then a large number of politicians are likely to join it, thereby leading to its success. If costs to membership are high and benefits low, then a party is likely to fail. A similar calculus applies to politicians founding parties. They are likely to establish certain types of parties when the cost of doing so is low and the anticipated benefits are high. This cost-benefit analysis is not a particularly novel framework for analysis. Rather, the novelty lies in thinking about party systems in terms of the cost-benefit calculation that politicians make about their career decisions. Party systems have previously been treated as the outcomes of a very different set of factors.

2. Implications for the study of party systems

The implications of the argument in the previous section are far-reaching. To begin, the idea that party systems depend on politicians' career choices could go a long way in explaining important characteristics of party systems in much of the developing world. Though an increasing number of countries throughout the world have transitioned into consolidated democracies, relatively few studies explore party systems in the developing world (but see Seawright 2006; Riedl 2008). One of the reasons for this lack of attention may be the high degree of fluidity in and non-ideological character of many party systems in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Given the frameworks available for thinking about party systems, many of these countries' party systems do not seem amenable to analysis.

Weak rule of law may be a large part of the reason why new party systems are so unstable. When politicians drive party system formation, the shape of the party system depends on a relatively small number of individuals whose notions of which party best serves their career ambitions— whether for power, wealth, or influence over policy-making—may change frequently and suddenly. If they so choose, a relatively small number of politicians can disrupt the party system by jumping ship from one party to another. Party systems in weak rule of law democracies are therefore subject to the whims and calculations of a small cadre of actors. Furthermore, voters do not burden their politicians with expectations of maintaining ideological consistency since voters place little premium on policy positions. In this context, it is hardly surprising that party systems are fluid and unideological. At the same time, perhaps the reason why many developing world party systems are not well understood is because analysts are looking in the wrong places. They are not focused on the factors that shape politicians' preferences for parties, only voters' preferences.

The reasons that voters vote for a party may be very different from the reasons politicians establish or join a party. Consequently, the factors that influence party system formation may vary drastically depending on whether rule of law is strong or weak. The actors who ought to constitute the focus of study should thus differ depending on whether the rule of law is strong or weak. In this way, the rule of law is a necessary background condition when studying party

systems. Rule of law is not necessarily a variable that exerts a *direct* effect on party systems. Instead, it has something akin to an interactive effect. For instance, nothing about the rule of law being weak or strong directly determines whether a party system contains religious or secular parties. But, the reasons why a country has religious parties may differ depending on whether the rule of law is strong or weak. A strong rule of law country may have religious parties in its party system for an entirely different set of reasons than a weak rule of law country. The impact of a variable may be nil in a strong rule of law setting and substantive in a weak rule of law context, or vice versa.

This is precisely the type of claim that I make about regional parties in Chapter 4. I contend that much of the existing literature on regional parties correctly diagnoses the causes of regional party success in strong rule of law countries, which are the empirical focus of most earlier research. But, the factors that influence why *voters* choose to vote for regional parties are not the same as the reasons why politicians might choose to join them. For regional parties, there is nothing about the rule of law *per se* that makes regional parties so successful in India. Instead, the rule of law provides a backdrop against which certain factors matter and others do not. It so happens that many of the factors that matter under strong rule of law—namely, ethnic and economic grievances—matter little in the context of weak rule of law.

3. Insulation from national trends

With this section, I begin the empirical portion of the chapter that provides evidence of the link between weak rule of law and politician-driven party systems. According to the argument earlier in this chapter and in the last chapter, parties in weak rule of law democracies are merely aggregations of individual politicians' support bases, and support for a politician depends on her attributes and those of her opponents. In other words, because candidates vary across constituencies, each constituency-level contest is an independent event to a far greater extent than under strong rule of law. If this is true, then constituency-level outcomes should be heavily insulated from national, party-based trends.

In contrast, if political parties and national-level policy-making matter, then outcomes across all constituencies should be subject to similar trends and should therefore move in the same direction in an election. The 2006 U.S. Congressional election is an example of a national trend influencing constituency-level results. Saddled with an uncertain economy, rising anti-war sentiment, and an unpopular president, Republican Congressional candidates fared badly across the board. The vast majority of Democratic candidates gained in vote share from 2004 to 2006, while the vast majority of Republicans saw their vote shares decline. This was true even in constituencies that were heavily Republican. National events and party factors did not alter general trends in terms of absolute levels of support; instead they induced a similar shift in favor of the Democrats across the vast majority of constituencies (New York Times 2006).

To measure the extent to which electoral outcomes in India are subject to national trends, I build on the work of Morgenstern and Potthoff (2005). In their article, they modify Stokes' (1965) components of variance model, which isolates the portion of electoral variance attributable to national-, local-, and state-level factors. Morgenstern and Potthoff modify this model first by

dropping the state-level.[53] They also provide conceptual clarification of the three types of variance that they identify: time, district heterogeneity, and district-time effects. Time variance is synonymous with national-level volatility and is close to what Stokes' refers to as the national-level component of variance. District heterogeneity is "the degree to which a party's support is consistent across districts," while the district-time effect is "the remaining, or residual, factors... akin to indicators for the influence of candidate or district characteristics at a given time" (19).

The district-time effect is the value of interest for assessing whether constituencies are influenced by local factors and insulated from national trends. If voters care most about parties and their policies, then constituency-specific effects should be of limited importance. Meanwhile the district-time effect should be very large under weak rule of law, since the outcomes of elections depend heavily on the individual politicians contesting the election. In their article, Morgenstern and Potthoff calculate the components of variance for 41 parties across 20 countries in Europe and Latin America. Using their same method, I calculate the components of variance for election results in India for Congress and the BJP.[54] Consistent with expectations, the estimates for district-time heterogeneity are considerably higher for Congress and the BJP than they are for parties such as the Democrats and Republicans or for the Conservatives or Labour, which are in countries with identical electoral systems but strong rule of law.

It is particularly noteworthy that the district-time effect is greater for the Indian parties than for the American parties. Part of the logic underpinning the expectation for a lower district-time effect in strong rule of law democracies is that party positions are constant across the country. This assumption does not necessarily hold in the United States. In the U.S., politicians often adopt different policy positions from their parties in order to cater to their constituencies (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001). Because of this, it could be argued that the district-time effect should be quite high in the United States. Indeed, it is much higher than in many other strong rule of law countries. But, it is still much smaller than India's.

To get a sense for whether the comparison between India, on the one hand, and the U.S. and the U.K on the other, is idiosyncratic, I plotted the district-time estimates for all of the parties in Morgenstern and Potthoff's article (plus Congress and the BJP) against the 2005 average across the WGI3 indicators from Chapter 2. The expectation is that as the rule of law strengthens—proxied for by the WGI3—the district-time effect will decrease. Indeed, this is the case. Figure 3.1 plots the WGI indicators of rule of law against district-time effects. The graph also includes a line plotting predicted values from regressing the WGI3 on district-time effects. The line representing fitted values has the expected negative slope. (A similar scatter plot and line result from plotting district-time effects and Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.) This plot is, of course, only suggestive. Not only does it rely on an imperfect indicator of how I conceive of the rule of law, but it also fails to control for a variety of important variables. Nevertheless, it shows that there is at least some preliminary evidence to suggest a correlation between rule of law and the importance of local-level factors in determining election results. It is also reassuring that the biggest outliers—parties in Canada, the U.S., and Chile—are also ones

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[53] Morgenstern and Potthoff drop the state-level component because in many countries election constituencies are coterminous with a country's provinces. Also, in many countries states are not meaningful political units.

[54] Following their lead, I use only election constituencies that these two parties contested in all the elections being analyzed. This is the procedure they following for the U.S. and the U.K.

with very low district magnitudes. Controlling for district magnitude might well strengthen the relationship between rule of law and the district-time effect.

Morgenstern and Potthoff suggest an additional way to measure the importance of national-level factors: the standard deviation in electoral swing from one election to the next across constituencies. High standard deviations in constituency-level election swings indicate that constituencies do not respond in a uniform way to electoral stimuli. In other words, local factors matter. When standard deviations are low, it indicates a similar response to national factors across all election constituencies. I calculated the inter-election vote swing for 22 parties in eight democracies across all constituencies for every consecutive election in which constituency boundaries did not change and the seat was contested.[55] Using these, I then calculated the mean swing and the standard deviation for each inter-election period for each party. These standard deviations are depicted in Figure 3.2. Each box and whisker plot represents a single party, and each observation contained in the plot is for the various election years.

On the left half of the figure are countries that use single-member district systems (India, Canada, the U.S., the U.K.) and on the right half of the figure are countries that use proportional representation (Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Switzerland). All countries are either federations or decentralized unions. As expected, countries with single-member district electoral systems tend to exhibit less uniform electoral swings across constituencies. Since single-member districts are usually smaller and voters cast their votes directly for individuals, this outcome is not surprising. However, within both groups, the standard deviations are higher among the weak rule of law countries (India, Brazil, Colombia, to the left within in each group) than they are among the stronger rule of law countries (the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Germany, Switzerland, to the right within each group). Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show only single-member district and proportional representation countries, respectively. To constitute a more conclusive test, these data must be expanded to include a greater number of countries, and factors aside from rule of law must be controlled for. Until then, however, these data point to important differences between strong and weak rule of law countries in the extent to which national factors appear to govern constituency-level election outcomes, even in countries with large district magnitudes.

4. Sholinghur constituencies and the state of Tamil Nadu

The politician-centered nature of party systems is evident not only in cross-national comparisons of strong and weak rule of law countries, but also from close examination of local-level party systems. This section describes politics in the constituency of Sholinghur in the state of Tamil Nadu and presages the arguments in a subsequent chapter about regional parties. The section also uses public opinion data from Tamil Nadu as a whole and from across India to substantiate the constituency-level conclusions. These data show that voters' opinions do not correlate with the

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[55] I actually dropped any observation in which the party in one of the two elections won more than 95% of the vote. This meant dropping 1100 observations for the U.S. and two in India. None were dropped for the other countries. The logic behind dropping uncontested races is that if these races had been contested, the winning party would have received a much lower vote share than it actually did. This is particularly important because if one election is contested but the other is not, there is likely to be a huge electoral swing unrelated to national trends. However, this massive swing would not accurately reflect changes in actual preferences either, since it is assumed that a large number of people would have voted for the non-contesting party had they been given the chance. If uncontested elections are not dropped, then the standard deviations in the United States are similar to those in India.

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type of party for which they vote. Party systems cannot therefore be straightforward reflections of voters' preferences and attachments.

4.1 Politics in Sholinghur constituency

Sholinghur is an election constituency in northern Tamil Nadu with 180,000 voters, suggesting a total population in excess of 250,000.[56] Sholinghur's politics is noteworthy because of the strength of the Indian National Congress. Although Congress remains India's largest political party, Tamil Nadu is a state where Congress has been particularly weak for some time. It last won state elections in 1962, and since 1977 it has been the third largest party behind the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Yet, in Sholinghur, Congress remains a potent political force. Congress' dominant faction in the state has contested nine of the constituency's thirteen elections, winning seven of them, including four of the last five.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the difference between Congress' performance in Sholinghur (the upper dashed line) and its performance at the state level (the lower continuous line).[57] The data points in 1989 are particularly telling, since 1989 was the last election in which Congress contested without any alliance partners.[58] In subsequent elections, it contested in alliance with either the DMK or AIADMK. Consequently, the party's vote shares in later years are potentially inflated by votes from either DMK or AIADMK supporters. As the 1989 data points illustrate, the last time that Congress contested state elections on its own, the party's vote share in Sholinghur was nearly double its state-wide vote share. Since then, the fact that Congress' alliance partners have allocated Sholinghur to Congress suggests that Congress is stronger than average in Sholinghur. When allocating constituencies as part of seat-sharing agreements, parties tend to allow parties to contest in their strongholds.

4.2 Explaining Congress strength

Similar to the example of Luni constituency discussed in Chapter 2, election results in Sholinghur constituency might suggests a widespread attachment in the constituency to Congress *per se*. However, Congress' strength in Sholinghur rests less on the public's attachment to the party and more on the shoulders of three brothers—Ponnurangam, Velu, and Munirathinam[59]— whose family owns a local bus company. Referred to locally as "the bus-owners," these brothers have dominated local Congress politics for over 40 years. Table 3.1 chronicles the many elections that the brothers have contested. The brothers' political notoriety seems to stem from

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[56] India's population aged 0-15 is about 30%, and the voting age is 18. From these facts and the number of eligible voters, I estimate the total population of the constituency.

[57] The data points for 1971, 1996, and 2001 do not represent the Indian National Congress. They represent break-away factions of the Congress—Congress (O) in 1971 and Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) in 1996 and 2001— that were the main Congress factions in Tamil Nadu at that time.

[58] In India, electoral alliances usually involve seat-sharing agreements in which parties divvy up election constituencies to avoid putting up multiple candidates against their opponents.

[59] The brothers' full names are A.M. Ponnurangam, A.M. Velu, and A.M. Munirathinam. The initials "A.M." represent the initials of their father's given name, while Ponnurangam, Velu, and Munirathinam are their given names. This naming convention, with an initial representing one's father's name followed by one's own given name, is pervasive in Tamil Nadu.

two factors. The first is their position as local notables in the area. The family owns a private bus company that provides both employment in the community as well as inexpensive transportation for a rural population for which car and even motorcycle ownership is rare. One of the brothers, Velu, also founded a local engineering college, providing a means of upward mobility to local students. The second is their caste. The brothers belong to the most affluent of the constituency's large castes, the Agamudai Mudaliars.[60]

Since the family's arrival on the political scene in 1962, Congress has only twice fielded candidates for the legislative assembly seat from outside the family. As a result, disentangling the brothers' popularity from the party's popularity is potentially tricky. However, several facts suggest that Congress' place in the local party system depends less on voters' preferences for Congress and more on their preference for the bus-owners. Without the bus-owners, Congress would likely be a minor force in the constituency.

First, the brothers have performed well in elections, irrespective of their party label. Although a self-declared "Congress family,"[61] the brothers have not always contested on the label of the main Congress party. Yet, across all elections, the brothers have turned in respectable performances at the polls, irrespective of party label.[62] Twice, in 1969 and 1996, the family joined dissident factions of Congress, Congress (O) and TMC(M), respectively. And, even more dramatically, in 2001, Ponnurangam came out of political retirement to contest on the party label of a very tiny, newly founded party called the New Justice Party (Puthiya Needhi Katchi). Prior to the 2001 election, Ponnurangam's younger brother Munirathinam was the sitting MLA in Sholinghur. However, Sholinghur was allocated to Congress' ally in that election, the AIADMK, and Munirathinam could therefore not stand for election. Many in the constituency believe that Ponnurangam contested in an attempt to keep the constituency in the family and that the local-level Congress may not have lent its full support to the AIADMK candidate.

Second, the one time that Congress fielded a candidate against one of the brothers, in 1996, the Congress candidate, R. Jayababu, fared poorly, winning only 17% of the vote, even though he contested in alliance with the AIADMK. As Table 3.2 shows, in the 2002 local election results, after the TMC(M) split from Congress and the bus-owners went with it, Congress did not contest several elections in the area, and where it contested was a virtual non-entity. Despite the long-standing success of Congress in the constituency, the departure of the bus-owners left the party almost entirely bereft of support.

Third, local election results in 2002 reveal that support for the brothers' party—Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar), the dominant Congress faction in Tamil Nadu at that time—declined as distance from the bus-owners' main power base, Sholinghur town, increased. Table 3.2 details

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[60] Agumudai Mudaliars account for about 10% of the constituency. The other main castes in the constituency are Sengunthar Mudaliars, Vanniyars, and Parayars. Together, these four comprise about three quarters of the constituency's population.

[61] Interview with A.M. Munirathinam on July 8, 2005, in Sholinghur, Tamil Nadu.

[62] The only electoral debacle was Velu's 1999 candidacy for the Arakkonam parliamentary constituency. However, Velu's relatively poor showing likely had little to do with his having left Congress. The brothers' home turf, Sholinghur constituency, is only one of six assembly constituencies that comprise the parliamentary constituency. In Sholinghur, Velu won 27% of the vote contesting with no election allies, as compared to the 17% he won overall in the constituency.

the 2002 election results. The TMC(M) was most popular in Sholinghur town. In Sholinghur, Munirathinam ran for town panchayat president (the equivalent of mayor) against candidates from the AIADMK and DMK. In elections for the town panchayat (the equivalent of the city council), the party also performed relatively well, though its support in this election is probably understated by these results. The TMC(M) contested with a tiny party, the PNK, which has subsequently proven to have a very slender support base. Together, the TMC(M) and PNK won nearly 30% of the vote in the town. Given the PNK's weakness, the figure of 30% may better approximate the TMC(M)'s support in that election. In other parts of the election constituency, far from where the bus-owners reside, the TMC(M) was no more popular than it was elsewhere across the state.

4.3 Party systems and voters' preferences

The preceding analysis indicates that the source of Congress strength in Sholinghur is the bus-owners. Their decision to remain in Congress explains why the party continues to be unusually strong in the constituency, relative to the rest of the state. Sholinghur is, however, but one constituency out of 234 in Tamil Nadu. This constituency could represent an anomaly. Data available from a post-election survey conducted after the 2004 Lok Sabha parliamentary elections by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) cannot directly test whether local-level party systems across the state hinge on the decisions of local politicians. But, these data can shed light on whether supporters of different parties vary in their policy orientations. If they systematically vary in their opinions on salient issues, then it is harder to make the case that party systems are not shaped by issues and policies and that they instead represent the aggregation of politicians' career decisions, as in the case of the bus-owners in Sholinghur.

In Tamil Nadu, one of the most important differences between Congress on the one hand and the DMK and AIADMK on the other is that the first is India's most national political party, while the latter two are both ethno-regionalist parties confined mainly to Tamil Nadu. Some of the defining features of the Tamil Nadu's state politics are the hegemony of ethno-regionalist rhetoric, particularly around the issue of the Tamil language, and the dominance of regional parties. Indeed, the CSDS data show that the overwhelming majority of Tamils hold opinions consistent with ethno-regionalism.

One of the survey questions in the 2004 Indian National Election Study (INES) asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement: "We should be loyal to our own region first and then to the country." Respondents had five options: Fully Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Fully Disagree, or No opinion. For simplicity, I collapse the first four categories into two: Agree and Disagree. Approximately 92% of respondents in Tamil Nadu agreed with the statement, a higher percentage than in any other major state in India. This finding should seem to suggest that policy informs party systems: a highly ethno-regionalist electorate casts its votes overwhelmingly for ethno-regionalist parties. On closer inspection, however, this conclusion does not hold.

As Figure 3.6 shows, responses to the question do not vary according to the party for which voters voted. Those who voted for a national party (in light grey) were no less likely to agree

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with the statement than were those who voted for an ethno-regionalist party (in dark grey). The same results hold when incorporating data from across India. Dividing up respondents from all states according to the type of party for which they voted reveals that nearly identical shares of voters agreed with the statement (see Figure 3.7). Figure 3.7 even presents an "easy case" for regional parties by focusing only on regionalist parties—those that articulate a regionalist message. The column in light grey does not include regional parties (as defined by their support base; see Chapter 4) that do not articulate a regionalist message. The correlation between views on region v. nation and support for regionalist parties should be even stronger than the correlation between policy views and regional parties as a whole, with partisans of regionalist parties articulating strong loyalties to their region. Yet, even those who voted for regionalist parties do not appear any more likely to agree with the statement on loyalty to nation and region.

Not surprisingly, no meaningful correlation exists between the success of regional parties and the percentage of voters who voted for a regional party. Figure 3.8 plots a state's regional party vote share in 2004 (x-axis) against the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement that people should be loyal to their region ahead of their country (y-axis). The resulting cloud of points shows no strong correlation. The observed correlation in Tamil Nadu between a regionalized party system and strong support for regional loyalty is something of an outlier. Elsewhere throughout India, however, the propensity of a state's voters to support regional parties does not correlate with their likelihood of professing loyalty to region over country.

The responses to the INES question on loyalty to region and nation are particularly interesting when contrasted with similar questions asked in the Basque Country in Spain, where responses sort neatly according to party preferences. Voters who support parties that adopt more strident ethno-regionalist rhetoric also more frequently articulate opinions consistent with an ethno-regionalist outlook. Figure 3.9 arrays the main parties contesting in the Basque Country from left to right according to whether they favor greater centralization or decentralization, with centralizing parties to the left and decentralizing parties to the right. A 1998 survey taken after regional elections in the Basque Country asked three questions about national self-identification, intensity of nationalist feeling, and constitutional preferences. The bars in the figure represent opinions consistent with ethno-regionalism, in this case pro-Basque sentiment. The white bars on the left include those who self identify as more Basque than Spanish or only Basque and exclude those identifying as only Spanish, more Spanish than Basque, or equally Basque and Spanish. The dark grey bars in the middle include those claiming to have high or very high nationalist feeling, excluding those with very low, low, or medium intensity nationalist feeling. Finally, the light grey bars on the right include respondents whose constitutional preferences include more autonomy or the right to self-determination and exclude respondents who prefer centralization or the *status quo*. The more ethno-regionalist the party, the more ethno-regionalist the opinions of the parties' voters.

The difference highlighted above between Tamil Nadu and the Basque Country is telling. In the former, ethno-regionalist sentiment appears uncorrelated with vote choice and therefore a poor explanation for the state's particularly regionalized party system. In the Basque Country, ethno-regionalist sentiment appears to explain the party system well. The prevalence of pro-Basque sentiment supports a highly regionalized party system. Voters in the Basque Country form preference over political parties based on their policy positions. No such evidence of this can be

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found for regional parties in India. The crucial distinction between these two settings is the rule of law; in Spain it is strong, while in India it is not.

The Basque Country-Tamil Nadu comparison presages the arguments to come in the subsequent three chapters. In these chapters, I show that the conventional explanations for regional party success do not hold water in the Indian context. Given the claim in this chapter about the links between the rule of law, candidate-centered politics, and party system formation, this should not be surprising. In the Basque Country and in Tamil Nadu, different sets of actors shape party systems—voters in the former, politicians in the latter. Looking to mass preferences over issues related to nationalism and centralization is a promising approach for understanding the party system in the Basque Country, since the underlying question there is why voters come to prefer certain types of parties. But, in Tamil Nadu, this is a misguided strategy. The key to understanding regional parties there is why politicians choose to form and join regional parties. It is to this task that the next chapters turn.

Table 3.1 Bus-owners' electoral performances in Sholinghur assembly constituency

Election year	Brother	Election type	Party	Outcome	Vote
1962	Ponnurangam	State	INC	Won	56%
1967	Ponnurangam	State	INC	Lost	41%
1971	Ponnurangam	State	NCO	Won	55%
1980	Velu	National	INC	Won	60%
1989	Munirathinam	State	INC	Won	39%
1991	Munirathinam	State	INC	Won	54%
1996	Munirathinam	State	TMC(M)	Won	54%
	Velu	National	TMC(M)	Won	59%
1998	Velu	National	TMC(M)	Lost	44%
1999	Velu	National	TMC(M)	Lost	17%
2001	Ponnurangam	State	PNK	Lost	42%
2002	Munirathinam	Local	TMC(M)	Won	40%

Note: INC = Indian National Congress; NCO = Indian National Congress (Organisation); TMC(M) = Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar); PNK = Puthiya Needhi Katchi (New Justice Party).

Source: Election Commission of India; Tamil Nadu State Election Commission.

Table 3.2 Local elections in Sholinghur assembly constituency, 2002

Office	INC %	TMC(M) %
Sholinghur town president	--	40.4%
Sholinghur town panchayat	--	18.7%
Sholinghur panchayat union	1.9%	11.8%
Kaveripakkam town president	--	--
Kaveripakkam town panchayat	0.7%	5.5%
Kaveripakkam panchayat union	1.0%	8.8%
Nemili panchayat union	4.8%	7.2%

Note: INC = Indian National Congress; TMC(M) = Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar).

Source: Tamil Nadu State Election Commission; Sholinghur town panchayat office.

Figure 3.1 As governance improves the district-time effect diminishes
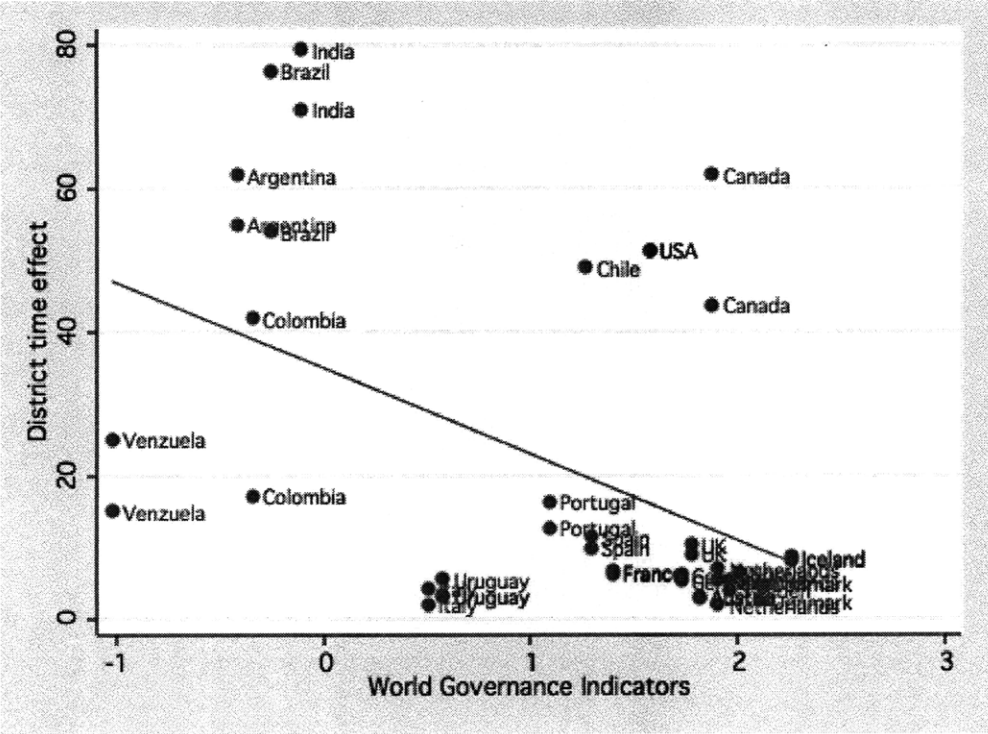
Note: Each data point represents a political party but is labeled based on the country in which the party is located. The x-axis is a country's average score on three Worldwide Governance Indicators (control of corruption, rule of law, government effectiveness; see Chapter 2 for details) for every year available from 1996 through 2005. The y-axis is the party's district-time effect, as calculated by Morganstern and Potthoff (2005).

Source: Morgenstern and Potthoff (2005); author calculations (for India); Worldwide Governance Indicators (see Chapter 2).

Figure 3.2 Uniformity of district-level swing by rule of law and electoral rules
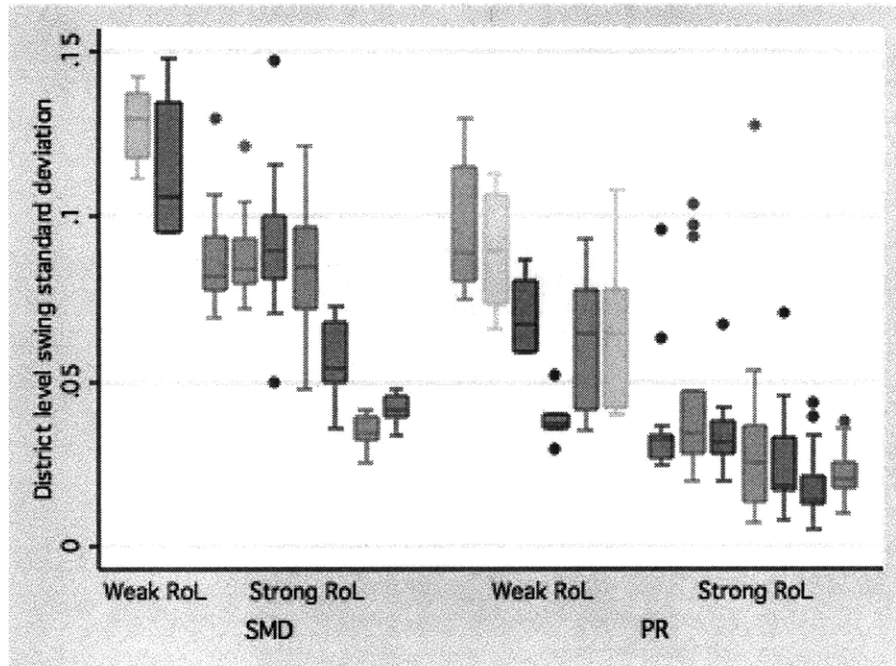
Note: Each box and whisker plot represents observations of the standard deviation from the mean district-level swing for a party across multiple elections. Parties are arrayed in the figure depending on whether they are in weak or strong rule of law countries and on their electoral systems. The countries with single-member district electoral systems (SMD) are India (weak rule of law), Canada (strong rule of law), the U.S. (strong rule of law), and the U.K. (strong rule of law). The countries with proportional representation electoral systems (PR) are Brazil (weak rule of law), Colombia (weak rule of law), Germany (strong rule of law), and Switzerland (strong rule of law).

Source: Author's calculations. Data come from Election Commission of India (India); Brancati 2007 (Canada, Colombia, Germany, Switzerland); Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives (U.S); Kimber 2009 (U.K.); Nicolau 2004 (Brazil).

Figure 3.3 Uniformity of district-level swing in single-member district (SMD) countries
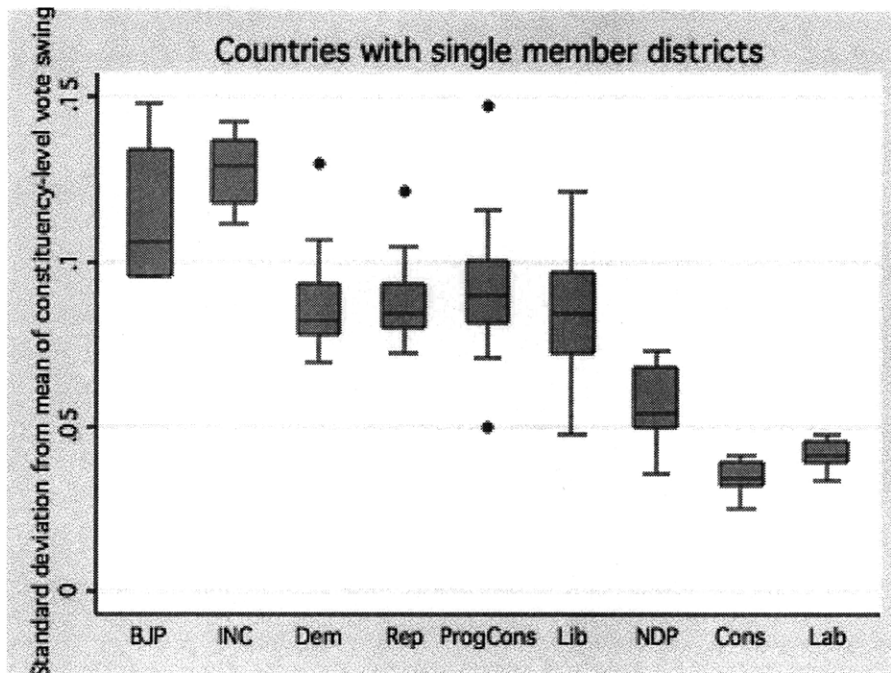
Notes: Each box and whisker plot represents observations of the standard deviation from the mean district-level swing for a party across multiple elections. The parties included are: India—Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC); the U.S.—Democrats (Dem), Republicans (Rep); Canada—Conservative Party/Progressive Conservative Party (ProgCons), Liberal Party (Lib), New Democratic Party (NDP); the U.K.—Conservative Party (Cons), Labour Party (Lab).

Source: See Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.4 Uniformity of district-level swing in proportional representation (PR) countries
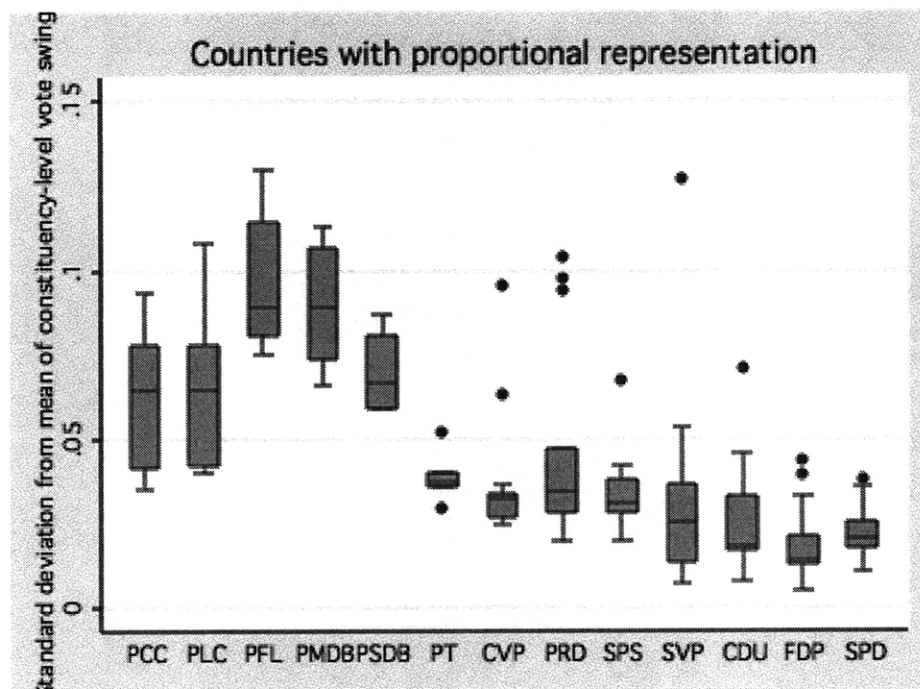
Note: Each box and whisker plot represents observations of the standard deviation from the mean district-level swing for a party across multiple elections. The parties included are: Colombia—Partido Conservador Colombiano (PCC), Partido Liberal Colombiano (PLC); Brazil—Partido da Frente Liberal (PFL, since renamed Democratas), Partido do Movimento Demcrático Brasileiro (PMDB), Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB), Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT); Switzerland—Christelichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz/Parti Démocrate-Chrétien Suisse (CVP), Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei der Schweiz/Parti Radical-Démocratique Suisse (PRD), Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz/Parti Socialiste Suisse (SPS), Schweizerische Volkspartei/Union Démocratique du Centre (SVP); Germany—Christlich Demokratische Union/Chrislich-Soziale Union (CDU), Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP), Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD).

Source: See Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.5 Congress vote shares in Sholinghur assembly constituency and Tamil Nadu state
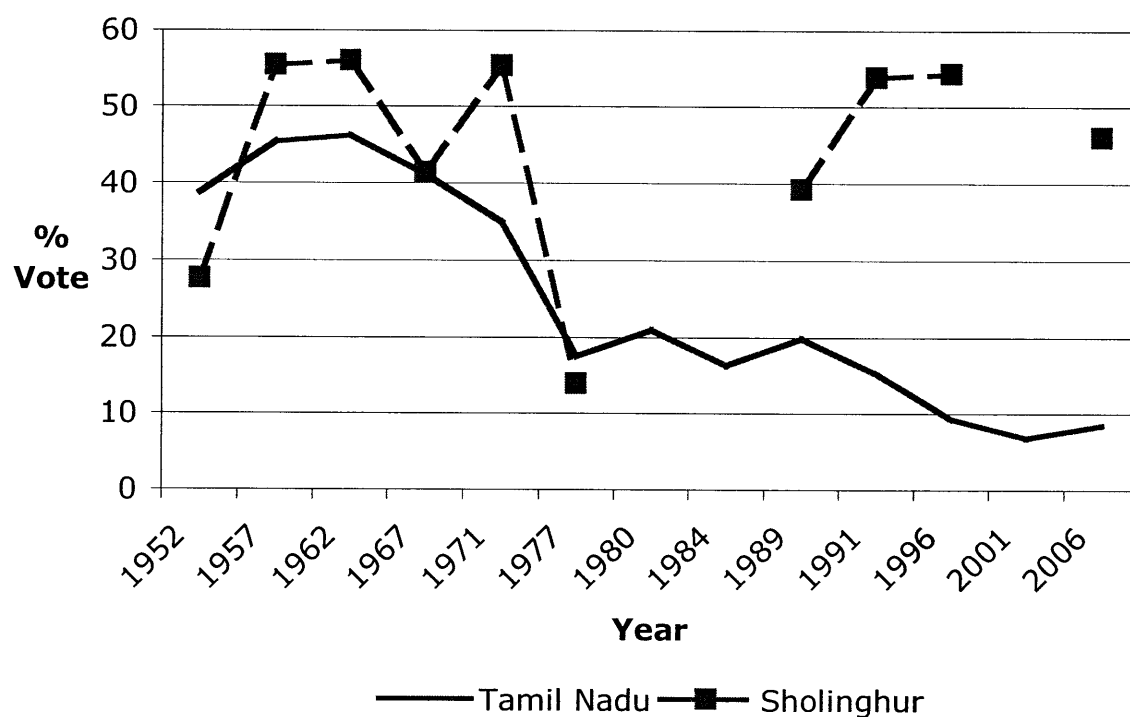
Notes: Vote shares refer to state elections. In 1971, the Congress vote share is for the Indian National Congress (Organisation), and in 1996 and 2001, the vote share refers to Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar). All other years refer to Indian National Congress.

Source: Election Commission of India.

Figure 3.6 Survey responses on loyalty to region by respondent's vote choice, Tamil Nadu
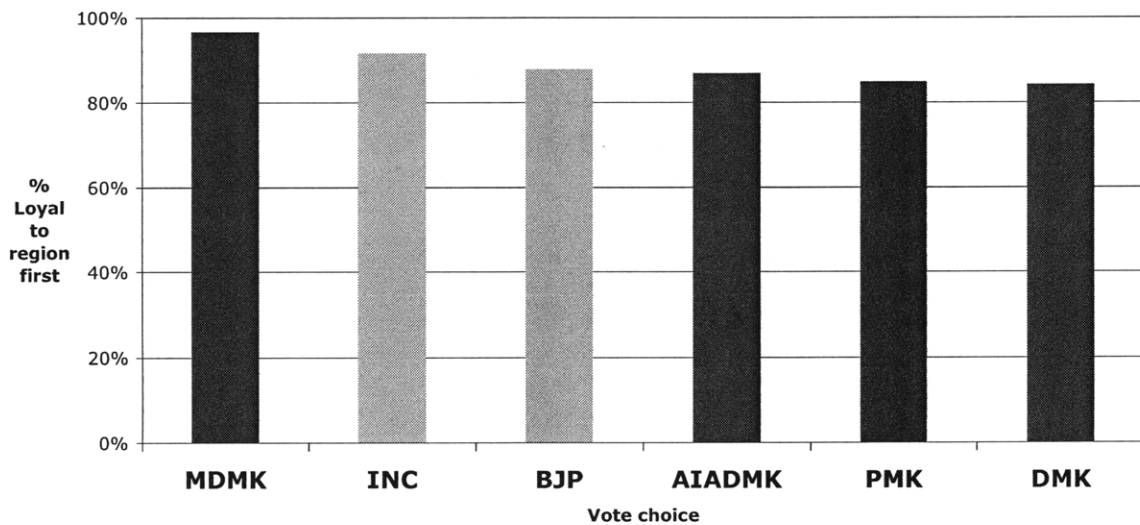
Notes: Each bar includes respondents who voted for that party (as listed on the x-axis). The height of the bars represents the percentage of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed that one should be loyal to one's region before one's country. Dark grey bars represent regional parties (MDMK, AIADMK, PMK, DMK); light grey bars represent national parties (INC, BJP). MDMK = Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; AIADMK = All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; PMK = Pattali Makkal Katchi; DMK = Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; INC = Indian National Congress; BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party.

Source: Lokniti 2004 (National Election Study), Question 24a.

Figure 3.7 Survey responses on loyalty to region by respondent's vote choice, all India
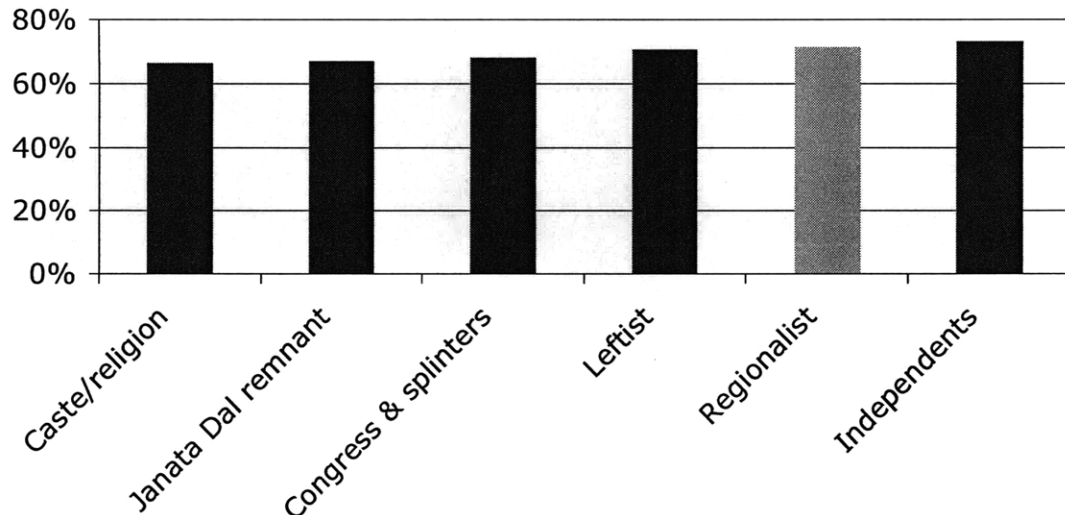
Notes: Each bar includes respondents who voted for that party type (as listed on the x-axis). The height of the bars represents the percentage of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed that one should be loyal to one's region before one's country. All bars except the light grey bar represent mixes of national and regional parties that do not espouse a regionalist ideology. The light grey bar only includes parties that espouse a regionalist ideology. The parties are categorized by the author as one of the following: based on caste/religion (e.g., BSP, BJP), a remnant of the Janata Dal (e.g., RJD, INLD), Congress or a splinter (e.g., INC, AITC), a leftist party (e.g., CPI(M), RSP), a regionalist party (e.g., J&KNC, DMK), or an independent candidate.

Source: Lokniti 2004 (National Election Study), Question 24a.

Figure 3.8 Regional party vote and loyalty to region by state
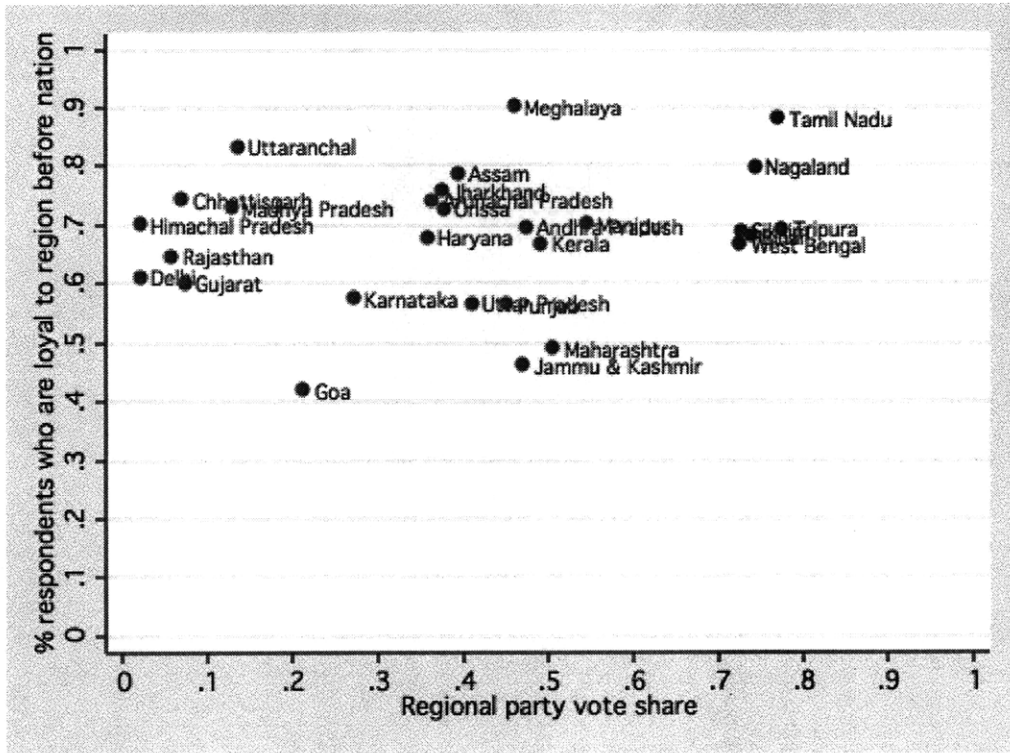
Note: The x-axis is the percentage of the vote won by regional parties in each state in the 2004 parliamentary elections. The y-axis is the percentage of respondents to the 2004 CSDS survey who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "We should be loyal to our own region first, then to the country." Puducherry and Chandigarh are excluded because of their small size.

Source: Regional party vote share: author calculations based on data from the Election Commission of India. Survey data: Lokniti 2004 (National Election Study), Question 24a.

Figure 3.9 Relationship between preferences about regionalism and vote choice in the Basque Country
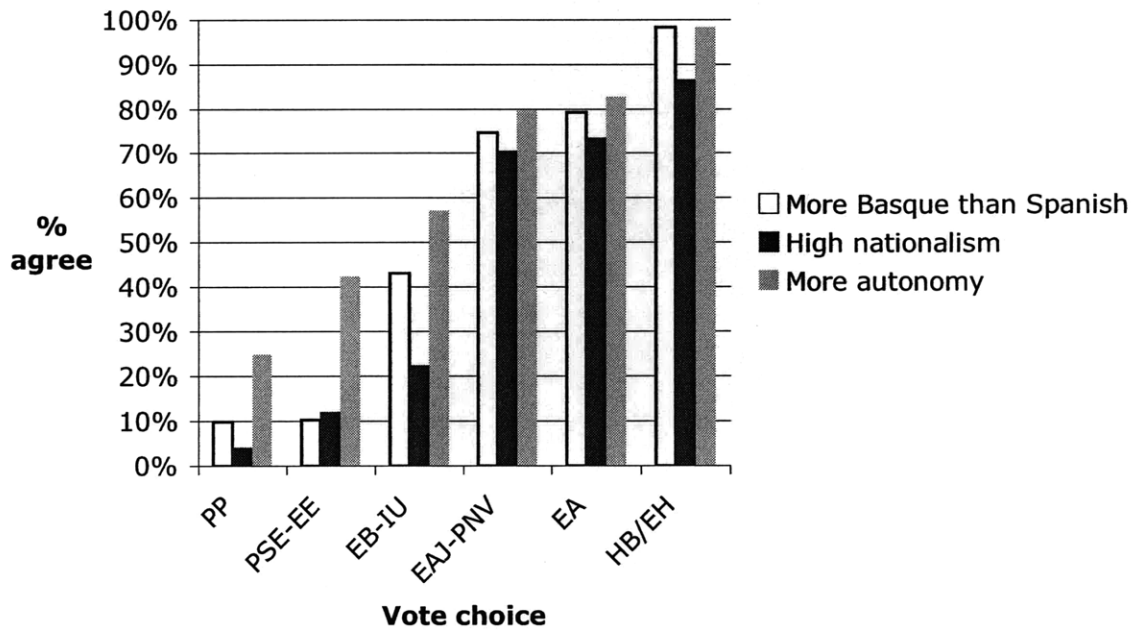
Note: PP = Partido Popular; PSE-EE = Partido Socialista de Euskadi-Euskadiko Ezkerra; EB-IU = Ezker Batua-Izquierda Unida; EAJ-PNV = Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco; EA = Eusko Alkartasuna; HB/EH = Herri Batasuna/Euskal Herritarrok. Parties on the left are national parties; parties on the right are Basque regionalist parties. The parties are arrayed from left to right based on their stances on Basque autonomy (left = anti, right = pro).

Source: Data are cited in de Winter, Gómez-Reino, and Lynch (2006), based on a post-election survey conducted in the Basque Country after the 1998 regional elections (Research Study 2308: Postelectoral del País Vasco, elecciones autonómicas 1998).

Chapter 4. Regional Parties in India: An Overview

In India the term "regional party," as I define it, encompasses scores of parties and hundreds of independent candidates that contest elections but win support across only a narrow geographical swathe of the country. Most of these parties are failures, as indeed, most of India's failed parties are also regional parties. However, the Indian party system includes more than three dozen regional parties that figure highly into state-level party systems and play roles of varying importance at the national level, ranging from those that simply aim to win a single seat in the Lok Sabha to those that are coalition king-makers and occupy important ministerial berths. The world of regional parties in India is therefore a complex and crowded one, and this chapter aims to make sense of it. Consequently, much of this chapter is descriptive, providing the lay of the land with respect to regional parties.

This chapter begins the portion of the dissertation devoted to regional parties, laying the groundwork for the arguments to come in the next two chapters. I begin by defining what I mean by a regional party and how I go about classifying a party as either regional or national (Section 1). Next, I place Indian regional parties in comparative perspective (Section 2), before recounting the historical trajectory of regional parties in the Indian party system (Section 3). I then very briefly describe the various types of regional parties that predominate in the party system (Section 4). Finally, I turn to existing theories, explaining why they cannot account for regional party success in India (Section 5).

1. Definitions and measurement

Intuitively, national and regional parties would seem easy to define and identify. National parties pertain to the country as a whole, while regional parties to a small part of it. Actual definition and measurement are, however, surprisingly complex. In this section, I outline how I conceptualize regional and national parties and classify parties accordingly. I then discuss alternative ways of thinking about regional parties and explain my reasons for choosing to classify parties as I do.

1.1 Operationalization

I classify a party as either regional or national based on the geographic distribution of its voters. In other words, a party's *support base* determines whether I classify it as a regional or national party. (I return to the possibility of using criteria other than support base in the next sub-section). A regional party is a party whose electoral support is disproportionately concentrated in one or a small number of regions, whereas a national party is a party whose electoral support extends across more than just a handful of a country's regions.

To measure the extent to which a party's voters are disproportionately concentrated or not, I calculate a Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) for political parties and political regions. In industrial organization, the HHI measures market concentration across firms. I calculate an HHI

to measure the extent to which *a region monopolizes a party's votes*.[63] For firms and markets, the formula for the HHI is:

$$H = \sum_{i=1}^{N} S_i^2$$, where S_i is firm i's market share, and N is the number of firms. As I use it, S_i is region i's share of the party's votes, and N is the number of regions. Scores on the index range from zero to one. A score of zero indicates that a party's votes are dispersed across all of a country's regions *in perfect proportion to each region's share of the total population of voters*. A score of one indicates a party whose votes all come from a single region. I treat the sub-national political units immediately below the level of the national state as a country's regions (van Houten 2000; Brancati 2008). In most countries, and especially in federal ones, these are usually called states or provinces.

For this index to be a meaningful indicator, I must contend with two issues. The first issue is the fact that regions vary in size within a country. If I simply took the share of a party's votes that it wins in each region, then a score of zero would indicate that a party won an equal *number* of votes in each region, irrespective of how many voters are in each region. Calculating the HHI in this way would mean that a party winning 100 votes in each of four regions would show up as having a perfectly dispersed vote share even if the four regions account for 97%, 1%, 1%, and 1%, respectively. In reality, such a distribution of votes would mean that the party's votes are disproportionately distributed in the last three regions. I therefore weight each region equally so that an HHI score of zero indicates that a party wins an equal vote *share* across all regions.[64] In other words, in the hypothetical country with four regions accounting for 97%, 1%, 1%, and 1% of the population, a party winning 25% of the vote in each region would have a perfectly dispersed vote share, even though the absolute number of votes won in the largest region would be 97 times greater than in the each of the other regions.

The second issue with which I must contend is that countries have different numbers of regions. When initially calculating an HHI (after having weighted each region equally), scores range from (1/N) to 1, where N is the number of regions. In other words, there is a lower bound (greater than zero) below which scores cannot go. The number of regions determines this lower bound. As the number of regions increases, the lower bound decreases. The problem that this poses is one of comparability across countries. In a country with four regions, an HHI score of 0.25 means perfect dispersion; for a country with 100 regions, a score of 0.25 indicates a fair degree of concentration. To ensure that HHI scores are comparable across countries, I therefore normalize the HHI scores using the following formula: (H − (1/N)) / (1- (1/N)), where H is the raw HHI score and N is the number of regions. The normalized scores then range from zero to one, regardless of the number of a country's regions.

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[63] I do not measure the fractionalization of a state's votes across parties, which is perhaps the more intuitive political analogue to market concentration.

[64] To weight each region equally, I divide the absolute number of votes won in a region by the share of all voters that come from that region. I then use these new, reweighted vote shares as the basis for the calculation. For example, if a country has two regions, the first with 60% of voters and the second with 40% of voters, and a party wins 50 votes in each, the reweighted votes in each region would be 83.3 and 125 votes, respectively. I then use these reweighted votes to calculate the percentage of a party's votes that come from each region. In this case, the party wins 40% of its votes from the first region (which accounts for 60% of the voters) and 60% from the second region (which accounts for 40% of the voters). Given an equal *number* of votes won in the two regions, the party's votes are actually drawn disproportionately from the second region since that region has fewer votes to give.

Having calculated an HHI for each party—which, to reiterate, measures the extent to which the party's votes are fragmented across regions—I then classify a party as either regional or national. (I treat independent candidates as their own parties, since they are no different from parties that contest in a single constituency).[65] To do so, I adopt a threshold of 0.18 to classify some parties as national and others as regional. I classify a party with a Herfindahl index of 0.18 or higher as a regional party and a party with a score of less than 0.18 as a national party. I select this cut-off because the U.S. Department of Justice uses it to assess levels of firm concentration in the marketplace. According the U.S. Department of Justice,[66] an industry with a Herfindahl index of less than 0.10 is considered unconcentrated, an index of between 0.10 and 0.18 is moderately concentrated, and an index of greater than 0.18 is highly concentrated. For simplicity I collapse the categories of unconcentrated and moderately concentrated into a single category of national parties, although an intermediate category of semi-national parties (whose scores range between 0.10 and 0.18) is a potentially useful category. Having classified each party as either regional or national, I calculate how successful regional parties are in a party system in a particular election by summing the vote shares won by all parties classified as regional.

1.2 Criticisms of the measure

A potential criticism of this procedure is that dichotomizing parties into "regional" and "national" discards useful information that the index provides about *how* regional or national a party is, particularly in the calculation of the total regional party vote share. An alternative to this strategy could be to multiply each party's vote share by its score on the index and then sum those figures to arrive at the regional party vote share. In this way, a party that is perfectly national would have none of its votes count towards the regional party vote total, a party that is perfectly regional would have all of its votes count towards the regional party vote total, and parties that are in between would have some, but not all, of their votes counted. I elect not to calculate regional party vote shares in this way because the substantive impact of movements along the scale is not a linear function. Movements along the scale close to zero imply far greater changes than very large movements along the scale at values closer to one.

To see this, consider an analogy to the effective number of parties (ENP), a measure widely used in political science (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). The ENP is calculated very similarly to the HHI that I use to calculate the fragmentation of a party's vote across regions, except that the ENP equals the number one divided by the unnormalized HHI.[67] A measure analogous to the ENP, the effective number of regions (ENR), could be calculated similarly. Imagine a country with 10 regions. A party scoring a 0.10 (prior to normalization for the number of regions) has its votes perfectly dispersed and its ENR is ten, while a party scoring a 0.11 has an ENP of about nine. Meanwhile, the ENR for a party scoring a 0.50 is two and the ENR for a party scoring a one is one. In other words, reducing the ENR by about one region requires only a 0.01 movement on the scale among fairly nationalized parties but a 0.5 movement for a highly regionalized party. Multiplying a party's score on the index by its vote share does not take this dynamic into

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[65] In 2004, 97 of 215 parties contesting national elections in India contested in only one of the country's 543 parliamentary constituencies.
[66] See http:///www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/testimony.hhi.htm.
[67] In other words, ENP = 1 / HHI

account. For example, two parties with identical vote shares and scores of 0.10 and 0.20 in this hypothetical country with ten regions would have a fairly similar number of votes counted towards the regional party vote share, despite the fact that the latter is substantially more regional than the other (ENR's of ten and five, respectively). Meanwhile, a party with a 0.5 on the index would have only half as many votes counted toward the total as an identically-sized party with a score of 1, despite relatively similar ENR's (two and one, respectively).

Another potential criticism of this procedure is that the threshold for classifying parties is arbitrary. As with almost any threshold, to some extent it is. In defense of this threshold on practical grounds, relatively few parties tend to fall near the threshold. In most countries, parties' vote shares tend to be either extremely dispersed or extremely concentrated, ensuring that scores on the index tend to fall near the extremes. Furthermore, parties that score close to the cut-off tend to win small vote shares; they are often failed parties whose vote shares are erratic across regions but uniformly low. Since India is the focus of the analysis, it is particularly important that the picture of regional party success in India not depend entirely on the particular cut-off that I use, that it be robust across different classification schemes. Ideally, small changes in the threshold would result in little or no change to my aggregate indicator of regional party success. Figure 4.1 displays regional party vote shares for national elections from independence through 2004 using three different cut-offs: 0.10, 0.18, and 0.26. As this figure shows, most years' vote shares track very closely with one another. Regardless of the cut-off, percentages increase and decrease in the same years. Furthermore, the "big picture" looks the same across all three thresholds. Irrespective of which cut-off is used, the regional party vote shares from the 1950s to the 1980s are high by the standards of other party systems (see below), and in the 1990s, regional party vote shares increased substantially.

A final criticism could be that the measure is redundant in the Indian case, since the country's electoral authority, the Election Commission of India (ECI), already classifies parties as either national parties or state parties. The ECI's definition is, however, problematic as a measure meant to capture support base. The ECI classifies a party as national if it gains recognition in any four states, regardless of the size of the states. Parties win recognition in a state through one of two ways. The first way is through activity and seats won. A party must be active for at least five years and have won at least one twenty-fifth of a state's seats in the Lok Sabha or one thirtieth of the seats in the state's Vidhan Sabha (state legislative assembly). The second route is through vote shares. A party gains recognition in a state if it wins at least 6% of the state-level vote either in national or state elections.

The main problem with this measure is that gaining recognition in four states conveys no information about a party's overall distribution of support. A party could gain recognition in four states and win no votes in the remaining 31 states and Union territories. It would therefore seem to better approximate a regional party, despite being classified as national. Meanwhile, a party could exceed 6% of the vote in only three states and win 5% of the vote everywhere else. By all rights, it should be a national party, not a state party, since its votes are evenly distributed. A second problem is that one of the routes through which a party can gain recognition is through seats won. In a single-member district system, seat shares are poorly correlated with vote shares and therefore a poor indicator of support base.

1.3 Alternative conceptualizations and measurements

My conceptualization and measurement of regional and national parties differs substantially from most other authors who either classify regional parties according to different criteria or who address party system nationalization, a phenomenon related to regional party success. Whereas I classify parties based on the distribution of their support, most other studies of regional parties use a party's message or arena of contestation (or both). Much of the research on regional parties confines its attention to parties that articulate a regionalist message, a message oriented around regional defense or advocacy (Heller 2002; Caramani 2004). Indeed, many such studies adopt terms other than regional party—such as ethno-regionalist, regionalist, or autonomist—in order to signal precisely which type of party they examine (Levi and Hechter 1985; de Winter and Türsan 1998; de Winter, Gómez-Reino, and Lynch 2006). Others define regional parties in terms of where they contest, classifying a party as regional only when it contests in a single region (Brancati 2008). Still others explicitly incorporate both arena of contestation and message (Fearon and van Houten 2002). Even in cases in which both message and contestation criteria are not built into a definition of regional parties, scholars often assume that a regionalist message and single-state contestation go hand in hand (Brancati 2008). While in many instances, parties with a regionalist message are also those that contest in a single state (and vice versa), the two do not always go together.

I choose to use support base as my criterion for defining a regional party because it is more consistent with my theoretical aims. The most important underlying question that motivates this study is: Why do party systems vary from one polity to another. Typically, scholars ask this question of different countries: why do party systems vary from one country to another? What makes regional parties interesting is that their presence introduces variation in party systems *within* a country. Wherever there are noteworthy regional parties, sub-national party systems exist that differ from the party system elsewhere in the country. My attempt to understand why some countries have strong regional parties in their party systems stems from this interest in uncovering why party systems vary within a country. From this perspective, neither contestation nor message is an adequate definition.

Parties can contest widely, adopt national political messages, and still win support in a very narrow swathe of the country, thereby introducing significant variation into sub-national party systems. A definition that uses support base will almost always include parties that are classified as regional by either a contestation or message criterion, but will also include parties that the other definitions do not. Since the aim of the project is to understand regional parties for their part in introducing sub-national variation in party systems, there is no reason to exclude parties that introduce such variation.

If motivated by a different theoretical aim, however, then my definition might be inappropriate. For a study like Brancati's (2006), in which the proposed mechanism through which decentralization undermines democratic stability is the chauvinistic and parochial demands of regional parties, then a definition that relies on support base alone would be theoretically inappropriate. It would include under the rubric of regional party parties whose behavior does not comport with the theorized mechanism. It is worth noting, however, that classifying parties based on the distribution of their support can lead to a strikingly different landscape of what are

called regional parties. Using Brancati's (2008) definition of a regional party as a party that contests in only one state, India's regional parties won a total of 16.9% of the national vote in India's 2004 general election. According to my support base definition, regional parties won 44.2% of the vote, nearly four times more.[68]

Aside from defining regional parties on a basis other than support, a second alternative to my approach would be to focus on levels of party system nationalization rather than regional party success. Party system nationalization refers to the homogenization of party systems across a country. A highly nationalized party system is one in which the same party system prevails across the country. Party system nationalization occurs when politicians across electoral districts coordinate on common political labels. This process is referred to either as linkage (Cox 1997) or aggregation (Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Hicken 2009). Given a theoretical interest in party system variation, party system nationalization seems like an ideal measure of what I am interested in. However, I prefer looking at regional party success rather than at party aggregation because I believe the former is a more intuitive measure that ultimately provides somewhat more information about the parties in a party system and is more useful for looking at sub-national variation in party systems.

The party aggregation measure that Chhibber and Kollman (2004) and Hicken (2009) use compares the party system at the national level with the average party system at the constituency level. If politicians coordinate on exactly the same party labels across all constituencies, then the party system should look almost identical, not only across all constituencies, but also between the constituency and national levels too. Thus, the average effective number of parties across constituencies should be identical to the effective number of parties at the national level. However, if different parties run in different constituencies, then the effective number of parties at the national level will be much higher than the average number of parties at the constituency level, because the national party system includes all of the various parties from across the country's constituencies. Hicken refers to the difference between the ENP at the national level and the average constituency ENP as inflation. Inflation tells us what share of the national ENP is due to the failure of parties to coordinate on party labels across constituencies rather than simply to a large number of parties. For instance, a country could have a large number of parties but low inflation, indicating that the same large number of parties is competing across all constituencies. Party system inflation is intimately linked to regional parties since regional parties necessarily inhibit aggregation. Where there are many regional parties, aggregation necessarily fails.

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[68] By a very rough estimate, in the 2004 election, parties that are regional by message won about 13.1% of the vote. The parties included in this vote total are All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Asom Gana Parishad, All Jharkhand Students Union, Autonomous State Demand Committee, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Federal Party of Manipur, Jharkhand Party, Jammu & Kashmir National Panther's Party, Jharkhand Party, Jharkhand Party (N), Jammu & Kashmir People's Democratic Party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Mizo National Front, Manipur People's Party, Nagaland People's Front, Pattali Makkal Katchi, Shiromani Akali Dal, Shiromani Akali Dal (M), Sikkim Democratic Front, Shiv Sena, Telugu Desam, Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Uttarakhand Kranti Dal, United Minorities Front of Assam. Not all of these parties contested in only one state. The vote share for parties contesting in a single state and satisfying the message criterion (by my rough estimate) in 2004 was 10.1%. These estimates are rough because they do not rely on a detailed assessment of platform and message.

Measures of party system aggregation are very useful in cross-national research, particularly across countries with similar electoral systems (viz., Chhibber and Kollman 2004). However, when looking within a country, the measure says little about the actual parties in the party system. Knowing the level of party system inflation does not convey information about which parties are more successfully engaging in linkage than others or the levels of support for parties that aggregate well and for those that do not.

By contrast, my measure focuses on the support given to parties that do not link across constituencies. Using the parties' HHI scores, this measure can be easily disaggregated to reveal which parties are contributing most to the regional or national party vote share and precisely how concentrated or dispersed their votes share are. In other words, a measure focused on regional political parties allows us to think in both system-level terms (by looking at the total regional party vote share) as well as party- and state-level terms (by looking at individual parties). As with the comparison between my conceptualization of regional parties and others', the point is not to suggest the superiority of my measure over others but simply to highlight the advantages of one measure for a particular question that is being asked. For a different kind of question, focused purely on cross-national variation in aggregation, the party aggregation measure may be the better choice. But, since this study if focused on where the parties that inhibit aggregation come from, it is important to know which parties those are, how their votes are distributed, and how successful they are in winning support. For that, my measure is more appropriate.

All of that being said, the party aggregation measure and my regional party vote measure are highly correlated. Figure 4.2 shows how they move together more or less in tandem. The regional party vote share measure is correlated with Hicken's inflation measure at the level of 0.73. Reassuringly as well, they tell a fairly similar story in India. Party system inflation has always been fairly high in India, just like regional party vote shares. But, in the 1990s, party system inflation rose considerably along with regional party vote shares.

1.4 Examples

At the extremes, it is easy to imagine what national and regional parties look like. The Democrats and the Republicans in the United States are both national parties because they are two main parties in every one of the country's fifty states. Meanwhile, the Parti Québécois in Canada is a clear example of a regional party because it has no presence outside of Québec. Cases in between these two are often harder to classify. Three examples help illustrate what kinds of parties my classification scheme admits as regional and what kinds as national. The three examples are the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in 2004 with an HHI score of 0.25, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in 1991 with a score of 0.20, and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) in 1962 with a score of 0.12.

All three are represented in Figure 4.3. The dark grey columns represent the proportion of the party's total vote won in the state where the party won the most votes. In other words, the state from which the CPI(M) won the most votes was West Bengal. The share of the CPI(M)'s votes that come from West Bengal is represented by the dark grey bar. The white bars indicate the share of the total voting population that comes from the state where the party performed best. That is, for the CPI(M), this bar shows the proportion of all voters that come from West Bengal.

Differences between the two bars illustrate disproportionality in the distribution of the party's votes. From left to right, the states indicated in the figure are Maharashtra (for NCP), West Bengal (CPI(M)), and Uttar Pradesh (BJS). Moving from left to right, the share of the parties' total votes won from a single state declines, indicating less disproportionate concentration. At the same time, moving from left to right, the states themselves account for larger shares of the total voting population. This means that the BJS wins a smaller share of its votes from a larger state, whereas the NCP wins a greater share of its votes from a smaller state. Hence, the higher HHI score for the NCP and the lower score for the BJS.

Indeed, the contrast between the NCP and BJS is noticeable. According to definitions based on contestation and message, both parties would be classified as national. But, whereas the NCP can hardly be called a national party, the BJS could have far more credibly claimed this status in 1962. While the NCP contested only 11 of India's 35 states and Union territories in 2004, the BJP contested in 14 of the 18 states and Union territories in existence in 1962. And, as Figure 4.4 illustrates, while the overwhelming majority of the NCP's votes come from a single state (Maharashtra), Uttar Pradesh—which happens to be India's largest state—provides only a large plurality of the BJS's total votes. Although the BJS did not, at this time, have a highly dispersed vote share, it won sizeable vote shares in several states and had meaningful footholds in many others. By contrast, the NCP is all but absent in almost every state in India except two or three. Thus, the BJS is a good example of a national party with a very uneven support base, while the NCP is a good example of a regional party that contests in multiple states.

In between these two examples sits the CPI(M). The differences between the CPI(M) and BJS on the one hand and the CPI(M) and the NCP on the other hand are not so stark. This is perhaps as it should be since the CPI(M) is one of the few parties in India that habitually sits close to the cut off separating regional and national parties. The party has a history of contesting in half or more of India states, as it did in 1991 when it contested 16 of 32 states and Union territories. It typically turns in very strong performances in West Bengal, Kerala, and the tiny state of Tripura, as well as decent showings in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In other states, its performance borders on dismal. The party's fairly wide arena of contestation and solid performance in several states militate in favor of a national classification. But, its exemplary performance in only three states when contrasted with dismal performances or a lack of contestation in many more states pushes it towards regional status. Given these competing pressures, it is understandable that the party hovers uncertainly between national and regional status.

2. India in comparative perspective

Regional parties in India are stronger than in almost any other country in the world. The few countries in which regional parties are notably stronger are those countries that are effectively without national parties. The three countries that fall into this category—Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and St. Kitts and Nevis—share common features. They are divided into two major regions (Wallonia and Flanders in Belgium, the Serb Republic and the Bosnian Federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis).[69] All three have also seriously contemplated bifurcation. Among countries whose existence as a single country is not in question, India has one of the most regionalized party systems in the world. Figure 4.4 shows the

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[69] Belgium actually has three regions since Brussels is also a region.

regional party vote shares for the all the world's federations and decentralized unions for which I was able to gather data. This figure is purely cross-sectional, including elections in 2008 or the closest election prior to 2008. Comparing Figure 4.4 to Figure 4.1 reveals that even when Indian regional parties were far weaker than they are today, India was still a highly regionalized party system, at least by contemporary standards.

Beyond the mere fact of its high levels of party system regionalization, Indian regional parties are noteworthy for other reasons as well, particularly when compared to regional parties in countries where regional parties are widely studied, namely Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Canada. The first notable characteristic of Indian regional parties is the large number of non-single state regional parties. The percentage of the vote won by parties contesting national elections exclusively in a single state is not all that different from many other countries, in the low teens. The main difference between India and other countries is the substantial vote share—around 30%—won by regional parties that contest in multiple states. In countries such as Spain or Canada nearly all parties are either clearly national, with votes spread across the entire country, or parties that contest only in a single region. Most parties that contest in multiple regions succeed in accruing a national support base. Moreover, those that fall in this in-between category are typically very small. Meanwhile, in India, a large class of parties contests in multiple states but nevertheless wins narrow support bases.

A second important feature of regional parties in India is the large number of parties identified with minority sub-groups within a particular region. These groups are often castes. Among oft-studied regional parties, most champion the causes of their region's entire population, some sub-group constituting the vast majority of the region, or a titular or "native" subgroup (such as Basques in the Basque Country or Scots in Scotland). In contrast, many Indian regional parties are identified with groups representing relatively small shares of the population that are no more titular or native than others groups. For instance, the Assam United Democratic Front is a regional party in Assam. But, it draws support almost exclusively from Muslims, who constitute a religious minority. The Pattali Makkal Katchi in Tamil Nadu is closely associated with members of the Vanniyar caste, who are only about 9% of the population. And, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti in Andhra Pradesh is identified with only the Telangana region of the state.

A third distinctive feature of regional parties in India is the large number of regional parties that were founded as splinters from national parties. Today, two of the most important coalition partners in India's Congress-led government, the Nationalist Congress Party and the All India Trinamul Congress, are parties that split from Congress. These two parties are heirs to a long tradition of Congress splinters. Aside from Congress, the Janata Dal, a now defunct national party, also gave rise to a host of regional parties as it disintegrated in the early and mid 1990s. These include the Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Biju Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United), Indian National Lok Dal, and Janata Dal (Secular). In other countries, most of the important regional parties do not have their origins in existing national parties.

3. India over time

As Figure 4.1 shows, regional parties have occupied an evolving position in the Indian party system. From independence through the 1991 general election, regional parties consistently won

between 20% and 30% of the vote. This changed with the 1996 election, and since the late 1990s, support for regional parties has leveled out around 45%.[70] Since 1996 represents an in-between point when the regional party vote share was higher than in previous years but still lower than in the four most recent elections (1998, 1999, 2004, 2009), India's electoral history can be usefully divided into the pre-1996 period and the post-1996 period. In both periods, regional party vote shares have fluctuated, but no more than might be expected from the ebb and flow of normal electoral politics. In some years parties do worse; in other years they do better. But the difference between the pre-1996 and post-1996 periods is dramatic. And as will be discussed in Chapter 6, there is every indication that the post-1996 vote shares represent a stable plateau. Few serious analysts expect a major retrenchment in the regional party vote any time soon.

Several observations about the change in regional party success are worth mentioning. First, independent candidates as a share of the regional party vote have declined steadily over time. From the 1950s and 1960s, when independent vote shares were in the double digits and accounted for more than half of the regional party vote share, absolute levels of support for independents declined in the 1970s and 1980s so that they came to account for about 20-30% of the regional party vote share. Then, with the rise in overall support for regional parties in the 1990s, independents now account for less than 10% of all votes cast for regional parties.

Second, the rise in votes for regional parties in the 1990s was not the result of increased support for existing regional parties. The vote shares won by regional parties in existence prior to the 1990s are almost identical today to what they were prior to the dramatic rise in support for regional parties overall. The third observation is a corollary to the second; regional parties gained support in the 1990s because of the proliferation of new regional parties, some in states where regional parties were already strong (Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu), others in states where regional parties had previously been largely absent (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar).

Fourth, the rise in regional parties has been accompanied by a thinning in the ranks of noteworthy national parties. Table 4.1 lists India's main national parties; parties winning miniscule vote shares are excluded. In the last several elections the number of major national parties is somewhat smaller than it was in the past, thanks in large part to the disappearance of national parties belonging to the Janata *parivar* and the increasing marginality of the communist parties. The Janata *parivar*[71] is a family of parties rooted in the socialist and agrarian traditions. This party family shared a common set of leaders and a persistent support base over time, though the parties within this family frequently split and re-merged with one another. In the 1990s, the

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[70] Complete results for the 2009 election are not yet available, preventing me from calculating the regional party vote share for 2009. Based on preliminary results, it appears that there were no major changes in the support bases of any major parties. The potential exception to this is the CPI(M), which suffered a major setback in its stronghold, West Bengal. Depending on the magnitude of the setback, the party's vote share may no longer be sufficiently concentrated in West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura for it to qualify as a regional party. If so, then the regional party vote share might be a few percentage points lower than in 2004. Regardless, the change would not be a major one.
[71] In Hindi, *parivar* means "family," and Janata means "people". I take the term "Janata" from the name of the party family's two most successful parties, the Janata Party and the Janata Dal. The term is used today to refer to the parties that emerged out of the disintegration of the Janata Dal. I use it, somewhat anachronistically, to refer to the predecessors of those parties as well.

last remaining national party in the Janata *parivar*, the Janata Dal, disintegrated into a number of regional parties.

Additionally, India's communist parties have become increasingly marginal *national* presences. The Communist Party of India's (CPI) support base has shrunk over time, such that it now has tiny toeholds in several states. But as even these toeholds melt away, it is increasingly limited to a small number of states. Meanwhile, the CPI(M) is, of late, usually the third or fourth largest party in India after Congress, the BJP, and sometimes the BSP. However, its presence is highly concentrated in three states—West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura. Though it has occasionally appeared among the ranks of national parties, the CPI(M)'s presence outside of its strongholds is becoming increasingly tenuous. Other national parties that have disappeared include: the Swatantra party, a right-wing party led primarily by business interests and Indian aristocrats; the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), a Scheduled Caste party initially founded by B.R. Ambedkar, the father of the Indian constitution; and the SCF's successor, the Republican Party of India (RPI).

With the departure of the national parties of the Janata *parivar* and the intermittent presence of the communist parties, this leaves the BJP and Congress as the main national parties. The BSP is also taking on increasingly national dimensions, though it has yet to come anywhere close to elsewhere replicating the success it has had in Uttar Pradesh. Although Uttar Pradesh remains far and away the state with the strongest BSP support, the party has begun to contest elections widely. It increasingly contests all seats in major state elections and contested more seats than the BJP or Congress in the 2009 national elections. The tiny inroads that it has made in most states are enough for it to now frequently cross the threshold for classification as a national party.

4. India's major regional parties

As noted at the outset of this chapter, regional parties in India are a very heterogeneous group. For simplicity, I group them into five different types: regionalist, non-regionalist ethnic, leftist, Congress splinter, and Janata Dal remnant. Describing each of these five types of regional party provides a brief survey of the major regional parties operating today.

4.1 Regionalist parties

India's regionalist parties most closely resemble well-known regional parties elsewhere in the world. These are parties that usually confine themselves to a single region, though they may define that region in a way that it is not entirely congruous with state borders. Their message focuses on the grievances of their respective region, and they almost always demand greater autonomy and decentralization. Some of India's oldest regional parties fall into this category: Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) in Jammu & Kashmir; Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu; the now defunct Jharkhand Party (JKP), existent in what was then Bihar; and debatably Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab. The last is so closely identified with Sikhs in Punjab that it may be more usefully categorized as a non-regionalist ethnic party. Either way, all four parties trace their roots to the pre-independence or early post-independence era.

Later additions to the ranks of regionalist parties include the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Jammu & Kashmir; the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in Andhra Pradesh, the Gorkhaland National Liberation Front (GNLF) and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) in West Bengal; Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam; Shiv Sena (SHS) and very recently the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in Maharashtra; Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in Jharkhand; Uttarakhand Kranti Dal in Uttarakhand (UKKD); All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), and Desiya Morpukku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) in Tamil Nadu, as well as a host of tiny parties in India's small northeastern states.

These later entrants have been, on the whole, far less animated in their demands for decentralization and autonomy. For instance, the TRS, GNLF, and GJM care far less about decentralization than they do about carving out new states from existing states, Telangana from within Andhra Pradesh (for the TRS) and Gorkhaland from West Bengal (for the GNLF and GJM). The AGP and JMM could almost be classified as non-regionalist ethnic parties, since they seem far less intent on cultivating support from their regions as a whole and far more interested in garnering support from their specific clienteles, Assamese Hindus and Santhal tribals, respectively. However, both parties claim to be representing "indigenous" groups, making them somewhat more credible as regionalist forces. Others, such as Shiv Sena and TDP, are not caste-based parties but nevertheless draw heavily for their leadership on specific castes, Marathas and Kammas, respectively, and seem to have lost some of their original ardor for their regionalist causes. There are, however, some new regionalist parties—notably the PDP and MDMK—for whom the regionalist message is crucial to the party's identity.

4.2 Non-regionalist ethnic parties

Non-regionalist ethnic parties are mainly caste and religious parties. Some are quite old—All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), representing Muslims in the city of Hyderabad; Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), strong mainly among Muslims in Kerala; the various factions of the Republican Party of India (RPI), which descended from the Scheduled Caste Federation and whose followers are mainly Mahars in Maharahstra; and debatably the Akali Dal, which is a Sikh party in Punjab. Though the Akali Dal is mainly viewed as Sikh party, it has made demands for autonomy, even secession, which make it a plausible candidate for being a regionalist party.

With the exception of the Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF), a Muslim party in Assam, and the tiny National Loktantrik Party (NLP), another Muslim party in Uttar Pradesh, most of the non-regionalist ethnic parties founded in more recent decades have been caste-based parties. Examples include the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), a Vanniyar party in Tamil Nadu; Bodoland Progressive Front (BPF), a Bodo party in Assam; and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The BSP originally started out as an SC party, limited almost exclusively to Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Today it is a national party. India has a host of other tiny caste-based parties, some of which may prove ephemeral: Apna Dal (AD) among Kurmis in Uttar Pradesh; Puthiya Needhi Katchi (PNK) among Agamudai Mudaliars in Tamil Nadu; Viduthalai Ciruthaigal Katchi (VCK) among Paraiyars in Tamil Nadu; and Gondwana Ganatantra Parishad (GGP) among Gonds in central India. The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), a party of Jats in western Uttar Pradesh, could also

potentially qualify as a caste-based party given its reliance on Jat votes. In general, classifying parties as caste-based is a tricky endeavor since many parties that once openly identified with a particular caste have since sought to broaden their appeals. The BSP, PMK, and VCK are good examples of this. The RLD has never openly identified as a party of Jats, but is widely perceived as a purely Jat-based party.

4.3 Left parties

India's Left parties are national in aspiration and rhetoric and would vociferously contest being labeled as regional. But, based on their support bases, three of India's four largest communist parties are regional: the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), the All India Forward Bloc (AIFB), and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP). The Forward Bloc and RSP are mainly limited to West Bengal, though the RSP has a small presence in Kerala too. The CPI(M)'s strongholds are West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura, with smaller toeholds elsewhere. The CPI(M) has occasionally qualified as national party, but usually does not. These three main Left parties are joined by a host of other tiny Leftist parties still active today, almost all based in West Bengal: the Forward Bloc (Marxist) (FBM), the West Bengal Socialist Party (WBSP), the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI), and the Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP), whose origins are in Maharashtra. A number of other Leftist parties in West Bengal are now effectively defunct: the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, the Bolshevik Party of India, and many others. Most of the Left parties have their roots in the pre-Independence period, during which revolutionary Marxism flourished among a section of India's elite. This trend was most pronounced in colonial Bengal (both West Bengal and East Bengal, which is the current country of Bangladesh), where colonial rule and Western education had the deepest roots.

Although all of the Left parties aspire to national followings, the CPI has been the only party to consistently achieve it. However, even today, that appears to be slipping away as the CPI's overall decline has made it increasingly difficult to achieve a national status. The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (CPI(ML)), which represents a more radical Maoist breakaway from the CPI(M), has also run candidates across enough of the country that it has come close to national status. But, as of now, the CPI(ML) is a relatively marginal electoral force.

4.4 Congress splinters

Over the course of India's history, Congress has given birth to a huge assortment of breakaway parties, most of them ephemeral. Some of these parties have been national—Congress (O) (NCO), Congress (U) (INC(U)), and the All India Indira Congress (Tiwari) (AIIC(T))—none of which were particularly successful or long lasting. Most splinters, however, have been regional. Some of these splinter parties have decimated particular state units of the Congress, such as Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) (TMC(M)), while others have effectively represented a single dissident Congress politician, such as Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress (MPVC). As with the dissident national parties that broke from Congress, many of the regional splinters have been short-lived. These include Bangla Congress (BAC) in West Bengal, Telangana Praja Samithi (TPS) in Andhra Pradesh, the Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) in Haryana, Himachal Vikas Congress (HVC) in Himachal Pradesh, TMC(M) in Tamil Nadu, and Jana Congress (JAC) and Utkal Congress (UTC) in Orissa. Most of these parties eventually merged back into Congress.

Others have proven more durable. Kerala Congress (KEC)—which has a strong following among Christians in Kerala and has spawned a gaggle of its own splinters also carrying the name Kerala Congress—was founded in 1960s. NCP, founded in 1999 and strong in Maharashtra, and the All India Trinamul Congress (AITC), founded in 1996 and active mainly in West Bengal, were founded more recently but show no signs of wishing to merge back to the parent party. The fates of the more recently founded Puducherry Munnetra Congress (PMC) in Puducherry and Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) in Haryana are harder to predict.

Though some of these Congress splinters are associated with particular communities—NCP and Marathas; HJC and Jats; KEC and Christians—most of these parties are more closely identified with the leaders responsible for their founding. This is particularly true for the regional Congress splinters, far more than for the national ones. It is hard to dissociate many of these parties from their leaders: Bansi Lal from HVP, Sukh Ram from HVC, Madhavrao Scindia from MPVC, Ajoy Mukherjee from BAC, Mamata Banerjee from AITC, Sharad Pawar and P.A. Sangma from NCP, G.K. Moopanar from TMC(M), and P. Kannan from PMC.

4.5 Janata Dal remnants

The final category of regional party is the Janata Dal fragment. Founded in 1988, the Janata Dal was initially a national party. Following a spell leading the national government, from 1989-90, it suffered a series of debilitating splits. Nearly all of these splits involved the departure of a regional unit of the party. Some of these fragments then split again, producing second-generation fragments of the Janata Dal. The deterioration of the Janata Dal was rapid after the first split in 1990, which produced the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP). Over the next decade, the party fell apart completely. Today, the parties that remain are all regional. They are Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in Haryana; Samajwadi Party (SP) in Uttar Pradesh; Janata Dal (Secular) (JD(S)) in Karnataka; Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Orissa; and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)), and Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJSNP) in Bihar. Of these, INLD, SP, and LJSNP are "second-generation" splinters, having broken away from earlier Janata Dal splinters.

Most of the remnants of the Janata Dal are not caste-based parties in that they do not explicitly identify with any caste and they are not entirely dependent on any one or two communities for the bulk of their support. Nevertheless, almost all of these parties are associated with particular communities from which they draw disproportionate support: Muslims and Yadavs for SP and RJD; Kurmis and Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) for JD(U); Vokkaligas for JD(S); Jats for INLD; and SCs for LJSNP. Although not as readily identified with upper castes, the BJD has a heavy upper-caste slant to its support base (Kumar 2004). The Rashtriya Lok Dal, a mainly Jat party in Western Uttar Pradesh, could also potentially qualify as a remnant of the Janata Dal. It did not actually break away from the Janata Dal, but its leader, Ajit Singh, is the son of Charan Singh, the leader of one of the parties that merged to found the Janata Dal in 1998.

4.6 Other parties

Not all parties sit comfortably in one of the aforementioned five categories, and a number straddle multiple categories. One party that defies classification is Praja Rajyam (PRP), a party

founded in 2008 by Telugu film star Chiranjeevi. Prior to the party's founding, Chiranjeevi had not been active in politics, so the party does not have its origins in a national party. Praja Rajyam is thought to have received strong support from the Kapu community, because that is the caste to which Chiranjeevi belongs. But, there is no evidence that its support was confined mainly to that community, and the party has certainly not openly identified with the caste. Additionally, the party has made no apparent nods toward regionalism. In many ways, PRP resembles the later generation of regionalist parties, many of which are dominated by their founders, associated heavily though not exclusively with a particular caste, and evince a fairly weak commitment to a regionalist agenda.

5. Existing hypotheses

Having laid out in broad strokes the landscape of regional parties in India, I now turn to hypotheses in the literature that could potentially be deployed to explain both the tremendous success of regional parties in India as well as their dramatic increase in support in the 1990s. This section shows how existing theories are lacking, thereby setting the stage for the arguments to come in chapters 5 and 6.

5.1 Historical evolution

In comparative perspective, the growing regionalization of a party system runs against the historical trend in most countries. In Europe, Caramani (2004) treats regional parties as relics of an earlier brand of territorially based, rather than functionally-based, politics. He contends that in the European case, the "survival of territoriality in politics today can therefore be explained principally through cultural cleavages that resisted the homogenizing impact of class politics" (292). The applicability of Caramani's argument to India is limited for two reasons. First, the Indian experience runs counter to that of Europe; regional parties have grown in strength, not diminished. Second, India has never had a dominant politics of class and shows little sign of developing it. Nevertheless, Caramani's contention that the origins of regional parties stem from "cultural cleavages" is one that is worth examining.

5.2 Ethnic grievances

One of the most important theories in the literature is that regional parties emerge in response to ethnic grievances (Levi and Hechter 1985; Bakke and Wibbels 2006). Since many of the world's most prominent regional parties champion the causes of minority ethnic groups—the Scotts and the Welsh in the United Kingdom, Francophones in Québec, Catalans and Basques in Spain—this hypothesis is an appealing one. Empirically, however, the hypothesis is problematic in India. To begin, as the previous section discussed, many regional parties in India do not articulate regional grievances. Therefore, it is doubtful whether an ethnic grievances explanation can provide much leverage, as many of the most important regional parties to emerge in the 1990s were splinters from Congress (NCP, AITC, TMC(M)) or Janata Dal fragments. Nevertheless, it is worth considering whether the data fit the hypothesis.

In fact, they appear not to. Regional parties are found throughout India, both in the country's ethnic core and periphery. Since India is highly ethnically diverse, identifying an ethnic "core" is

not necessarily straightforward. However, Hindi-speakers are the largest linguistic group and the one that has historically been thought to dominate Indian politics. In contrast, South India speaks languages belonging to the Dravidian language family, which is entirely unrelated to the Indo-European language family to which Hindi and most of the other widely spoken languages in India belong. Additionally, India's remote northeast is religiously, linguistically and culturally distinct from any of the rest of "mainland" India. Yet, across the Hindi-belt and neighboring states where related languages are spoken, there are states with strong regional parties (Bihar, West Bengal) and states where they are virtually non-existent (Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh). So too in South India and the Northeast, where there are states that are dominated by national parties (i.e., Karnataka and Arunachal Pradesh) and those where regional parties dominate (i.e., Tamil Nadu and Sikkim).

Another problem is that the ethnic grievance argument is hard-pressed to explain the increase in support for regional parties in India in the 1990s. If new support for regional parties emerges out of the politicization of region-specific grievances, what explains the simultaneous politicization of disparate regional identities across India? Furthermore, why would an increased sense of regional grievance lead to the proliferation of *new* regional parties rather than to increased support for *existing* regional parties in states where they already existed?

In the early 1990s, India experienced important waves of ethnic mobilization that surely heightened the salience of certain ethnic identities. One wave of mobilization was religious in nature. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, agitations were launched to build a temple to Lord Ram on the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. Hindu revivalists eventually demolished the mosque, provoking riots throughout India. At roughly the same time, caste became highly salient as the national government implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission report in 1990. This report mandated additional caste-based affirmative action quotas for certain lower caste groups.

Although this ethnic mobilization occurred just prior to the increase in support for regional parties, these particular events would not, on the face of it, seem to lend themselves to the politicization of regional ethnic grievances. Most regional ethnic grievances pit a peripheral group against a core group or a peripheral group against the central government. But, in these cases, the groups in conflict—Hindus versus Muslims, upper castes versus other backward classes (OBCs)—are not region-specific groups. They are groups found throughout the country. The politicization of these identities could easily have led to grievances, but these would not be grievances specific to any region. Politicization of these groups ought to have led to new national parties. Nevertheless, many have argued that north India felt the effects of the Mandal and *mandir* (temple) agitations most keenly. Perhaps true, but this cannot explain the considerable variation across the Hindi-speaking North, where states such as Haryana, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh witnessed a subsequent rise in support for regional parties, while others, such as Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand, did not.

5.3 Economic grievances

Another important version of the grievances hypothesis has to do with economic grievances. Some theories predict regional parties in wealthy states that protest subsidizing poor states

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(Fearon and van Houten 2000; Hale 2000), while other theories predict regional parties in states that feel economically marginalized by the central government (Hechter 1975; Giuliano 2006). At first blush, an economic grievances hypothesis seems plausible. Beginning in the 1990s, India's economy began to liberalize, following which, the gap between India's poor northern and eastern states and its wealthier western and southern states increased. And, as inter-state economic inequalities grew, so too did regional parties.

But, the same questions that dog the ethnic grievances hypothesis apply to the economic grievance hypothesis. First, why should a grievance-based hypothesis apply when so few regional parties articulate grievances as part of their appeals to voters? Second, if inter-regional disparities suddenly became important, why would not existing regional parties benefit? Why would this prompt only the founding of new parties rather than the increased success of existing ones? Third, and finally, regional party success correlates poorly with poverty or wealth. For every one of the economic winners in which regional parties are strong (Maharashtra, Punjab), there are states where they are weak (Delhi, Gujarat). The same applies to basket-case states where regional parties are both weak (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh) and strong (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh).

5.4 Institutions

Perhaps the most promising explanation for regional party success in India is institutions. Indeed, although I contend that institutions cannot explain change over time and cannot on their own explain why India's regional parties have been as successful as they have, India's political institutions have almost certainly allowed regional parties to succeed in ways that they could not otherwise have.

A number of recent studies have explained the success of regional parties (or the related phenomenon of party system denationalization) in terms of formal institutions that decentralize power. For Brancati (2008) political decentralization, namely federalism, is key, while Chhibber and Kollman (2004) focus on fiscal decentralization. Finally, Hicken (2009) argues that the centralization of power within the institutions of the national government, what he calls horizontal centralization, explains party system nationalization. In some form or another, all of these arguments contend that as power is dispersed and pushed down to lower levels of government, there are additional power centers worth fighting over. Furthermore, regional parties can potentially win control over these power centers, thereby providing an incentive for the formation of regional parties.

The problem that these arguments face is the stability of India's political institutions. Throughout its history, India has remained a parliamentary federation with a weak and indirectly elected upper house and elections conducted in single-member districts. The concentration of power—whether between the central government and the states or within the various institutions of the national government—has remained stable over time. On the political front, India decentralized power to the local level in the early 1990s. But, this can hardly explain the rise of regional parties. For one, the extent of actual decentralization is in doubt. While in some places decentralization has been meaningful, in others it has not (Chaudhuri 2006), and there is no obvious correlation between states with meaningful local decentralization and those with

increasingly successful regional parties.[72] Additionally, local decentralization did not prompt the rise of local parties. Local decentralization should predict the growing importance of micro-parties and independents. There is no evidence in favor of the former, while the importance of independents has, if anything, declined.

In terms of fiscal decentralization, the matter is open to some debate. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue that thanks to economic liberalization, India's states possess far more fiscal power than they once did. However, the constitutional division of power and resources did not change during the period of liberalization. Although state governments are now important actors in attracting investment into their states (when once they were not), their ability to tax and their share of resources from the central government has not changed. I discuss the issue of fiscal decentralization in greater detail in Chapter 6. For now, I note an additional problem with the fiscal decentralization argument, which is its inability to explain cross-national differences. In their book, Chhibber and Kollman trace over time changes in variation in party system nationalization to trends in fiscal (de)centralization. Setting aside any doubts about changes in India's levels of decentralization, absolute levels of decentralization are entirely *inconsistent* with levels of party system nationalization across the countries they study. While Canada is far and away the most decentralized of their cases and the United Kingdom by far the most centralized, the two countries' party systems look very similar (see Table 6.6 in Chapter 6). At the same time, the U.S. and India look very similar in terms of measures of decentralization, yet the American party system is among the most nationalized in the world and India's is the most regionalized. Finally, with respect to Hicken's hypothesis about horizontal centralization, there have been no major changes in India in the institutions on which he focuses.

Although I have indicated skepticism about the ability of institutional arguments to explain change over time or even the strength of regional parties in India relative to other countries, it would be imprudent to entirely dismiss the importance of institutional arguments. Indeed, Indian federalism is undoubtedly an important condition that has facilitated the rise of regional parties. Federations exist throughout the world, and in many of them regional parties are weak (see Figure 4.4). Federalism alone cannot therefore explain the tremendous success of Indian regional parties. By the same token, it is hard to imagine regional parties occupying such an important place in the party system were it not for federalism. Were state governments non-existent or entirely powerless, regional parties could probably not have achieved the success that they have. The fact that state governments control policy areas that are critically important for every day well-being—health, sanitation, education, law and order—and generate a great deal of employment surely provide strong incentives to politicians to establish and join regional parties. Thus, federalism should perhaps best be viewed as a necessary though insufficient condition for regional party success.

5.5 New hypotheses

Given the inability of existing hypotheses to explain what has happened in India, what can explain the phenomenal success of regional parties? Can anything meaningful be said about such a heterogeneous category of parties defined purely by their geography? In the next two chapters,

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[72] For example, Karnataka is a model of political decentralization, but its party system has become increasingly nationalized over the past decade with the rise of the BJP.

I argue that something can indeed be said. After all, despite the heterogeneity of this category of party, support for regional parties remained relatively stable for nearly forty years. Then, quite suddenly, it began to rise and now appears to have reached a stable plateau. Amidst all the chaos of India's party system, elements of stability stand out.

In keeping with the themes of Chapters 2 and 3, this study looks for answers about weak rule of law party systems in the realm of political elites. What would make a substantial number of politicians want to establish and join regional parties during the first four decades after independence? Then, in the 1990s, what made an even larger number of politicians suddenly decide that regional parties were preferable to national parties?

The next two chapters contend that the conditions that gave rise to the tremendous success of regional parties were the geographic concentration of politically salient attributes, namely caste, and coalition government. Because the salient groups in Indian society are geographically concentrated, forging a national party requires knitting together various groups into a single party. This is a costly endeavor, which many politicians opt to avoid. As a result, many politicians in India have elected to establish and join regional parties. Since the concentration of groups in India has been a constant, this feature of the Indian polity explains the steady baseline level of support for regional parties that has never dipped much below 20% or 25%.

The second important condition is coalition government, the advent of which gave added incentives to politicians to join small regional parties that were hitherto shut out of national level power. The shift from single-party majority government to coalition government in the late 1980s and early 1990s prompted the dramatic spike in regional party success that began in the mid 1990s as politicians opted to establish new regional parties.

Table 4.1 National parties in India, 1952-2004

Year	National parties					Vote%
	Congress	*Hindu*	*Communist*	*Janata*	*Other*	
1952	INC	BJS, *RRP*	--	SOC, KMPP	SCF	69%
1957	INC	*BJS*	CPI	PSP	*SCF*	76%
1962	INC	*BJS*	CPI	PSP	SWA, *RPI*	79%
1967	INC	BJS	CPI, *CPI(M)*	SSP, *PSP*	*RPI*	78%
1971	INC, NCO	BJS	CPI	SSP, *PSP*	*SWA*	73%
1977	INC	--	CPI	JNP	--	79%
1980	INC, INC(U)	--	CPI	JNP, JNP(S)	--	79%
1984	INC	BJP	CPI	JNP, *LKD*	--	71%
1989	INC	BJP	CPI, *CPI(M)*	JD	*BSP*	80%
1991	INC	BJP	CPI	JD, *SJP*	--	74%
1996	INC, AIIC(T)	BJP	CPI	JD	*BSP*	65%
1998	INC	BJP	--	--	*BSP*	56%
1999	INC	BJP	--	--	--	54%
2004	INC	BJP	*CPI*	--	*BSP*	56%

Note: Parties are arranged by party family and classified as national based on their HHI measuring the fragmentation of their vote across India's states. Italicized parties are those that are semi-national, with HHI's between 0.10 and 0.18. Only parties winning more than 1.0% of the vote are included. The number of excluded parties is very small. AIIC(T) = All India Indira Congress (Tiwari); BJS = Bharatiya Jana Sangh; BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party; BSP = Bahujan Samaj Party; CPI = Communist Party of India; CPI(M) = Communist Party of India (Marxist); INC = Indian National Congress; INC(U) = Indian National Congress (Urs); JD = Janata Dal; JNP = Janata Party; JNP(S) = Janata Party (Secular); KMPP = Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party; LKD = Lok Dal; NCO = Indian National Congress (Organisation); PSP = Praja Socialist Party; RPI = Republican Party of India; RRP = Ram Rajya Parishad; SCF = Scheduled Caste Federation; SJP = Samajwadi Janata Party; SOC = Socialist Party; SSP = Samyukta Socialist Party; SWA = Swatantra.

Source: Election Commission of India; author calculations.

Figure 4.1 Regional party votes shares in India, using different thresholds
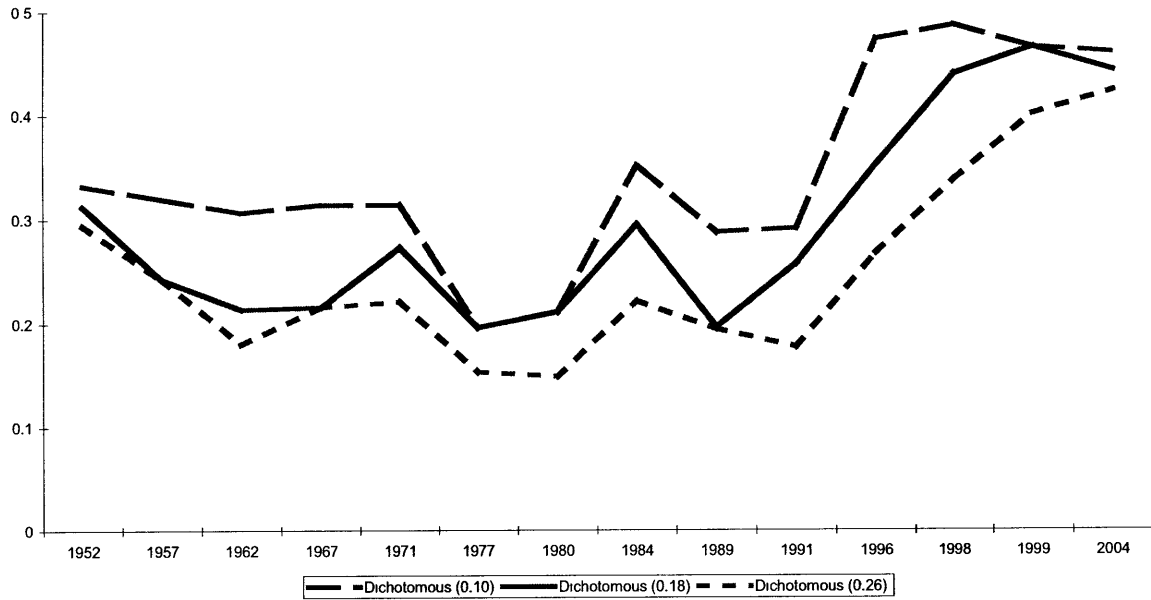
Note: Each line traces the percentage of the vote won by regional parties in national elections, using different thresholds on the HHI to classify parties as regional.

Source: Election Commission of India; author calculation.

Figure 4.2 Comparing the regional party and party aggregation measures for India

Note: The dotted line represents the share of the national level vote won by regional parties according to my definition, using the fragmentation of a party's vote across states. It is measured along the left-hand y-axis, which is scaled according to vote share (out of 1, not 100%). The solid line represents the party aggregation method used by Chhibber and Kollman (2004) and is measured on the right-hand y-axis.

Source: Election Commission of India; author calculations.

Figure 4.3 Comparing Indian parties with different levels of vote fragmentation across states
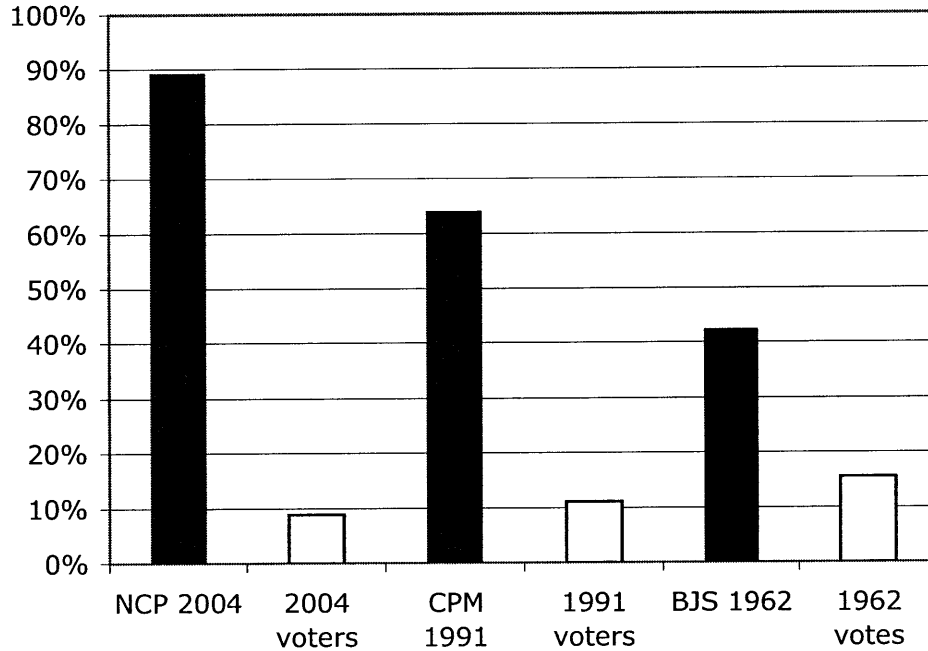
Note: Dark grey columns represent the share of the vote won by the party in the state that accounts for the greatest share of its votes. White columns represent the share of total votes in the electorate that come from that state. NCP = Nationalist Congress Party; CPM = Communist Party of India (Marxist); BJS = Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The states in question are Maharashtra (NCP); West Bengal (CPM); Uttar Pradesh (BJS).

Source: Election Commission of India; author calculations

Figure 4.4 Regional party vote shares in the worlds federations and decentralized unions
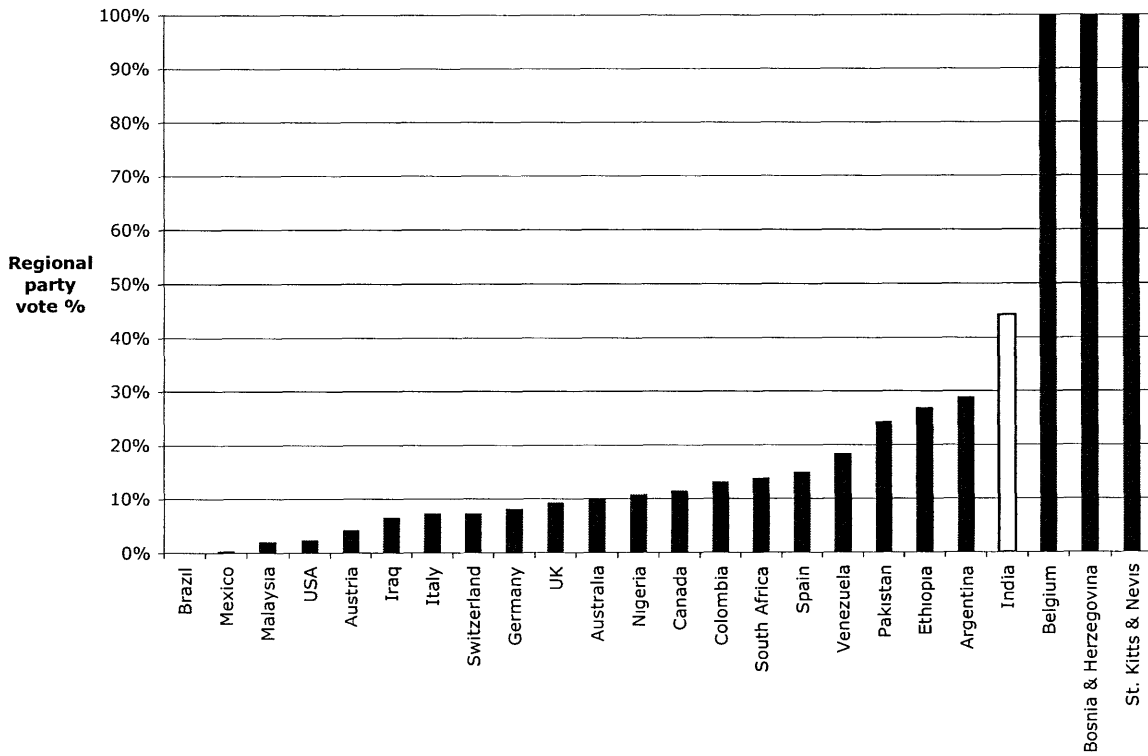
Note: The list of federations included here comes from Watts (1999). Colombia and the United Kingdom are decentralized unions; all other countries are federations. I have not been able to locate disaggregated vote shares for Russia. Because legislative results were not available for Nigeria, I used the results from the simultaneous governors' races. However, data from only 26 of 36 states was available. The figure for Nigeria should therefore be treated with extreme caution.

Source: Various, collected by author.

Chapter 5. Group Geography, Party Organization, and Regional Parties

This chapter explains one aspect of regional party success in India: the stable base of approximately 25% of the national vote that regional parties have consistently received since independence. The constancy of this core of popular support over time suggests the presence of some relatively static feature of the Indian polity that has allowed regional parties to carve out an unusually large space in the Indian party system.[73] This feature is the geographic concentration of salient groups in society, namely groups oriented around caste and, to a lesser degree, language and mass political leaders. As part of a politician-centered explanation for party systems, this chapter shows how the distribution of groups in society—what I call group geography—shapes the costs associated with forming political parties. When most salient groups are geographically concentrated, as they are in India, political entrepreneurs must incur onerous costs to establish a national party. As a result, a substantial number have always opted to form regional parties, in spite of the fact that many of them evince no ideological commitment to regionalism.

This argument comes directly out of the Indian case. However, I present the argument in the first half of the chapter in general, non-India-specific terms. The logic of the argument consists of five steps (sections 1-5). Section 6 briefly distinguishes this argument from other important ones in the literature. Then, in the second half of the chapter (sections 7-11), I turn to the empirics of the Indian case, providing details that are the basis for the argument in the first half. Both the theory and empirics focus almost exclusively on national parties because the argument about group geography explains the choice to establish a regional party as a negative choice. Political entrepreneurs choose regional parties because they do not wish to bear the costs associated with national parties, rather than because they have a particular affinity for regional parties.

The argument that leads from geographically concentrated groups to regional parties proceeds in the following five steps. 1) When groups are geographically concentrated, political entrepreneurs cannot establish a national party without knitting together different groups from across the country. 2) Keeping multiple groups together in a party creates coordination problems. 3) These coordination problems can be solved through the creation of a robust party organization. 4) Investment in party organization comes at a substantial cost, particularly to political entrepreneurs initially establishing a party. 5) Thanks to the costs involved in investing in party organization, many politicians forego such an investment and settle for leading regional parties.

1. Concentrated and dispersed groups

The first step in the logic leading from group geography to regional parties is that political entrepreneurs must knit together multiple distinct groups to form a national party when groups are geographically concentrated. If no group is found everywhere in the country (i.e., when groups are concentrated), then it follows that national parties necessarily incorporate multiple groups. Otherwise, they could not achieve a national support base. Meanwhile, if groups are found throughout the country (i.e., dispersed), then a party need only incorporate a single group to establish a national support base. In this section, I first define group concentration and

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[73] Even at the moment of regional parties' worst performance, the Indian party system was highly regionalized in comparison to other countries.

dispersion (1.1) and politically salient groups (1.2). I then elaborate on the logic of this section's claim (1.3), before contending with an important critique that group geography is as much an opportunity for political entrepreneurs as it is a constraint (1.4).

1.1 Conceptualizing group concentration and dispersion

The distinction between concentrated and dispersed groups is most meaningful for small- or medium-sized groups but breaks down for larger groups that can simultaneously appear both concentrated and dispersed. As an illustration, consider a group comprising 5% of a population and another group comprising 75% of a population, both in a space in which population is evenly distributed. For the small group, the difference between perfect concentration and perfect dispersion is marked. Perfect concentration means that the group constitutes 100% of the population in 5% of the space; perfect dispersion means that that the group constitutes 5% of the population across 100% of the space. Both scenarios straightforwardly comport with common-sense notions of what concentrated and dispersed distributions are.

Now consider the group comprising 75% of the population. Here, the difference between perfect concentration and perfect dispersion is ambiguous. Perfect concentration means that the population accounts for 100% of the population in 75% of the space, whereas perfect dispersion means that 75% of the population across 100% of the space belongs to the group. In both cases, the group can be found across the vast majority of the space, meaning that even in its most concentrated form, the group is highly dispersed. Hence, the boundary between concentrated and dispersed blurs for large groups, and the distinction between the two is most useful in heterogeneous settings where no group constitutes an overwhelming majority.

1.2 Defining politically salient groups

I conceive of groups as aggregates of individuals with common, widely recognized non-valence attributes. Attributes are individual-level characteristics on some dimension of identity. For example, speaking English is an attribute on the dimension of language.[74] Widely recognized attributes are those that are known to exist in the population and that are either readily observed in others or those with which individuals frequently self-identify. I consider as groups only those aggregates based on non-valence attributes. In chapter 2, I discussed the distinction between valence and non-valence attributes, and I defined valence attributes as those that inspire moral consensus, while non-valence attributes are ones in which moral judgment does not inhere. Groups, as I refer to them, are composed of individuals based on non-valence attributes because valence attributes (such as honesty) are frequently difficult to observe and depend on highly subjective judgments. Non-valence attributes, by contrast, are typically visible (e.g., height, income, ethnicity) and less frequently contestable. I therefore exclude from the universe of politically salient groups those that are based on these attributes.

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[74] Chandra and Boulet (2005) use the language of categories, attributes, and dimensions. Attributes define membership in a category, and attributes are arrayed on an attribute-dimension. I use the language of groups, rather than categories, because I attach some qualifications to the types of attributes with which I am concerned, namely that they are widely recognized and non-valence.

For the purposes of this argument, groups must also be politically salient. A group is politically salient if membership in that group shapes voting behavior in important ways. Many types of groups could therefore be politically salient in a society: ethnic, class, sectoral, ideological, even followers of a political leader. While I require that an attribute influence individual-level voting behavior to be salient, all salient attributes need not constitute central lines of cleavage in the party system. For instance, in a particular polity, social class might influence voters' vote choice. But, if other factors along with social class contribute to vote choice or if all parties present a similar class appeal, then the party system will not be oriented around class.

A polity can have politically salient groups based on a large number of attribute-dimensions. Throughout this chapter, I simplify matters by referring to polities as though all groups are concentrated or dispersed, when in fact most polities combine groups based on many different attribute-dimensions, with some types of groups concentrated and some dispersed. Since the mix of concentrated and dispersed groups is what matters, it would be more appropriate to refer to polities based on whether the *preponderance* of groups is geographically concentrated or dispersed. However, for ease, I refer mainly to the two extreme ideal-types—polities in which all politically salient groups are dispersed and those in which all salient groups are concentrated.

1.3 Group geography and political parties

Group geography has an important implication for political parties. It determines the minimum number of politically salient groups that parties must incorporate to establish a national support base. The more that politically salient groups in society are dispersed the smaller the number of groups *required* to form a national party. The more that politically salient groups are concentrated, the larger the number of groups that a party must incorporate if it wishes to be a national party.

When politically salient groups are geographically concentrated, incorporating a single group into the party will only produce a regional party since, by definition, the group is highly concentrated and therefore found in only a small portion of the country. To construct a fully national support base, a party must therefore incorporate as many groups as there are geographic areas with distinct groups. For example, if a country has four linguistic regions (that is, language groups concentrated in their own geographic regions), then a party that is fully national would have to incorporate four different groups of voters representing the four different regions. By contrast, when politically salient groups are dispersed, a party need not rely on multiple groups. Instead, it can incorporate a single group of voters and still maintain a national support base. To return to the example of linguistic groups, if a country has four language groups each dispersed throughout the country, then a party could incorporate voters from only one language group and still be a national party. In this example, if the four language groups are equally sized, then the incorporation of a single group places an upper bound on how large the national party can be (i.e., 25% of the vote), but has no bearing on whether it is national or regional.

Dispersed groups do not ensure that all parties *must* be national. Parties could, for some reason, win support from members of a dispersed group in some places and not others, thereby resulting in a regional party. The crucial point, however, is that in a setting of dispersed groups a party could expand to become a national party without incorporating new groups; it would only have

to incorporate more members of the same group. By contrast, when groups are concentrated, a party has to incorporate entirely new groups to establish a national following.

Nor does the dispersion of groups imply that national parties never incorporate multiple groups. National parties may frequently include multiple dispersed groups in an effort to increase the size of the party. It is even possible for a national party in a setting of dispersed groups to incorporate more groups that a national party in a setting of concentrated groups.[75] To reiterate, the claim here is about the number of groups *necessary* for establishing a national party. When groups are dispersed, parties can attempt to incorporate as many groups as they like, but that decision does not usually bear on the national or regional nature of the party. So long as the party successfully incorporates a single group (with roughly equal success everywhere), then it is a national party. The situation differs considerably for national parties in settings with concentrated groups. Here, the decision about how many groups to incorporate often directly determines whether the party is regional or national. If it fails to incorporate at least a certain number groups, it will fail in its aspirations for a national support base.

1.4 Groups as structural constraint or object of political entrepreneurship

A voluminous body of research has shown that politics shapes both the types of groups that are salient as well as the boundaries of those groups (Laitin 1986; Pzeworski and Sprague 1986; Nobles 2000; Posner 2005). The politically salient groups in society should not therefore be thought of purely as a constraint on politics but also in part as the object of politics. However, for the purposes of this study—understanding national and regional parties in a weak rule of law democracy—I take the structure of salient groups in a polity at a given point in time as exogenous and largely unchangeable in the short-run. I do so because I believe that this accurately captures the strategic environment in which any individual political entrepreneur finds herself at the time when she enters politics.

This assumption requires justification. Why does group geography necessarily pose a constraint on party building rather than present an opportunity? Assume for a moment that, all else equal, politicians tend to prefer national parties to regional parties. If a political entrepreneur finds herself in a setting with concentrated groups that make the formation of a national party costly (see below), then why would she not attempt to reengineer the groups in society either to increase the salience of a dispersed group that was previously irrelevant or to reconstruct the boundaries of an existing group to turn it into a dispersed group? In theory she could. But, doing so would in all likelihood be a difficult and time-consuming task and would not be easily replicable among her fellow political entrepreneurs.

One strand of research shows how identity groups or the interests and values that underpin them take shape over the *longue durée* (Laitin 1986; Dirks 2001; Pandey 2006) or thanks to large-scale societal changes beyond the control of any small set of individuals (Ingelhart 1977). According to these accounts, the ways in which people identify themselves depend on major socio-economic processes, centuries of tradition, or deeply embedded social relations. Effecting

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[75] For example, if one country has a relatively small number of concentrated groups, then a national party might only incorporate a handful of groups. If another country has a very large number of dispersed groups, a national party might incorporate a large number of groups in an effort to become a large, rather than a small, national party.

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change through *longue durée* processes rules out short-term change by definition. Perhaps more importantly, individuals or even small groups of individuals are unlikely to be able to purposively exact change on this scale for their own political purposes.

Another strand of research shows how short-term identity change is possible. This literature examines the role of state institutions in shaping which identities matter and how those identity groups are defined (Nobles 2000; Chandra 2005; Posner 2005). A major change in state policy can indeed produce the kinds of changes that an ambitious regional politician would like to see. The policies capable of shaping identities and their salience often represent cornerstones of state policy—how the state counts its population (Nobles 2000), defines its internal boundaries (Chandra 2005), or organizes elections (Posner 2005). The sticking point for political entrepreneurs in regional parties is that they are often political outsiders. Indeed, it is precisely because their political aspirations are frustrated by the existing group landscape that they wish to engineer change. Political entrepreneurs are often further hampered by the small size of their parties. Even if a regional party is in a position of power (which is not uncommon, as I discuss in the next chapter), it may not on its own have the power to change major state policies. Larger national parties that benefit from the status quo may be unwilling to accede to change.

For these reasons I introduce the simplifying assumption that groups in society are constraints within which politicians must work in the short-run. I do not exclude the possibility that a political entrepreneur can turn these constraints into opportunities, but I assume that for the overwhelming majority of the political entrepreneurs I am interested in—those in small regional parties—group geography constrains behavior. Even the most successful social engineer would likely succeed only over the course of a long time. Additionally, one social engineer's success with respect to one type of attribute would not necessarily be replicated along other dimensions such that it would change a polity's overall group geography from one with predominantly concentrated groups to one with predominantly dispersed groups. Nevertheless, should the landscape of groups change dramatically over time, this fact could be taken into account. What would once have been a static aspect of the analysis of regional parties could thus become a dynamic story.

Finally, the assumption of a fixed geography of groups (at a given point in time) does not preclude political entrepreneurship. In some polities, many types of groups may shape vote choice, even if these groups do not necessarily structure the party system. For example, imagine a party system structured by ethnicity. For some set of historically contingent reasons, parties might have developed around ethnicity, even though class is also politically salient. In this context, if ethnic groups are concentrated and class groups are not, an ambitious political entrepreneur interested in establishing a national party might try to parlay the salience of class into a new class-based national party. Group geography is not, therefore, deterministic. Political entrepreneurs can choose which of the (usually) many salient groups in society they wish to mobilize around.

2. Coordination problems

The previous section explained why group geography influences the number of groups that a national party must incorporate. This section now turns to how the number of groups influences

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the costs that a party faces, specifically costs related to coordination. Coordination problems are common wherever multiple actors must cooperate. As the number of actors in a situation increases, so too does the problem of ensuring cooperation amongst them. Parties are no different, and group geography influences the coordination problems that parties face. When groups are dispersed, the number of groups required to form a national party is smaller. The smaller the number of groups in the party, the less severe the coordination problem. When groups are concentrated, more groups are required to form a national party, and the coordination problems consequently increase in magnitude. The coordination problem to which I refer does not concern groups of voters, but rather groups of politicians, which I refer to as factions.[76] To unpack the logic that links geography to coordination problems, I answer two questions in this section. First, why does the group geography of *voters* produce coordination problems for *parties*? Second, what exactly are the coordination problems that parties encounter?

2.1 How societal groups influence factional conflict

Section 1 covered the geography of groups in society, but the argument in this section refers to nature of conflict within a party. Why would the geography of groups of voters influence the structure of factions within a party? The question is particularly relevant in a weak rule of law setting, where politicians enjoy a great deal of latitude to make their own decisions about party membership. In this context, it might appear plausible that the groups in society do not bear on the factions that form within a party. If so, then the structure of groups would not shape the nature of the coordination problem that parties face.

The claim that groups in *society* should shape factional conflict in a *party* requires that two assumptions prove true. First, politicians in a party must belong to at least some of the same groups as their party's voters. If not, then incorporating multiple groups of voters would not translate into having politicians from multiple groups within the party. Second, politicians in the party must sort themselves into factions based on the same factors that differentiate groups in society. In other words, it is not enough that the party membership reflects societal groups if factional conflict then takes shape based on an altogether different set of factors. The same factors that differentiate groups in society must also inform the ways that politicians sort themselves into factions.

2.2 Why politicians resemble voters

The argument that the geography of groups influences the nature of factional conflict within a party first rests on the assumption that when parties must include multiple groups of *voters* to knit together a national party, they must also include *politicians* from multiple groups. When groups are dispersed, a national party need only incorporate a single group of voters and politicians. The argument falters if, when groups are concentrated, a national party incorporates *multiple groups of voters* but only a *single group of politicians*. If this happens, then group geography would not influence elite-level coordination, since parties would be able to bypass coordination problems entirely by incorporating politicians from a single group, irrespective of whether groups are concentrated or dispersed. For example, if a party in Spain won support from

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[76] To distinguish between groups in society and groups within parties, I refer to aggregations of individuals within parties as factions.

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Basque, Catalan, Galician, and Castillian speakers but only incorporated Catalan speaking politicians, then the coordination problem among politicians (based on language) would be no different than in Germany, if a party were to win support from German speakers and incorporate only German-speaking politicians. Though language is concentrated in Spain but dispersed in Germany, in both cases, the party would incorporate a single group of politicians and therefore face comparatively minor coordination costs, even as the Spanish party incorporates multiple groups of *voters* while the Germany party does not.

When groups are concentrated, what prevents a party from winning the support of multiple groups of *voters* while only relying on politicians from a single concentrated group? Practically speaking, political institutions often make this scenario impossible. In countries with small electoral constituencies and laws requiring residency for politicians running for office in a constituency, parties can hardly avoid drawing politicians from the places where they win votes. If the party fares well in elections in a place, then almost by definition, the party must include a significant number of politicians from that location. And, if groups are concentrated, then the party cannot help but include politicians from multiple groups. At a somewhat more ideational level, where electoral systems privilege the notion of geographic representation (i.e., in single-member district systems), voters might come to expect that representatives of their geographic area actually come from that area and that "outsiders" do not represent them and their constituencies. If this is the case, then parties may have a strong incentive to field local candidates instead of parachuting candidates in from elsewhere lest they risk punishment at the polls.

Additionally, in a weak rule of law setting, voter preferences should also lead parties to incorporate multiple groups of politicians in a context of concentrated groups. In Chapter 2, I argued that voters in weak rule of law democracies choose candidates based on inferences they make about how candidates will selectively implement policy when in office. I noted three mechanisms that underpinned voters' inferences: community, *noblesse oblige*, and altruism. Of these three, community rests on assumptions about the bonds of obligation owed to fellow group members. Voters believe that when politicians are forced to decide whether to selectively implement policy on their behalf, the politicians rely in part on obligations they feel to fellow group members. Therefore, the more similar the politician is to the voter, the more likely the politician will help the voter in his time of need.

From the party's perspective, incorporating politicians from one group—which means from one region, when groups are concentrated—puts it at an electoral disadvantage when seeking votes outside that region. If the party draws candidates from a single region, then in all other regions its candidates cannot rely on the mechanism of community to win votes since they belong to different groups. Parties therefore have a strong incentive to field candidates and draw party members from among the ranks of the local population. When groups are concentrated, doing so means incorporating politicians from multiple groups. Thus, wherever groups are concentrated, we should expect to see parties also drawing their politicians from multiple groups.

2.3. Why factional conflict mirrors societal divisions

Even if national parties include politicians from multiple groups, why must politicians from multiple societal groups in a party translate into multiple factions within a party? Why must the nature of factional conflict be more severe when a party includes more groups (i.e., when groups are concentrated) than when it includes fewer groups (i.e., when groups are dispersed)? A great deal of research has suggested that cooperation and collective action is more difficult among heterogeneous populations than among homogenous ones. The mechanisms that explain this relationship vary (Habyarimana, Humphreyes, Posner, and Weinstein 2007). Some authors posit that the cooperation falters because individuals from different groups tend have different preferences (Dahl 1971, chapter 6; Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999) or because individuals possess more and better information about fellow group members than they do about members of out-groups (Hardin 1995; Fearon and Laitin 1996). Alternatively, fellow group members may be better positioned to invoke norms of obligation or use devices such as community shaming to elicit cooperation (Petersen 2002; Tsai 2007). They may also simply prefer to allocate scarce goods to fellow group members rather than to the community as a whole or to the most needy. Whatever the mechanism, since politicians are members of society like anyone else, they too should be prone to this same tendency to fracture along group lines.

Homogeneity within a party does not preclude factions, as Japan's LDP amply illustrates (Cox and Rosenbluth 1993). But homogeneity also never *hurts* or exacerbates the problem of factionalism. It cannot hurt a party if its members are more likely to share common preferences, know more about one another's preference, be capable of sanctioning one another, or prefer to help fellow group members over others. Conversely, while heterogeneity does not guarantee factional problems, heterogeneity never *helps* the situation, if it means that members have less in common, trust one another less, know less about one another, and do not necessarily wish to allocate scarce resources to all other party members equally. In sum, a diversity of groups in the party does not, as an ironclad rule, lead to a more severe factional problem within a party, but it suggests a far greater likelihood of a severe factional problem.

2.4 Coordination problems within parties

If group geography indeed shapes the nature of a party's coordination costs, on what exactly do parties coordinate? Parties must make decisions and then carry them out. Party factions must coordinate in two main arenas: legislative or policy behavior and resource allocation within the party. First, parties must decide what policies to advocate and how to vote on crucial issues in the legislature. Although voters, particularly in weak rule of law societies, may not place much importance on policy, politicians may still care deeply about policy. Politicians within the same party may wish to pursue somewhat different policy-related ends or to serve different sets constituents with distinct preferences. As a result, politicians must coordinate on a common response to policy issues of the day. Then, once they have made a decision, the party must ensure that dissenting party members toe the party line and behave accordingly.

Second, parties must allocate resources internally. These resources include posts within the party organization, ministerial berths if the party is in power, nominations for elected office, campaigns funds, and human and monetary resources aimed at developing the party's grassroots.

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Resources can also include illicit gains from corruption or posts in the party or government that provide substantial opportunities for graft. Naturally, factions vie for as great a share of these resources as possible.

When a party coordinates effectively, then it arrives at an outcome agreeable to all factions and by which all factions will abide. However, resolving policy debates and allocating resources often results in coordination failures. When factions cannot broker a compromise, then coordination produces winners and losers. The dissatisfaction of losers in this process poses considerable risks to a party. If the party is lucky, the impact of the coordination failure will end at soured relations between factions within the party. If the party is not so lucky, the party's factions may work at cross-purposes, undermining one another in the legislature or on the campaign trail. Or, the failure may prompt a party split as the disgruntled faction exits the party to form a new party or join a rival party. If a party wishes to maintain the integrity of its organization and support base, then successful coordination among factions is imperative.

3. Party organization and coordination problems

So far, the previous two sections have shown how group geography influences whether parties face greater or lesser coordination problems. This section explains why national parties must undertake significant costs if they wish to successfully overcome the coordination problems inherent in settings with concentrated groups. The briefest explanation is that when groups are concentrated and national parties must reconcile multiple regional factions, parties can overcome their coordination problems by investing in party organization, which comes at considerable cost.

The best solution to the problem of intra-party coordination is party organization. Organization cannot guarantee successful cooperation, but it can greatly increase it likelihood. I identify four mechanisms through which party organization should increase the likelihood of coordination among factions of party. These mechanisms either smooth the coordination process or reduce the likelihood that politicians will opt to leave a party after a coordination failure.

3.1 Credible commitments

A well-developed party organization provides credible commitments to those in the party who currently lose out in factional conflicts that they may be able to win in the future. Party organization does not guarantee that today's losers will win tomorrow, but it keeps that possibility alive by making transparent what politicians need to do to secure a more favorable outcome in the future.[77] Typically, a strong party organization entails structured and predictable rules for resolving conflict and allocating power and resources within the party. Although it is possible to imagine a highly disciplined, organized party that operates according to the arbitrary, unpredictable dictates of a single leader or coterie of leaders, a complex organization with a large number of active members, myriad branches, and multiple layers of organization is usually institutionalized and bureaucratized to a significant degree.

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[77] This line of argumentation is inspired by Chandra's (2004) argument about the incorporation of multi-ethnic elites and internal party democracy. However, I do not insist on democracy within the party as the sole means through which credible commitments can be made.

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The rules designed to resolve conflict and allocate power may include party primaries to decide nominations for party tickets, formal institutions for handling cases of party indiscipline, and reasonably transparent procedures for filling internal party posts. Such transparent procedures could include either democratic internal elections or more centralized procedures in which the criteria required for advancement are well known and widely adhered to.[78] Although rules can change, the presence of a fairly stable set of regulations and procedures suggests some likelihood that present outcomes can be reversed in accordance with these rules. The complete absence of rules for resolving conflict or allocating power means that those who lose out today are highly uncertain about their future prospects. There are no assurances that the arbitrary decisions that resulted in the present (unfavorable) outcome will not be repeated in the future. And even if those decisions are not repeated, the absence of rules means that politicians may not even know how to go about securing a more favorable outcome in the future. In this setting, those unhappy with present outcomes may be more likely to forego the benefits of party membership and leave the party because they have no reason to believe that their situation in the party will change.

3.2 Distributing power

A highly developed party organization increases the number of power centers within a party. In effect, this allows for greater opportunity to "buy off" various party factions. In many settings, nominations for office typically go to local candidates. If factions organize along geographical lines, then each faction should already have a monopoly over nominations in its region, and other regions' factions similarly monopolize seats from other regions. Often, parties can therefore do very little to mollify disgruntled factions through allocation of nominations to elected office. If, however, the party also has a strong organizational wing with posts that wield considerable power, then party leaders can use these posts as inducements for disgruntled factions to remain within the party.

3.3 Election resources

Highly organized parties frequently provide their members with electoral resources: manpower, whether foot soldiers on the ground, party strategists from the central party, or star campaigners from various wings or units of the party. They can also provide financial resources, which can be particularly important when elections are staggered and held in different places at different times. At any given time, the central party unit and other regional wings of the party can subsidize campaigns in a region where elections are being held. A less organized party can also provide electoral resources but often on a more modest scale. In particular, a poorly organized party will usually have fewer workers on the ground. It may also be less capable of marshalling funds (or other resources) from regions where elections are not being held to those where they are.

The election resources provided by an organized party provide an inducement for various regional wings to remain with the party's fold. If a regional unit splits from the parent party, it risks losing resources available from elsewhere in the party. By contrast, in a weakly organized

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[78] For example, India's Communist Party of India (Marxist) adheres to a policy of democratic centralism and does not make decisions through democratic procedures. However, the criteria for advancement are relatively consistent and transparent. Seniority, service to the party, ideological commitment, and loyalty are all highly prized and required for advancement.

party, the would-be party split does not risk losing as many resources. Therefore, following a coordination failure in a poorly organized party, disgruntled factions may have fewer reservations about leaving the party.

3.4 Loyalty through socialization

The mechanisms highlighted so far have explained ways in which party organization provides incentives to politicians to remain in a party instead of exiting after a coordination failure. In other words, these factors can convince politicians who are *willing* to quit their party not to do so. However, party organization can also influence politicians' willingness to leave their parties by creating strong bonds of loyalty to the party through socialization. If parties function purely as election-winning machines, then politicians may feel little loyalty to their parties. Politicians may engage with their parties infrequently outside of election campaigns if the parties are not firmly rooted in local communities. Furthermore, if the party functions only as a resource for winning elections, then politicians are apt to view parties in a purely instrumental light and leave whenever the party no longer serves their immediate needs.

By contrast, highly organized parties are more likely to foster strong political loyalties. Highly organized parties that have a dedicated cadre or workers and are active in local communities are frequently embedded in local social networks. This ensures that a politician's political activities and networks often overlap with social activities and networks. As a result, politicians are less likely to want to leave their parties because it could mean endangering social ties. Strong party organizations are also better at indoctrinating politicians and turning them into "true believers" whose ideological commitments make them reluctant to leave the party. More generally, the better organized a party is, the more likely its politicians will have developed affective ties to the party through the socialization process and be less likely to want to leave, even if their career prospects with the party diminish.

4. The costs of party organization

If strong party organization can potentially produce positive outcomes, why would parties not invest in it? If they did, then the geographic concentration of groups would present a far more modest challenge to the integrity of national parties, making the formation of national parties a more viable option. Unfortunately for political entrepreneurs and party leaders, party organization comes at a cost.

4.1 Resources

Developing a strong party organization requires considerable time and resources, particularly in a country where the communication and travel infrastructures are not always well developed. Recruiting party members and setting up active local organizations require time. Staffing the party with dedicated, active members requires either a major monetary outlay to pay full-time party workers or highly effective recruitment of party members willing to dedicate their time to organizing the party for free. If workers are not paid, skilled and loyal party workers must be cultivated—first identified, then convinced to engage in extensive party work, and subsequently trained and monitored.

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4.2 Expedience

The costs of party organization, in terms of time and money, are compounded by the fact that party organization is usually not the most expedient strategy for ensuring immediate electoral success, particularly for new parties. Party building across large swathes of territory is often a very slow process. It takes time to create a reliable organization capable of gathering and relaying information to party leaders, recruiting high quality candidates to contest on a party label (especially a new one), and organize an efficient election-winning machine.

While the time horizons for organization building are often long, the time horizons that parties face for electoral success are often short, particularly in settings where parties face frequent elections. Frequent elections can occur for three main reasons, because 1) legislative terms are fixed in length but very short (e.g., the U.S. House of Representatives), 2) legislative terms are of variable length but governments frequently fall before the end of their mandate (e.g., Israel in the 2000s), or 3) countries hold elections at multiple levels (i.e., local, provincial, national, supranational), all of which operate on different electoral calendars (e.g., India since the 1960s). As a result, parties might have to endure several election cycles before their investment in party organization yields much electoral benefit. During that time, parties may have difficulty recruiting politicians or raising funds, thus deterring further investment in organization. As a result, parties may resort to strategies that provide short-term benefit—populist appeals or ethnic mobilization—over a long-term strategy such as party organization. Focusing squarely on party organization therefore carries with it the cost of short-term electoral success and resources.

4.3 Constraints on leaders

Strong party organization is often accompanied by internally democratic procedures. Or, failing democratic procedures, highly organized parties usually have transparent procedures for functioning. Parties in which decisions are made both autocratically and opaquely are very rarely highly organized. The formal democratization of a party or creation of transparent, regularized procedures (that may not be fully democratic) both constrain party leaders' scope for activity. The party membership or the codified set of rules that governs the party circumscribes a party's decisions, therefore imposing an important cost. Party leaders typically have less power when a party is highly organized than they do when it is not. Naturally, this cost falls exclusively on a party's most important leaders, who are often its founders. The cost that party organization imposes on leaders is particularly important since they are usually responsible for decisions about investment in party organization.

4.4 Creation of alternative power centers.

The creation of a party organization also requires delegating power and resources to multiple leaders within a party. In particular, organizational positions often require constant interaction with a party's cadre or rank and file. Top organizational positions therefore provide up and coming leaders with opportunities to establish factions within the party. For an autocratic party leader intent on retaining her position within the party, the creation of a strong party organization risks creating rivals for her place in the party.

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5. Weighing the costs and benefits of party organization

The preceding four sections indicate that political entrepreneurs and party leaders face a difficult tradeoff when politically salient groups are geographically concentrated. On the one hand, party leaders can maximize their chances of successfully building a national party by investing in party organization. But, doing so comes at substantial cost: money, time, a potentially delayed electoral breakthrough, limited authority in the party, and an insecure position as the party's leader. On the other hand, party leaders can forgo investment in party organization, focusing on short-term electoral goals, saving resources, and safeguarding their positions of power within their party. However, they must also reconcile themselves to their fates as leaders of regional parties.

Politicians will not all view this tradeoff in the same way, and a variety of factors may shape their responses. This tradeoff forces politicians to weigh different aspects of their ambition: the desire to head a party with a wider geographical reach and the possibility of greater influence versus the desire to ensure one's position atop an existing organization, albeit a somewhat smaller one. Some politicians will opt for one, some for the other. Or, seeing this tradeoff, a great many may opt against forging their political paths in a new party and choose instead to join an existing national party that has already made the organizational investment. No such tradeoff exists when politically salient groups are geographically dispersed. A national party that constructs its support base thanks to a single dispersed group faces fewer coordination problems and therefore a less pressing imperative to invest in party organization. Put differently, when groups are dispersed, a political leader can have her cake and eat it too. The possibility of heading a party with a wide geographic base remains a possibility. At the same time, she can forgo investing in party organization, thereby conserving resources and safeguarding her position in the party.

The differences that emerge between settings with concentrated and dispersed groups can potentially explain some of the cross-country variation in the extent to which regional parties are fixtures in national party systems. Where groups are concentrated, a larger number of political entrepreneurs will find the task of establishing a national party prohibitively difficult and the costs too high. As a result, countries with concentrated groups are likely to exhibit a generalized tendency toward the formation of regional parties.

6. Contribution of the argument

Before concluding the theoretical part of this chapter, it is important to delineate the contribution of this argument and differentiate it from some others in the literature. The major contribution of this argument lies in its mechanism. The idea that a society with concentrated groups is more prone to regional parties than one with dispersed groups is fairly straightforward. Without some kind of geographic concentration, regional parties would never emerge. The novelty of this argument derives from how it links the geography of groups to party organization and the incentives facing politicians. Politicians choose to form regional parties to avoid the costs they would incur when investing in the organization needed to hold together a national party. The more typical argument that would link group geography to party formation is that membership in

groups influences preferences. Therefore where groups are concentrated, so too are preferences. If certain preferences are found exclusively in one region and not in others, then this gives rise to regional parties that cater to those preferences. But, in a weak rule of law setting, this preference-based mechanism is less relevant. Instead, groups matter because of the party building costs they impose on politicians.

Highlighting the mechanism that links group geography to regional parties also helps distinguish my argument from traditional arguments about ethnic grievances. Given the importance of caste in India, it could be easy to conclude that an ethnic grievance argument could in fact provide leverage in explaining regional parties in India. But, such arguments are about how ethnicity influences preferences. They require that membership in an ethnic group be associated with feelings of being wronged by the central government or by another ethnic group. The more a grievance is associated with an ethnic group the more likely it should give rise to a regional party. Ethnic groups that are not aggrieved should not therefore give rise to ethnic groups.

The argument in this chapter does not require that membership in an ethnic group (or in any other group for that matter) be the source of a grievance that then informs policy preferences. Instead, politicians need only invoke the mechanism of community for voters to expect that ethnicity might be helpful in securing policy implementation. In this sense, any ethnic group is as good as another as the basis for voting behavior, grievance or not. Thus, the important feature of ethnic groups is not whether they have a grievance attached to them but rather the geography of their distribution. In terms of observable implications, an ethnic grievance argument would predict that regional parties would emerge in strong rule of law settings in rough proportion to the magnitude of the grievance, whether constructed or real. In a weak rule of law setting, so long as all groups are concentrated, they should all pose an equal problem for the formation of national parties.

As a final note, this argument is also different from standard ones in the literature about how ethnic heterogeneity influences the number of parties in a system (Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Amorim Neto and Cox 1997). In those arguments, absolute levels of ethnic heterogeneity influence the number of parties. In this argument, absolute levels of ethnic heterogeneity are not nearly as important as the distribution of groups. The implication of my argument is that a weak rule of law society with a relatively small number of concentrated groups should be far more prone to regional parties than a society with a far more fragmented ethnic demography in which all major groups are dispersed.

7. Concentrated groups in India

The second half of the chapter turns to the empirical outcome of interest: regional parties in India. It proceeds in five steps that roughly parallel the logic of the argument in the first half of the chapter. The five claims that I document in the second half of this chapter are as follows. 1) India's most important political groups are geographically concentrated, namely caste and to a lesser degree language and groups oriented around specific mass leaders. 2) National parties incorporate multiple groups. 3) These groups frequently translate into factions within the parties that have proven troublesome for party unity. 4) Durable national parties have tended to have strong party organizations, while national parties that have fallen apart thanks to factionalism

have tended to exhibit weaker party organizations. 5) Political entrepreneurs have continued to establish new regional parties, even during periods when the political climate was not particularly favorable for small parties. In sum, the details of the Indian case show how hard it is for national parties to survive when they must aggregate multiple groups in society, absent a strong party organization. As a result of the challenges faced by national parties, the Indian party system has always had highly regional tendencies.

This section establishes that India's most salient groups are geographically concentrated and that most of the country's potentially important dispersed groups tend to be far less important for electoral politics. In India, the most important groups in politics, which also happen to be geographically concentrated, are primarily caste groups but also include language groups and groups oriented around popular mass leaders. Meanwhile, several other types of groups that are often salient in other contexts—namely, religion, class and occupation, and ideology—are geographically dispersed but far less important for understanding party politics in India. Though the requisite material exists to make use of dispersed groups for the purposes of party building, the preponderance of salient political groups in India is geographically concentrated.

7.1 Caste[79]

Caste is arguably the single most important factor in Indian electoral politics. According to Yogendra Yadav, one of India's most prominent electoral scholars and public intellectuals, "Caste is undoubtedly the building block of electoral politics...People think of their everyday concerns and livelihood matters in and through caste. More importantly, caste channels political information and provides a filter to evaluate that information" (2007). Most successful parties are easily identified with one or more caste group(s), and at the constituency level caste is often the single most crucial factor shaping electoral outcomes.[80] When parties select candidates, most take the caste makeup of the constituency into account. State-level cabinets and party executive bodies are often carefully chosen to reflect a balance of castes. Dunning (2009) also shows that that villagers in Karnataka significantly prefer candidates from their caste to candidates belonging to other castes.

The centrality of caste to Indian politics does not mean, however, that most parties' support bases are composed of a single caste group or that most caste groups vote as monolithic blocs. Rather, most parties rely on support from multiple caste groups, and few caste groups vote *en masse* for a single party. Instead, parties tend to rely disproportionately on a particular caste group for support, and caste groups often give disproportionate support to one party. To use an analogy, just as party identification and race cannot explain everything about American elections, they are extremely good places to start when assessing an individual's likely vote

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[79] Though caste is a product of Hindu practice and described in Hindu religious texts, all major religions in South Asia—Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity—practice caste or a functional equivalent. Under the rubric of caste, I therefore include endogamous institutions that function like caste, namely *biradari* and *quom* among Muslims as well as tribal groups among Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists.

[80] In Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu even relatively high-level state politicians admitted that caste was a major factor in elections, even though one might expect them to pay lip service to the idea that politics and elections are about local economic development or the state government's performance in office. Caste was infrequently mentioned in interviews in West Bengal. For reasons that are not entirely clear, West Bengal and Orissa stand out among India's major states as places where caste appears to play a comparatively minor role.

choice or the likelihood that a candidate from a particular party will win a constituency (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Miller 1991). These factors alone cannot predict election outcomes and voting behavior, but they are probably the two most important factors in American elections. So, too, with caste in India.

The word "caste" simultaneously refers to two different phenomena: *jati*, which is geographically concentrated, and *varna*, which is intended to be geographically dispersed. *Jatis* are endogamous groups that traditionally adhered to a hereditary occupation, followed common religious practices, and restricted with whom they would dine or accept food. Since *jatis* rarely cross India's linguistic boundaries, they are geographically concentrated. However, *jatis* comprise the juridical categories used for affirmative action (i.e., reservations) in India— Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).[81] Because each of these mega-caste categories includes various *jatis* from across India, these reservation categories are dispersed groups.

In addition to belonging to a reservation category, in theory each *jati* also belongs to a *varna*, one of the four categories that comprise the idealized societal hierarchy as outlined in the ancient Hindu religious texts, the Vedas: Brahmin (priestly class), Kshatriya (warrior or ruling class), Vaishya (commercial class), and Shudra (laboring or servant class). Those outside this classification are without caste, avarna, and treated as untouchable. Since the *varna* system is meant to describe a societal division of labor, each *varna* is supposed to be found everywhere. In practice, Brahmins, Shudras, and avarnas (or "untouchables") are, indeed, geographically dispersed groups found throughout Hindu India; however, Kshatriyas and Vaishya are concentrated mainly in North India.

Depending on whether caste is understood as *jati*, *varna*, or a reservation category, caste groups can be either concentrated or dispersed. However, *jati* groups are most often the "building blocks" of Indian electoral politics. With some exceptions, *varna* and reservation categories have failed to gain traction as sources of electoral mobilization.[82] In large part, *jati* has succeeded where *varna* and reservation categories have not because *jati* is nested within the larger *varna* and reservation categories, allowing it to undercut the larger categories. The ability to undercut these larger *varna* and reservation categories stems from the day-to-day social importance, informational richness, and constituency-level electoral utility of *jati*.

First, *jatis* maintain a quotidian importance in social life in ways that neither of the larger, dispersed categories does. *Jati*, not *varna* or reservation categories, at one time determined whom one could marry or dine with, what one's occupation would be, and certain aspects of religious practice. Inter-dining is now common, and the nexus between caste and occupation is

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[81] *Jatis* that do not belong to one of these categories belong to a residual category that is ineligible for reservation. The name for this category varies across India, including Forward Caste, Upper Caste, and General Caste.

[82] A widely cited example of mega-caste *varna* categories being used in politics is that of Kshatriyas in Gujarat, where the Rajputs, universally treated as Kshatriyas, incorporated lower caste groups into the category of Kshatriya to turn the category of "Kshatriya" into a category sufficiently large to influence electoral politics (Weiner 1967). Though widely cited, the unity of the upper and lower caste Kshatriyas came under strain in the 1970s and 1980s and has largely ceased to be a meaningful category (Kohli 1990). Other examples of non-*jati* caste-based mobilization include the political salience of the Brahmin identity. In many states throughout India, parties are often described as soliciting or benefiting from Brahmin support.

increasingly loose. But, *jati* still shapes marriage, residential segregation patterns, and religious habits (include dietary restrictions) for many Indians, and in many cases occupational specialization remains.

Second, *jati* is far more informationally rich than the other categories. A person's *jati* usually conveys both *varna* and reservation category as well as the bearer's language, region, and religion. It also provides clues about likely occupation and socio-economic status. By contrast, the far more heterogeneous categories of *varna* and reservation category provide no conclusive information about language, region, or religion and very little information about occupation.

Third, and finally, *jati* is usually more electorally useful at the constituency level than either of the larger categories. Shudras and OBCs[83] constitute majorities (sometimes overwhelming ones) in most Indian constituencies, whereas other *varna* and reservation categories represent small minorities. Given the size and diversity of the Shudra and OBC communities, individual *jatis* often undermine these large categories. A single *jati* often exceeds or comes very close to the effective winning threshold in a single-member district. From the perspective of larger Shudra or OBC *jati*, mobilizing around the larger categories often produces an over-sized coalition at the constituency level. Thus, even though many OBC or Shudra *jatis* would benefit from a pan-OBC mobilization, which could potentially undermine upper caste dominance, constituency level calculations frequently undermine the salience of these larger, dispersed groups.

The Indian state has, at various times and to various degrees, privileged all types of caste groups—*varna*, *jati*, and reservation categories. And while the dispersed groups based on *varna* and reservation categories *can* constitute meaningful political categories, concentrated *jati* groups are, above all, the most salient type of group in Indian politics.

7.2 Personality

Although scholars acknowledge the importance of the personal vote in electoral politics, they rarely think of politicians as the basis for durable and salient political groups. Frequently, politicians succeed by mobilizing an already existing social or political group. These are not cases of personality-based groups. In these instances, a leader might be thought of as the leader of a particular ethnic group and succeed because of her ability to mobilize that group. But, the group would exist without her, and she would not necessarily succeed without the previous politicization of that group.

However, in India there have been several examples of parties whose defining characteristics are the leaders that found them.[84] These are cases in which parties attract large numbers of voters based exclusively on the personality of the leader. In these instances, membership in a group oriented around a specific politician—that is, identifying as a "follower" of one such leader—

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[83] There is a high degree of overlap between the Shudra *varna* and the OBC category. However, not all Shudras are OBCs, and not all OBCs are Shudras.

[84] Examples outside of India might include the Gaullists in France and the Peronists in Argentina. In both cases, loyalty to a specific leader appears to have been the basis for fairly enduring political identities. Moreover, the parties oriented around de Gaulle and Perón drew support from various segments of society and could not simply be recast in other terms, such as class, occupation, or ideology.

shapes voting behavior. Prominent cases of this in India include the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam founded by M.G. Ramachandran (known as MGR) in Tamil Nadu; the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), also in Tamil Nadu and founded by Vijayakanth; and the All India Trinamul Congress (AITC) in West Bengal, founded by Mamata Banerjee. In each case, the parties' supporters cannot be easily defined as a group in terms other than those related to affinity to or affection for the party's leader. Many other parties with well-known leaders may combine both personality-based groups as well as other types of groups, such as caste groups.

Both MGR and Vijayakanth were wildly successful film actors before they founded their respective parties. Both used their film careers to establish personas that served them well after their transitions into politics. MGR carefully cultivated a pro-poor image, portraying poor characters or playing the role of savior of the poor (Pandian 1992); Vijayakanth used his movie roles to establish himself as someone dedicated to philanthropy and fighting corruption. After long stints in the film industry and after having founded their own political parties, both men then used their extensive network of fan clubs as organizational bases after they founded their parties. Neither the AIADMK nor the DMDK have a particularly clear social base. Indeed, neither has an obvious ethnic support base, which is uncommon among parties in India.[85] To some extent, MGR's pro-poor image translated into a disproportionately poor support base. But, MGR was never a leader of the "poor" inasmuch as he never championed the poor against the rich or was beholden to the poor for political success; he enjoyed support up and down the economic hierarchy thanks to his notoriety from films.

Mamata Banerjee has forged a personal following in a very different manner, doing so through her militant opposition to West Bengal's ruling Left Front, which has held power uninterruptedly in the state since 1977. Banerjee vocally criticized her former party, the Indian National Congress, for its failure, in her view, to meaningfully oppose the sitting state government. She has repeatedly led anti-government agitations, embarking on hunger strikes and courting arrest and physical injury at the hands of police. Banerjee's record of opposition appears to have struck a chord with many, particularly those who feel similarly neglected, marginalized, or victimized by the incumbent government. Like the AIADMK and DMDK, her party is not defined by any obvious social bases. Instead, her party is strongest in those areas where her agitational activities have been most frequent and most prominent—in Kolkata and the surrounding districts.

In theory, personality-based groups could be dispersed as a leader's appeal could potentially extend throughout a country. However, in India, several factors conspire to ensure that nearly all personality-based groups are geographically concentrated. The first is language; charisma is hard to translate. Media and entertainment are also language-specific, meaning that leaders who establish their following in this way (as did MGR and Vijayakanth) are likely to have their support bases limited by the geography of language. Second, if their followings come from their grassroots activities (like for Mamata Banerjee), in a country as large as India, it is hard to engage in such activities across a sufficiently large space to generate a following that qualifies as a dispersed group. Third, India's federalism means that political scenarios can vary from state to state. As such, a political leader responding to specific conditions in a state (again, as in the case

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[85] MGR's family originated in Kerala; therefore few people in Tamil Nadu belong to his caste, Nairs. Vijayakanth also hails from a community, the Kapus, mainly found outside of Tamil Nadu, in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

of Mamata Banerjee) may be of limited relevance in other states. As a result of these factors, very few Indian politicians have been able to construct politically salient groups around their own persona that extend throughout the country.

7.3 Language

Language groups are potentially very salient in India. Language has been the basis for a great deal of extra-parliamentary political activity, ranging from street protests to hunger strikes to insurgencies. But, given the country's current internal borders, language has rarely been the basis for partisan mobilization. Language does, however, pose important constraints on mobilizing other types of groups. As such, the concentrated geography of language groups in India is important in ensuring that the group landscape tends heavily towards concentrated, rather than dispersed, groups.

India is very diverse linguistically, and language groups in India are highly concentrated. Most languages in India are widely spoken in only a single state. The principal exceptions are Hindi and Urdu, which are spoken across eleven subnational units (nine states and two Union territories) in North India.[86] Currently, language is seldom the source of active political mobilization in electoral politics. Since India reorganized its internal borders in 1956 so that state boundaries largely coincide with linguistic borders, most states are now linguistically homogenous. Furthermore, outside of a small number of urban constituencies, most electoral constituencies are linguistically homogenous as well, so language does not constitute a meaningful axis of competition at either the state or constituency level. However, in linguistically plural settings, language has proven a meaningful source of competition. Examples include the erstwhile multilingual states of Bombay and Madras as well as the current situation in Assam. In smaller-scale multilingual settings such as Mumbai, the Shiv Sena and, more recently, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena have exploited language differences between Maharashtrian-speakers and other linguistic groups. Similarly, language has been important in Belgaum district, a majority Maharashtrian-speaking district in the largely Kannada-speaking state of Karnataka (Weiner 1967; Kohli 1990).

Perhaps more important than its importance as the basis for active political mobilization, the concentrated geography of language imposes important constraints on using other types of attributes to construct dispersed groups. For one, caste (read: *jati*) groups are nested within language groups. Language therefore imposes an inherent constraint on *jati*-based mobilization. Since language groups are concentrated, then *jati* groups are as well, until and unless traditional *jati* groups begin to federate across linguistic boundaries.

More generally, the geographic concentration of language groups undermines other dispersed groups because of the barriers to communication that it erects, particularly in a setting such as

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[86] Syntactically, Hindi and Urdu are the same language. They use different scripts, and "purer" forms of the two languages—that is, highly Persianized forms of Urdu and Sanskritized forms of Hindi—differ substantially in their vocabulary. In census figures, the term "Hindi" includes a large number of dialects that are quite distinct from one another. The states where Hindi is dominant are (in descending order of size) Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. The two Union territories are Delhi and Chandigarh.

India, where no *lingua franca* unites the population.[87] Language differences make it especially difficult for politicians to establish personalistic followings across the entire country since charisma is hard to convey either through translation or in a language other than one's mother tongue. Leaders who establish themselves either through grass roots activities that involve direct interaction with the public or through media and entertainment face considerable difficulties in expanding their network of loyalists to those with whom they cannot directly communicate. Thus, although language groups are now seldom the bases around which parties are built, the geographic concentration of language groups undermines would-be attempts to mobilize on the basis of other dispersed groups.

7.4 Religion

India's two largest religious groups, Hindus (approximately 83% of the population) and Muslims (approximately 13%) are both geographically dispersed. As with language groups, religious groups are salient in that they sometimes influence voting behavior and can constitute potential sources of wide-scale mobilization under certain conditions. But, religious groups are rarely the basis for political parties.

On the one hand, religion *can* influence voting patterns under certain circumstances. Muslim voters appear to use their religious identities to inform their vote choice in states where the BJP (or other similarly *Hindutva*-inclined parties) are major forces in the party system. The BJP receives very little Muslim support, and it is believed that many Muslims vote tactically to ensure the BJP's defeat. In religiously divided constituencies, such as those in many urban centers in North India, religious groups define the support bases of the major parties.[88] And in those few places where Muslims constitute a sufficiently large portion of the population that they can sustain a winning party, Muslim parties have indeed emerged. These include the Muslim League in Kerala, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen in Hyderabad, and the Assam United Democratic Front. Chhibber (1997) has further shown that, among Hindus, levels of religiosity have a modest impact on a Hindu's likelihood of voting for the BJP, while Kumar (2003) notes that the BJP performed best in those districts where violence was worst in the 2002 Gujarat anti-Muslim pogroms, suggesting that violence was moderately successful in polarizing the electorate along religious lines.

On the other hand, in states where the BJP is not a major factor—that is, throughout most of southern and eastern India—religion is not very relevant. For instance, Muslims divide their voters fairly evenly among the major parties in states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. Furthermore, the proportion of constituencies that are religiously divided is very small. Most are overwhelmingly Hindu, ensuring that mobilizing around either Hindu or a religious minority identity is not particularly profitable for either side, either because the Hindu category is unnecessarily over-sized and therefore prone to undercutting or because the minority

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[87] Hindi comes closest to being a *lingua franca*: Hindi and its dialects are spoken by about 40% of the population, and it is spoken by a fair number of Indians in neighboring states. While English is a *lingua franca* for elites, a very small portion of the population, about 5%, speaks English fluently.

[88] For instance, in Rajasthan's former Hawa Mahal state legislative constituency in Jaipur's old city, Congress usually fielded a Muslim candidate and relied on a mostly Muslim support base, while the BJP always fielded a Hindu and won the vast majority of the Hindu vote. Compared to most other constituencies in Rajasthan, caste was relatively unimportant in Hawa Mahal constituency.

religious groups are too small to constitute a winning support base. Though more common than it ought to be, pre-election violence is sufficiently infrequent that most elections do not witness electorates polarized by religious violence. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the caste groups nested within religious groups are privileged by the state far more than religious identities. Whereas affirmative action benefits are tied to caste identities, the government attaches no specific benefits to religion,[89] and the state does very little to institutionalize religion.

While religion has historically been important in post-independence extra-parliamentary mobilization, notably riots, religion is only sporadically salient in politics—at some times and with some populations. Conditions that promote the salience of religious groups among the majority of an electorate—namely a certain religious demography or highly polarizing events—do not routinely obtain across India. For this reason, though religious groups are potentially salient and geographically dispersed, religious group demography in India has not been sufficient to ensure the easy mobilization of dispersed religious groups into national parties. Instead, religion has been easily undercut by other groups, such as caste, language, and personality.

7.5 Class and occupation

As in most societies, class and occupational groups are geographically dispersed. Neither has, however, played a major role in shaping electoral outcomes in India. Relatively few parties have clear class or occupational support bases. Even in West Bengal, which has been governed by a communist coalition for over 30 years, the class bases of the major parties—Marxist and non-Marxist alike—are not strikingly different; the Left enjoys only a modest edge over its opponents among the poor and uneducated (Yadav and Kumar 2006). For parties with more pronounced class or occupational profiles, these characteristics tend to be by-products of the party's caste-based support.[90] In other words, a party with disproportionately rich supporters usually gains those rich supporters because it wins disproportionate support from a caste that is disproportionately wealthy not because the party fares well among rich voters from all castes.

The failure of class and occupational groups to gain salience in Indian politics can be attributed to a number of factors. First, unions, often at the vanguard of promoting class and occupational consciousness and mobilization, are of declining strength in India and have never, even at the pinnacle of their strength, successfully penetrated large swathes of the population (Rudolph and Rudolph 1987; Teitelbaum 2007). The vast majority of Indians work in the informal sector, which makes unionization difficult. Second, as with much else in India, attempts at mobilizing along class or sectoral lines are often undercut by caste (Varshney 1998). Income and occupation remain tightly bound to caste, and the state has linked economic advancement to caste through its system of caste-based reservations. Given caste's continued social salience, it is not surprising that it is hard to decouple it from income and occupation as sources of political identification and mobilization.

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[89] The government of Andhra Pradesh is currently trying to implement a 5% reservation in the state for Muslims. This has not so far been implemented and is opposed in many corners.

[90] One potential exception may be the BSP. In the last state elections in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP made in-roads into non-SC communities, doing particularly well among the poor of those communities. Though the BSP's poor support base was initially derivative of its dependence on an SC (heavily Chamar) support base, it may be bolstering its credentials among the non-SC poor.

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Third, neither class nor occupational cleavages necessarily divides the population into meaningful and electorally viable groups. The poor and the working classes combined account for the vast majority of the Indian population, particularly in rural areas. Indeed, India is in some respects a highly equal society. Its Gini coefficient places it on par with former socialist states such as Poland. Additionally, most Indians still rely at least in part on agriculture for their livelihoods. For this reason, almost no serious party presents itself as an urban party or a party for the middle class or rich.[91] Parties therefore rarely differentiate themselves on matters related to class and occupation. As a result of these factors, class and occupation—which in many societies constitute important dispersed groups that underpin nationalize party systems—tend not to be politically salient.

8. National parties' variegated support bases

The previous section discussed how the most salient groups in India's polity are geographically concentrated. Meanwhile, those dispersed groups that could potentially serve as the building blocs for national parties tend to be relatively unimportant for electoral politics. As a result, it should come as no surprise that all of the country's national parties incorporate multiple groups that vary across the country's different regions. Congress and, to a lesser extent, the BJP have drawn on a combination of dispersed groups as well as concentrated groups. These parties have also been the most persistently and convincingly national. Those parties that have been relatively successful at cobbling together different support bases across the various states have also succeeded in accruing a national support base—for instance, the Janata *parivar* and Swatantra. Finally, parties that have been the least successful in incorporating multiple groups across the regions are the most dubiously national: examples include the BSP and CPI(M).[92]

8.1 Congress

More so than any other party, Congress draws on dispersed groups, namely Brahmins, Muslims, and SCs. Traditionally, it has relied for support on a "sandwich coalition" bringing together the top of the social hierarchy, Brahmins, along with the bottom of the hierarchy, SCs and Muslims, all the while enjoying somewhat weaker support among middle sections. Not surprisingly given the dispersed nature of these groups, Congress has been India's most national party.

However, emphasizing the dispersed groups upon which Congress draws may obscure as much as it reveals. Congress' support is highly variegated by region, representing a mosaic of different groups across the country. Even among those dispersed groups on which it relies, support for Congress varies across region. This applies to Brahmins, Muslims, and SCs alike. Over time,

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[91] The BJP is often referred to colloquially as an urban or middle class party. Indeed, its loss in the 2004 general elections is often attributed to its neglect of the rural poor. However, the BJP could not win upwards of 20% of the vote if it relied solely on the upper and middle classes. It too relies for a great deal of support from poor sections of society. Furthermore, serious scrutiny reveals little evidence that the BJP actually lost in 2004 because of its neglect of the rural poor (Lakin and Ravishankar 2006; Thachil and Herring 2008).

[92] I include the CPI(M) because it has consistently been one of India's largest parties, even if it has not consistently been classified as national. Despite its regional status, the party's strongholds are far-flung, thereby giving it some properties similar to national parties. I exclude the CPI, which is habitually classified as national, because of its small size and the relative lack of information available about the party in recent decades.

Congress has successfully retained the support of these groups in some states far more than it has in others. This variation can account for some of the Congress' loss in total vote share over time. But so far, losses among these groups have not hampered the party's ability to secure a national support base because Congress has, despite the importance of several dispersed groups to its support base, always relied heavily on a large number of concentrated groups as well. Nairs in Kerala, Nadars in Tamil Nadu, Reddys in Andhra Pradesh, and Jats in Rajasthan have all constituted core elements of Congress state units. Though part of Congress' success in garnering its national support base stems from its incorporation of several of India's few important dispersed groups, the party's success also relies on incorporating concentrated groups as well.

8.2 BJP

To some extent, the BJP also enjoys support among a dispersed group: the Brahmins. In states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where the party is persistently weak, the one group that is has consistently been able to attract has been the Brahmins. The toehold afforded to the party in many parts of India by the Brahmin vote has helped the BJP in its quest for a national support base. This was not always the case. In its earlier incarnation as the Jana Sangh, the BJP relied far less heavily on the Brahmins (who tended to side with Congress). Instead, the party's image was as a party of Vaishyas, and in some places, Rajputs (i.e., Kshatriyas) (Graham 1990). Compared to other concentrated groups in India, Vaishyas and Rajputs are relatively dispersed. This fact gave the Jana Sangh a leg-up on other parties in establishing itself as a national party. It could establish a reasonably national following with relatively little work, thanks to the dispersion of Vaishyas and Rajputs across much of North India. The Brahmin shift towards the BJP in the 1980s and 1990s further enabled the party to gain toe-holds in other parts of the country.

As with Congress, over-emphasis on the dispersed groups within the BJP risks overlooking the importance of concentrated groups in establishing the party's national support base. The BJP has most successfully expanded beyond the Jana Sangh's traditional strongholds in those areas where it has cultivated the support of concentrated groups, such as the Patels in Gujarat and the Lingayats in Karnataka. It has also strengthened its hand in some states where it was already strong by reaching out to various tribal communities.

8.3 Janata parivar

Today, the many regional fragments of the Janata *parivar* together reflect what was once the very heterogeneous support base of the national parties that represented the party family. Currently, most of regional parties that formerly belonged to the Janata *parivar* are closely associated with a specific caste or community group, most of them concentrated: Muslims and Yadavs with the Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, respectively; Jats with the Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana; Pasis and other Scheduled Castes with Lok Jan Shakti Party in Bihar; Kurmis, Koeris, and the Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) with the Janata Dal (United) in Bihar; and Vokkaligas with the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka. Though the Biju Janata Dal is not conventionally linked to a particular caste, Kumar (2004) has shown that the BJD enjoys disproportionately strong support among Brahmins and

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Karans, who are concentrated in state's coastal areas. All of these groups, save Brahmins in Orissa and Muslims in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are geographically concentrated.[93]

With the exception of Orissa, where the BJD's support base resembles Congress' in the 1960s (i.e., broad-based but heavily coastal and upper-caste), the support bases of these regional fragments of the Janata Dal reflect the support bases of the Janata *parivar* in its earlier incarnations. For instance, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal in the late 1960s drew support from the numerically strong and relatively economically advanced backward castes in North India: Jats, Yadavs (Ahirs), and Kurmis (Fickett 1971). Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the Samyukta Socialist Party garnered much of its following from a similar set of backward castes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (Fickett 1968). Meanwhile, the PSP relied heavily on Vokkaligas in Karnataka; the coastal areas of Orissa, particularly among backward castes and the Chasas (an OBC caste) in particular; and Assamese Hindus, who now largely support the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP). In Haryana, none of the Janata *parivar* parties had yet made in-roads in the state. Instead, the percentage of the vote for independents was quite high. Many of these independents were Jats who won substantial support from their co-ethnics (Brass 1981). Much of this vote would eventually end up with the Indian National Lok Dal.

8.4 Swatantra[94]

Perhaps more so than any other national party in India's history, Swatantra was a clear amalgamation of different groups across the country's various states. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, several parties merged with Swatantra, giving the party distinctive caste bases across regions: Chettiars, Mudaliars, and Naidus from the Indian National Democratic Congress in Madras (now Tamil Nadu); Vanniyars who were followers of S.S. Ramaswamy Padayachi of the erstwhile Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party; and Kammas in Andhra Pradesh, who represented the remnants of the Krishikar Lok Party in that state.

Swatantra also merged with parties that brought with them support from the former subjects of many of India's erstwhile princes. These parties were the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa, which was dominated by former princes in the Orissan highlands; the Janata Party in Bihar, which was a vehicle for the ambitions of the Raja of Ramgarh; and the Rajasthan unit of the Krishikar Lok Party, which was supported by the Jat royal house of Bharatpur. Elsewhere, mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat, the party successfully recruited select high profile princes (usually Rajputs), who brought their former supporters into the Swatantra fold.

8.5 Bahujan Samaj Party

The BSP is India's newest national party. It draws its support overwhelmingly from members of the Scheduled Castes. Like all reservation-based caste categories, the category Scheduled Caste includes hundreds of *jatis* from across India. Since the SC category is, by now, a relatively old one, dating back to the promulgation of the Indian Constitution in 1950, and comes attached with

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[93] The categories EBC and SC are not necessarily concentrated but individual castes that comprise them are.
[94] This section draws heavily on Erdman (1967), Chapter 6.

substantial state benefits, SCs could potentially constitute a salient and dispersed group. However, the BSP's patterns of support do not indicate that this is yet the case.[95]

Within Uttar Pradesh, the BSP increasingly draws a heterogeneous support base. Since the early 2000s, the party's leader, Mayawati, has consciously attempted to widen the party's appeal in Uttar Pradesh, the state where the party is most successful. However, the core of the BSP's support initially came from the Chamars, a Scheduled Caste to which Mayawati belongs. It has since expanded to include SCs more generally in Uttar Pradesh. Some of the party's better performances have also come in Punjab, home state of the party's founder, Kanshi Ram—also a Chamar. More recently, however, the party has also performed better than ever before in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Haryana, all states with substantial Chamar populations.[96]

The BSP's failure to establish a more robust national base or to replicate its success in Uttar Pradesh elsewhere in India appears to stem from the party's inability to either turn the category of SCs into a politically meaningful category or to incorporate multiple groups across India. Indeed, in somewhat different words, this was the problem identified by a BSP leader in Rajasthan. He complained that only Chamars were put in positions of power despite the fact that Chamars were not particularly numerous in Rajasthan.[97] The BSP has scored some minor electoral breakthroughs by fielding popular rebel candidates, but this strategy is only useful in engineering initial breakthroughs; it cannot foster long-term growth. As a result, the BSP has not replicated its success in Uttar Pradesh elsewhere.[98] It has acquired its national status thanks to its willingness to run candidates widely (in spite of the cost), its recruitment of rebel candidates, and its modest success among SCs in non-stronghold states. However, compared to Congress, the BJP, or even Swantantra or former Janata *parivar* parties, the BSP's *bona fides* as a national party are decidedly weak.

8.6 Communist Party of India (Marxist)

The CPI, the CPI(M)'s predecessor, drew on distinct geographically concentrated support bases in its stronghold states: Ezhavas in Kerala, Bengali refugees from East Pakistan in West Bengal (Chatterji 1985),[99] and Kammas in Andhra Pradesh (Harrison 1960). Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu, the party enjoyed sporadic support in pockets where it

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[95] Outside the ambit of the BSP, SC politics in Tamil Nadu indicates that the SC category may not be sufficiently potent to overcome *jati* distinctions. The state has two major parties based among the SCs. The more successful is Viduthalai Ciruthaigal Katchi (formerly the Dalit Panthers of India), with a strong base among the Paraiyars of northern Tamil Nadu. The less successful is Puthiya Tamizhagam, which draws support mainly from the Pallars of southern Tamil Nadu. To date, neither party has been very successful in winning support from both of the state's major Scheduled Castes.

[96] As Chandra (2004) notes, however, there is no straightforward correlation between the proportion of Chamars in a state and the BSP's electoral success.

[97] Interview in Jaipur, Rajasthan, August 9, 2006.

[98] Instances of the BSP's modest successes outside of Uttar Pradesh are telling. In 2008, the BSP scored its best performance even in Rajasthan. It did so by fielding a large number of Meena candidates. Earlier, in 2007, Rajasthan witnessed a sometimes violent conflict between Meenas (a tribal community) and Gurjars (a community aspiring for tribal status). The BSP cashed in on this by clearly siding with the Meenas, which neither major party, Congress or the BJP, would do.

[99] Although this fact appears relatively seldom in academic writings, it was frequently mentioned in my interviews.

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successfully mobilized landless laborers. Elsewhere, throughout much of India, the party's urban Brahmin leadership proved to be a liability in building a mass base (Harrison 1960).

When the party split in 1964, the CPI(M) retained its base in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, and in a few other pockets. (In Andhra Pradesh, the CPI lost most of its base, and the Telugu Desam eventually incorporated the Kamma vote bank). In both Kerala and West Bengal, the CPI(M) expanded beyond its original bases. In Kerala, the CPI(M) is also very strong among SCs and has made some, albeit far less, progress among Nairs and minorities. In West Bengal, the party was originally strongest in Kolkata, thanks to both the presence of Bengali migrants in the city as well as the party's efforts to mobilize urban workers. After the CPI(M) gained power at the state-level, it successfully colonized the bureaucracy, enacted land reform, and decentralized power in rural areas. In doing so, it turned rural Bengal, particularly in the western part of the state, into its stronghold.[100] Though today the CPI(M)'s support in its two stronghold states is highly varied and draws from many different groups, the party successfully expanded in these states thanks to its initial support among a handful of concentrated groups. In other states where it did not similarly build on concentrated groups, the party has failed to thrive. Its inability to incorporate multiple groups across various states has prevented the party from establishing a truly national base.

9. Factional conflict in national parties

Having discussed the support bases of India's national parties and demonstrating how they incorporate multiple concentrated groups, this section turns to the question of factions. Most parties experience some measure of factionalism and dissent. The important questions are how much, with what results, and to what extent factional conflict mirrors the geography of groups. Major party splits are evidence of particularly severe factional problems. When parties split, coordination amongst a large section of the party has failed. Major party leaders quitting or defecting from their parties often suggest a more modest form of factionalism, usually indicating a coordination problem but on a far smaller scale.

Over time, the BJP and CPI(M) have consistently managed their factional conflict better than other national parties. Furthermore, little of the factional conflict appears to be driven by group geography. Congress has done considerably less well in managing factionalism, but it has nevertheless managed to avoid evisceration as a result of internal conflict. Its factional conflicts have also frequently had roots in group geography. So too with the BSP, although the party's shorter history and more compact support base means that the party's survival requires considerably less inter-group coordination. Finally, Swatantra and the parties of the Janata *parivar* collapsed entirely as a result of factional in-fighting that manifested itself largely along the lines of the concentrated groups that comprised the parties.

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[100] The CPI(M) has never been a dominant force in Kolkata. Congress, which has a strong following among Kolkata's non-Bengali population, has always been strong in the city. Prior to the CPI(M)'s ascendancy in the state, the party was strongest in Kolkata and Bengal's industrial belt. Over the last 20 years, Kolkata has been referred to as a Congress stronghold, less because the party exerted an unquestioned dominance in the city and more because it was the only part of the state where it was not habitually defeated by the CPI(M).

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9.1 CPI(M)

No party, including the CPI(M), has been immune to factional conflict. This is nowhere more evident than in recent events in Kerala, where factions led by Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan and Politburo member Pinari Vijayan have engaged in an ugly factional conflict. But, symptomatic of the party's history, even this ugly, public spat has not produced a breakaway party or an exodus of defectors. As a whole, the CPI(M)'s record of handling factional conflict appears to be quite successful. High-profile leaders rarely resign or defect to other parties; the party produces few rebel candidates; and the party only occasionally suffers splits.

Since its birth in 1964, the CPI(M) has endured a small number of relatively minor splits, none of which have severely damaged the party's electoral prospects or organizational strength. Examples of these minor splits include the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) in 1969 by radical elements in favor of armed revolution, Janathipathiya Samrakshana Samithy (JSS) in Kerala by expelled leader K.R. Gowri Amma, and the Party of Democratic Socialism in West Bengal by another expelled leader Saifuddin Chowdhury. The first was largely uninterested in parliamentary politics, while the latter two have never expanded much beyond the personal followings of their founder-leaders.

Despite the CPI(M)'s comparatively positive track-record of party unity, the party was itself the product of a party split. Ostensibly, the rift in the CPI that eventually produced the CPI(M) has been described as an ideologically-motivated conflict between the pro-Moscow wing of the party (the rump CPI) and the pro-Beijing faction (CPI(M)). However, it is hard to ignore the strategic aspects involved in the split. The more moderate pro-Soviet wing advocated closer relations and greater cooperation with Congress, a strategy that the pro-China faction opposed. Despite the ostensibly ideological roots of the conflict, the party split largely along geographical wings, with the most electorally successful state units shifting predominantly toward the CPI(M) and the less successful state units remaining mainly with the CPI. In other words, in states where the CPI had no hope of exerting influence except through cooperation with some other party (read: Congress), the more moderate CPI won. In those states where the party exerted substantial influence and could hope to one day come to power (as it eventually did in West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura), the CPI(M) retained an edge.

Rather than a purely ideological split, the struggle within the CPI that eventually gave rise to the CPI(M) could thus be equally construed as a fight among state units of the party. However, the fight was not among the various groups within the party—that is, the Ezhavas, Bengali migrants, and Kammas—but rather between state units that perceived their strategic interests to be incompatible with those of others states'. It just so happens that those state units that preferred to avoid alliance with Congress were those that had most successfully cultivated and then leveraged their support bases among concentrated groups to establish themselves as major state-level parties. Although the 1964 split was not so obviously a product of tensions between the party's concentrated groups, group geography appears to have had a somewhat indirect role in precipitating the split.

9.2 BJP

As with the CPI(M), events in recent years—the defection of former Chief Ministers Uma Bharati, Kalyan Singh, and Shankersinh Vaghela and the recent resignation of former Union Ministers Yashwant Sinha and Jaswant Singh—highlight the BJP's current factional woes. Also like the CPI(M) however, the BJP has managed to keep most of its factional conflicts under control. On the one hand, the BJP routinely produces a fair number of rebel candidates who leave either to contest as independent candidates or to join rival parties such as Congress, Samajwadi Party, or BSP. Additionally, a small number of senior leaders, such as those noted above, have quit the party.

On the other hand, the number of top leaders who quit the party represents a trickle. Perhaps most impressively in the context of Indian politics, the party has never suffered a major split, quite a feat for a major Indian party. In 2006, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharati, a major figure in the BJP, founded her own party, the Bharatiya Janshakti Party. Only a handful of other top BJP leaders followed her (e.g., Madan Lal Khurana). Initially, there was concern that Bharati's departure might make a dent in the BJP's vote in Madhya Pradesh, particularly among the OBCs, to which she belongs. However, the BJSP was a non-starter and not a major factor in either the 2008 state elections in Madhya Pradesh or the 2009 general elections.

Bharati's expulsion from the BJP and career outside the party speak to a long-standing factional tension in the BJP. With a background in the RSS, Bharati was seen as a vocal proponent of the BJP's *Hindutva* agenda. Throughout its history, the BJP (and its predecessor, the BJS) has had a vexed history with the RSS, never sure of how closely it wishes to hitch itself to the outfit that is described as the BJP's organizational backbone. The question of the BJP's emphasis on *Hindutva* and its reliance on the RSS became all the more acute as the party expanded in the 1990s. Although the party's Hindu agenda is credited by some with fueling its expansion, during this same period, many politicians without RSS backgrounds joined the party. Today, the party is clearly divided into two major camps: those with RSS backgrounds and those without. This line of division has been the source of major conflict within the party, indicating that factional conflict certainly exists. However, the party has, for the most part, successfully kept this conflict from turning into a major coordination failure. Furthermore, the BJP bucks the trends of the other parties since its factional conflict does not manifest itself in geographical terms as fights among various state units or social groups.

9.3 Congress

Congress has been faction-prone since the advent of competitive politics (Brass 1965). Throughout its history Congress has continually fought its own members in elections, having spawned countless rebel candidates. Until recently, the party has faced persist problems with defections and party splits among even its top leaders. The current Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, and Home Minister, P. Chidambaram, have both been members of Congress splinter groups. In some cases, party leaders have quit Congress to establish their own parties, making no attempt to claim the Congress mantel or to retain control over elements of the party organization. Such was the case with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party founded in 1952 by J.B. Kriplani after he

left Congress and the People's Democratic Party founded by former Congressman and Kashmiri leader Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. In both cases, the leaders left Congress without explicitly attempting to split the party.

More often, party leaders have sought to do precisely that: split the party or claim the Congress mantel as their own. Four such attempts occurred in 1969, 1979, 1996, and 1999 with the births of the Congress (O), Congress (U) (later Congress (S)), All India Indira Congress (Tiwari), and Nationalist Congress Party, respectively. In all cases, the leaders who left the party fell out with the party's top leadership and attempted to create an alternative Congress. All attempted to create national parties. Despite several parties gaining toeholds across various parts of the country, it quickly became clear that none held much sway outside of a handful of states—almost always the home states of the parties' new leaders.[101] In addition to these major splits, the party has witnessed numerous regional splits in nearly every state. In many cases, leaders successfully sapped Congress of its organization, personnel, and support, as with the founding of the All India Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) in Tamil Nadu, and Kerala Congress in Kerala.

In spite of the party's many splits, Congress' long-term survival attests to the party's ability to solve many, though not all, coordination problems. In the end, the party has not disintegrated into a series of regional pieces. It has faced serious personnel problems in the form of serious splits and very frequent defections and rebel candidacies. Yet, it has not fallen apart as has been the case with other national parties.

9.4 BSP

The BSP, like Congress, has suffered major dissent within its ranks yet managed to survive. The party routinely produces rebel candidates, and defections are common. For instance, in 2003, a major portion of the BSP's legislative party in Uttar Pradesh quit the party, founding the Loktantrik Bahujan Samaj Party, which quickly merged with the Samajwadi Party.[102] Or, in 2008, within weeks of the state elections in Rajasthan, all six BSP MLAs joined Congress. Attempts to split the party have taken place, but with little effect, as evidenced by the founding of the Bahujan Samaj Party (Ambedkar) by a handful of dissident leaders in Punjab and Haryana in the mid-1990s. The party did little to dent the BSP's vote share. In general, dissent within the BSP mainly occurs among individual politicians (i.e., defections) rather than among quasi-organized groups or tendencies within the party. There are currently no obvious factional divides within the party, either geographical or otherwise. In part, this can be attributed to the relatively compact nature of the party's support base. The BSP garners little popular support outside of Uttar Pradesh and its neighbors.

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[101] For example, Congress (O) was strongest in party leader K. Kamaraj's home state of Tamil Nadu; Congress (U), later Congress (S), fared well in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala, from where most of its top leaders—Devraj Urs and Ramakrishna Hegde (Karnataka), Sharad Pawar (Maharashtra), K.P. Unnikrishnan and A.K. Antony (Kerala)—hailed.

[102] Under India's current anti-defection laws, sitting politicians cannot defect from their party and retain their seats unless one-third or more of the party quits simultaneously. This qualifies as a party split rather than defection. In this case, the founding of the Loktantrik BSP was a tactic to enable the mass defection of BSP MLAs to the SP and engineer a legislative majority for the SP in Uttar Pradesh.

9.5 Swatantra

Though the BSP and Congress may appear beset by coordination failures given the frequent defections and splits that they have endured, these parties have managed to survive. Swatantra did not. As soon as the party reached its pinnacle, it began to disintegrate, one region at a time. The Raja of Ramgarh quit the party in 1964, effectively wiping out the state unit in Bihar. In 1972, Rajaji, one of the party's founders and its main draw in Tamil Nadu, died. Even before his death, the party's attempt at growth had been stymied by the rise of the DMK. In Orissa, Congress successfully expanded into the state's highlands, which had been former princely territory and a Swatantra stronghold. The party's Gujarat unit was also weakened by the exit of much of its lower-caste Kshatriya vote bank to Congress (Kolhi 1990).

In Bihar, the party effectively lost its state unit because the Raja of Ramgarh did not feel adequately accommodated by the party. In other states, the exact reasons behind the exit of some factions are less clear. Nevertheless, it is evident from the party's electoral results that it disintegrated mainly on a regional basis, clearly retaining support in some states while losing it almost overnight in others. Furthermore, as the party lost steam, it came to rely ever more heavily on the aristocracy to win votes, particularly in Rajasthan but also in Gujarat and Orissa. Since the party was initially founded by businessmen and free-market conservatives, primarily from states other than its aristocratic strongholds, the strength of the aristocrats in the party caused significant factional conflict (Erdman 1967: 263). Swatantra avoided a final showdown between the two wings of the party by merging with the Bharatiya Lok Dal in 1974.

9.6 Janata parivar

The history of the Janata *parivar* is one of factionalism. The party family repeatedly suffered a series of mergers and splits, usually along regional lines, as well as smaller scale defections of major leaders. At no point have the parties in this party family demonstrated their ability to coordinate successfully among factions within the party. Instead, theirs is a history of failed coordination and its consequences.

Attempts to found a single socialist party in 1952 (Praja Socialist Party), 1964 (Samyukta Socialist Party), and 1971 (Socialist Party) all failed almost as soon as they began. The Socialist Party refounded itself in 1955 after the founding of the PSP; the PSP never fully joined the Samyukta Socialist Party and quickly refounded itself in 1965; and the Socialist Party of 1971 quickly fragmented into a series of parties all bearing the Socialist Party moniker. Similarly, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, which was founded as an amalgamation of Congress dissident groups, began to disintegrate almost as soon as it was founded. The rump elements, mainly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, formed the core of the Bharatiya Lok Dal, which eventually found its way into the Janata Party.

The Janata Party, the party family's most electorally successful incarnation, could not even survive three years, even though it was in power at the time. By the early 1980s, it had produced three major parties: BJP, Lok Dal, and the rump Janata Party, in addition to several small parties. The final attempt at unity among the Janata *parivar* began in 1988 with the founding of the Janata Dal and ended a decade later when the rump Janata Dal split into the Janata Dal (Secular)

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and Janata Dal (United). Over the course of the intervening decade, most of the party had already fallen away, one state at a time. In some states, such as Gujarat and Rajasthan, Janata Dal members left for either Congress or the BJP. In other states, new regional parties were founded, such as the Haryana Lok Dal (Rashtriya) (later the Indian National Lok Dal) in Haryana, Rashtriya Lok Dal in Bihar, Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, and Biju Janata Dal in Orissa.

Prior to the Emergency, when the parties in the Janata *parivar* split, they usually produced new national parties. However, the splits were not entirely unrelated to geography. Until the 1980s, in most states one of the parties of the Janata *parivar* usually dominated the other. After the Emergency, the party splits occurred very clearly along geographic lines. The rump Janata Party was strong in Bihar, Orissa, and Karnataka, while the Lok Dal (formerly Janata Party (Secular)) was a major force in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. The final disintegration of the Janata Dal in the 1990s took place almost entirely along state lines, with the exit of regional leaders and their distinct support bases: Mulayam Singh and Lalu Prasad with their respective Muslim-Yadav combines in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Om Prakash Chautala and the Jats in Haryana, H.D. Deve Gowda and Vokkaligas of southern Karnatka, and Biju Patnaik's predominantly upper caste following in Orissa.

Over the course of the Janata *parivar*'s history, its parties not only suffered a large number of splits but also frequent defections. While the Samyukta Socialist Party remained a relatively potent political force, the PSP was virtually non-existent by the early 1970s thanks largely to defections to Congress. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the parties of the Janata *parivar* continually contended with defections to Congress, a party in which many of its members had political roots. And, ultimately, in the states where a Janata Dal unit did not break away, the party's politicians fled to either Congress or the BJP, leaving virtually nothing with which to break away from the parent party.

10. Organization across national parties

Levels of party organization across India's national parties roughly correspond to the severity of factional conflict. Parties that manifest little evidence of coordination failure are also those with strong organizations: active grassroots units, institutionalized party structures, and stable rules and regulations. At one extreme lies the CPI(M), which is widely considered to be the best organized party in India. At the other extreme are the parties of the Janata *parivar* and Swatantra, which had no organization of which to speak. In between these two extremes lie the BJP, which tends to be reasonably well organized, and Congress and the BSP, whose organizational capacities are more dubious but certainly exceed those of the now defunct national parties.

10.1 CPI(M)

The CPI(M)'s organization is far stronger than that of any of India's other major parties, particularly in its strongholds of West Bengal and Kerala. The party is highly disciplined, has a loyal cadre and an active local network of activists, as well as clear paths for promotion within the party. The CPI(M) adheres to a policy of democratic centralism—it is highly centralized and decisions come from on high. Most parties in India are also highly centralized, but the CPI(M)'s centralization differs in several key respects. First, decisions are usually made by a committee

rather than by a single individual. Second, decision-making bodies are elected through a quasi-democratic process. For example, the Party Congress, whose delegates are sent by the party's state units, approves the party's Central Committee. Third, lower-level tiers in the organization are disciplined in their adherence to the decisions of their superiors.

The CPI(M)'s cadre is also unusually disciplined. Discipline is high within the party because promotion depends on it. Unlike most other parties that welcome star politicians into their ranks and immediately accommodate them with prestige and position, promotion within the CPI(M) requires loyalty and service. Even membership in the party is not automatic; it is granted only after a probationary period. Party members must work their way up through the organization by demonstrating loyalty, knowledge of party ideology, and commitment to the organization through activity in one of the party's many organizational wings.[103] Candidates for major elected office, such as MP or MLA, have typically had very long careers in the party

At the local level, the party had a vast network of paid "full-timers"—members whose full-time jobs are party work. Thanks to the full-timers, the CPI(M) maintains local party offices throughout its strongholds, even in small towns and villages where most other parties do not have active organizations or offices that are open daily.

10.2 BJP

The BJP's organizational strength is a matter of some debate (Manor 2005). On the one hand, it falls well short of the CPI(M)'s and manifests important organizational weaknesses. On the other hand, the BJP is hardly bereft of party organization as many parties are. Much of the BJP's organizational strength comes from its association with other members of the *sangh parivar*, a network of Hindu religious organizations. Historically, the BJP has had a close association with the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. Indeed, the BJP's predecessor, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, was founded as the political wing of the RSS. The RSS is highly organized, maintaining a network of local chapters, *shakhas*, across India that meet weekly.

The relationship between the RSS and BJP is ambiguous. The BJP claims that it is entirely independent of the RSS and makes its own decisions. Detractors claim that the RSS and BJP are tightly linked. The only official organizational linkage between the two is that the party executive of each BJP state unit as well as the national unit each have a General Secretary (Organisation), who is deputed directly from the RSS. However, members with RSS backgrounds heavily populate many of the state organizations and occupy many of the party's top posts.

Regardless of the precise relationship between the RSS and BJP, the BJP benefits tremendously from the RSS's organization. At election time, the RSS provides manpower to BJP candidates. This is especially important since in many states, parties do not usually maintain active party offices or organizations in rural areas. Aside from the manpower in elections, the RSS plays an important socializing role in the BJP. The BJP itself does not have a students' wing. Instead, the

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[103] These wings include the All India Democratic Women's Association (women's wing), Student's Federation of India (student's wing), Democratic Youth Federation of India (youth wing), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (trade union), and All India Kisan Sabha (farmer's association).

Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarti Parishad (ABVP), which is actually the RSS student's organization, functions in this capacity. The ABVP integrates many young people into BJP politics, since campus politics is often very active in North Indian universities. Even if the BJP does not demand the same kind of ideological discipline as the CPI(M), a large portion of the party's top leadership was socialized in a common organization, often from youth, and shares a common set of ideological aims and outlooks. At the national level, decision-making is relatively consensual compared to other parties. An autocratic party leader has never governed the party, and the BJP regularly holds *chintan baithaks* (brain-storming sessions) with its top politicians to discuss high-level strategy.

Despite the BJP's organization strengths, its merits should not be over-stated. The party's grassroots organization, RSS aside, is not particularly strong in rural areas or outside of election time. Nor is party discipline especially high. Members are frequently expelled for indiscipline but just as frequently welcomed back. Although the RSS and ABVP successfully socialize many party leaders, the BJP's top leadership includes a sizeable cadre with no RSS roots or commitment. Indeed, the party has been willing to accommodate popular politicians and high profile rebels, even if they evince dubious commitments to the party or its ideological goals. For example, film star Hema Malini, former cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu, and Maneka Gandhi, widow of Nehru-Gandhi scion Sanjay Gandhi, all sit on the BJP's national executive despite having had short careers in the BJP. This has meant that paths to career advancement are somewhat opaque. The party is neither rigidly democratic nor unrelenting in its demand for loyalty and ideological commitment.

10.3 Congress

Like the BJP, the state of Congress' organization is a matter of debate (Chhibber 1999; Chandra 2004). It also represents a mix of strengths and weaknesses. During the initial decades after independence, the party was thought to be well organized (Weiner 1967), albeit far more so in urban than in rural areas (Burger 1969). The party had a highly developed organizational hierarchy, ranging from local party units, to district, state, and national units. Furthermore, leaders were elected by party members, with each organizational level selecting members for the level above.

Since the late 1960s, the party organization has atrophied, although the party has recently attempted something of an organizational. Today most parts of India have District Congress Committees, that is, organizational units at the district level.[104] However, organizations below this level are rare outside of urban areas, and the tradition of intra-party democracy has not yet been revived. Though the party president, now Sonia Gandhi, is officially elected by the All India Congress Committee, state and district committees are usually appointed. It is also unclear what role the national party unit has. Congress maintains an elaborate structure at the top, and most office-bearers at the top of the party are, indeed, major players in the party. But most decision-making authority rests with the party president. Since those close to the party president are well represented in the All India Congress Committee, the national unit has some *de facto* power in decision-making. But this may be the by-product of many members' close association with Sonia Gandhi rather than as a result of their positions in the organization.

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[104] These are organizational districts, not electoral constituencies. There are currently 604 districts in India.

Congress maintains a number of frontal wings, among which the student and youth wings are reasonably active. These two organizations are important conduits through which the party cultivates new leadership. However, the party frequently welcomes defectors from other parties and provides position and power to the children of important party leaders. For example, the new generation of young politicians in Congress, which the party trumpets as a modernizing force, is composed almost entirely of the sons of Congress stalwarts.[105] Indeed, nearly all cabinet ministers in the newly constituted Manmohan Singh government under the age of 40 are the children of former cabinet members or high profile career politicians.[106]

10.4 BSP

Unlike many newer parties, the BSP has constructed some measure of organization. The party founder, Kanshi Ram, established the Backward and Minority Community Employees Federation (BAMCEF) in 1973, prior to founding the BSP. When Kanshi Ram eventually founded the BSP, "BAMCEF provided the BSP with its initial base of cadres and considerable infrastructural support" (Chandra 2004, 145), and all of the states where the BSP has established at least a modest foothold in the party system are those where BAMCEF was initially strong (165-166). It is no longer clear to what extent the early BAMCEF organization still shapes BSP organizational strength, particularly outside of Uttar Pradesh. Within Uttar Pradesh, the BSP is reported to have a strong local network of active party workers. In the most recent election party leader Mayawati attempted to establish *Bhaichara* (brotherhood) Committees throughout the state to promote positive relations between caste groups.

Aside from its local network in Uttar Pradesh, other aspects of the BSP suggest a weak organization. Decision making in the party is not just centralized; it is autocratic and unpredictable. The CPI(M), for instance, is centralized, but decision-making is nevertheless highly formalized. By contrast, decision-making in the BSP has historically been capricious, first under Kanshi Ram and then under Mayawati. For instance, Chandra (2004) notes that "[p]arty posts in the BSP were allotted by the party leader, Kanshi Ram, and his close associates by using a combination of predictable and arbitrary criteria" (258). The predictable criterion is caste-based representation. At the time, this meant ensuring at least token representation to all of the major Scheduled Castes. Given the tremendous support that the BSP receives from SCs and their prominence in the BSP cadre, the increasing allocation of tickets to non-SCs implies that rewards within the party—in this case nominations for elected office—are not distributed based on party service and activity. Last, the party organization itself is not highly formalized even at the national level. There is not a fixed set of offices with set procedures for allocation, and the party has not developed frontal organizations.

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[105] Chief among them is Rahul Gandhi, son of party president Sonia Gandhi. Others include Sachin Pilot, son of Rajesh Pilot; Milind Deora, son of Murli Deora; Jitin Prasada, son of Jitendra Prasada; Jyotiraditya Scindia, son of Madhavrao Scindia. Beyond the young generation of leaders favored by Rahul Gandhi, G.K. Vasan is the son of G.K. Moopanar; Meira Kumar is the daughter of Jagjivan Ram; and Kumari Selja is the daughter of Choudhary Dalbir Singh.

[106] This includes ministers from outside of Congress, such as Agatha Sangma of the NCP, daughter of P.A. Sangma; M.K. Alagizhi of the DMK, son of M. Karunanidhi; and Dayanidhi Maran of the DMK, son of Murasoli Maran.

Congress' and the BSP's organizational pathologies notwithstanding, they compare favorably to the now-defunct Swatantra and the national parties that once represented the Janata *parivar*. The story for these parties is straightforward; none had any meaningful organization. One Swatantra founder, Minoo Masani, "detailed numerous deficiencies in his report to the 1966 convention in Delhi, and they boiled down to the fact that, in too many cases, Swatantra had no organization and no cadres worthy of the name, even in states where it had considerable legislative strength" (Erdman 1967: 262). Furthermore, the princes who dominated the party units in states where Swatantra was strongest, Rajasthan and Orissa, had little interest in organization building. But, it was precisely this organizational weakness that allowed Congress to breach Swatantra's stronghold in the Orissan highlands (Ray 1974: 2033).

Among the Janata *parivar*, the PSP, with its urban upper caste leadership, was focused far more on legislative activity than on grass-roots activities (Fickett 1973). Fickett (1968) notes for example that even in Karnataka, where the PSP was relatively strong, it was exceedingly weak in terms of organization. It won support almost purely based on the Vokkaliga vote bank. The SSP, by contrast, was much more active in launching mass agitations, but this does not appear to have translated into a vibrant party organization. Given how quickly the Janata *parivar* parties merged and split, it is hardly surprising that none established a particularly robust organization. Few were around long enough in any one incarnation to establish highly institutionalized party structures.

More recently, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Lok Dal was described mainly as a personal vehicle for Devi Lal (Hardgrave 1984b), suggesting little attention to organizational matters and, instead, a focus purely on the party's top leader. Fickett (1993) also identifies the Janata Dal's "most basic defect...[as] its lack of grass-roots organization" (1157). Politicians I spoke to in Rajasthan, who frequently referred to the Janata Dal organization in Rajasthan as non-existent, corroborate this conclusion. At no point did the national parties of the Janata *parivar* appear to have invested heavily in party organization.

11. Political entrepreneurs and regional parties

As discussed in the next chapter, politics in the period before 1989 provided regional parties with few meaningful opportunities to participate in government. Single-party majority governments governed at the Centre almost uninterruptedly, and the ruling party at the Centre frequently dismissed state governments led by regional parties (or any party unaligned with it). Through the late 1960s, Congress rule appeared difficult to dislodge at the Centre as well as in many of the states. Consequently, Congress exerted a strong pull on ambitious politicians. Among those who were unwilling or uninterested in joining Congress, many attempted to build national rivals to Congress. Yet, during this period, political entrepreneurs founded a number of regional parties. From independence through the 1989 national election, 24 new regional parties contested national elections and won at least 0.20% of the vote in their debut elections.[107]

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[107] Although 0.20% may seem like a miniscule vote share, if sufficiently concentrated, it is enough to win one or two seats in the Lok Sabha. Most of the 24 parties that meet this threshold won seats in the Lok Sabha.

The argument made in this chapter is that the choice to establish regional parties is not an altogether surprising one, given the predominance of geographically concentrated groups in India. The presence of a large number of politically salient and geographically concentrated groups allows political entrepreneurs to found regional parties with relative ease and without necessarily making a costly investment in party organization. In contrast, the construction of a national party entails significant costs. A party must amalgamate different support bases across the country's various regions. Doing so is difficult without creating a fairly strong party organization, which comes at significant cost to a political entrepreneur. Were most politically salient groups geographically dispersed, a political entrepreneur could instead appeal to a single group without making the same investment in party organization.

This line of reasoning explains why Indian politicians have consistently exhibited a willingness to establish regional parties, even in relatively unfavorable circumstances from the 1950s through the 1980s. Group geography has always made national parties costly endeavors. But, India's party system has changed dramatically in the last 20 years as regional parties have gained increased prominence. The next chapter turns to the question of party system change, explaining why regional parties gained so much ground so rapidly in the 1990s.

Chapter 6. Coalition Government and the Rise of Regional Parties

After several decades of electoral stability, the percentage of the Indian electorate that voted for regional parties nearly doubled during the 1990s (see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). What accounts for this sudden and rapid increase in support for regional parties? The answer lies with the advent of national-level coalition government, which began in 1989 and persists to this day. The 1989 general elections brought to an end over forty years of almost uninterrupted single-party majority (SPM) government.[108] Before the 1990s, support for Indian regional parties had been fairly constant. But, in 1989, as a result of jockeying among the country's three main national parties—Congress, BJP, and Janata Dal—Congress lost its legislative majority and in dramatic fashion pitched the country into a new era of coalition government. By the early 1990s, it was clear that no party was likely to win a SPM in the foreseeable future. As a result, payoffs associated with membership in a regional party increased substantially. Parties that had long been marginal players at the national level were suddenly critical players. Political entrepreneurs increasingly chose to form their own regional parties, and successful regional parties began to crop up in all corners of the country. Ambitious young politicians opted to join regional parties rather than casting their lots in with one of the major national parties. These politicians brought with them voters from their own constituencies. The implication of the Indian experience for other weak rule of law democracies is that regional parties should be more successful in countries with frequent national-level coalition governments than in countries in which SPM governments are the norm. A further, more general, implication is that regional parties should be more successful in settings where small parties have access to national-level power.

The previous chapter explained the persistent success enjoyed by Indian regional parties from independence onward. It did so by demonstrating that when politically salient individual-level attributes are highly geographically concentrated, costs associated with building and maintaining a national party are very high. As argued in Chapter 2, voters vote for politicians under weak rule of law based on their individual attributes. Chapter 5 built on this argument, showing the high costs associated with building a national party in a setting of geographically concentrated groups. By contrast, the costs associated with forming a regional party are relatively low. As ar result, regional parties have always occupied an important place in India's electoral landscape.

But Chapter 5's argument is not dynamic. It cannot explain the rapid changes that beset the party system beginning in the early 1990s. To explain the surge in regional party success in the 1990s, I turn in this chapter to an analysis of the payoffs associated with regional party membership and how those payoffs changed over time. Chapter 6 is divided into seven sections. The first (Section 1) presents a general argument linking coalition government to regional party success. Section 2 shifts from a general explanation to the specifics of the Indian case, describing the country's experience with SPM and coalition governments. Section 3 addresses questions of endogeneity by establishing causality in the Indian case. Sections 4 and 5 detail the payoffs associated with membership in regional parties in India during the pre- and post-1991 eras, respectively. Section 6 examines how changing incentives led to changing behavior among politicians. Finally, section 7 refutes four important alternative hypotheses.

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[108] In the remainder of the chapter I use the abbreviation SPM in place of "single-party majority."

1. Coalitions and regional parties

Why should weak rule of law democracies with frequent national-level coalition governments have stronger regional parties than those governed by SPMs? Coalitions matter for regional parties in this setting because coalition government increases politicians' payoffs for membership in a regional party. The logic underlying the argument proceeds in three steps.
> (1) Without coalitions, regional parties cannot participate in government and access the resources associated with governing.
> (2) Without the ability to form part of the government and access the rewards of office, politicians are less likely to join regional parties.
> (3) The smaller the number of credible politicians that join regional parties, the smaller the vote share that regional parties will garner.

Because Chapters 2 and 3 discussed step (3), explaining why party success depends on which parties politicians join, I focus here on steps (1) and (2) in sub-sections 1.1 and 1.2, respectively. The remainder of Section 1 discusses causality and endogeneity (Section 1.3), before outlining three general propositions that emerge from the argument (Section 1.4).

1.1 The (in)ability to participate in national government

Without coalition government, regional parties cannot access the various resources associated with heading or participating in the national government. The assumption underpinning this step in the logic is that regional parties alone can never constitute a SPM.[109] If a regional party could win a legislative majority, then it could access all the resources of governing without having to participate in coalitions. But, if regional parties cannot constitute SPM governments, then they can only gain access to national-level power through coalition government.[110] In most countries, a party cannot win a SPM and remain a regional party; in order to capture enough seats to win an SPM, its votes must be sufficiently distributed across a country that it could no longer qualify as a regional party. Infrequent exceptions occur (Pakistan in 1971, St. Kitts and Nevis)[111], and these exceptions point to the unlikely confluence of circumstances required to produce regional parties

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[109] Recall from Chapter 4 that I classify a party as regional by calculating a Herfindahl index to capture the fragmentation (concentration) of a party's votes across a country's regions. Parties whose votes are highly concentrated in a small number of regions receive high scores on the Herfindahl index. When a party's score is greater than 0.18, I classify the party as regional. If its score is 0.18 or less, I classify the party as national.

[110] I treat single-party minority governments as coalition governments since they require the support of at least one other party to survive and pass legislation. The only difference between a single-party minority government and a formal coalition government is that in the case of a single-party minority government, the government may rely on different parties' support at different times. With coalition governments, the identities of the allied parties remain more or less constant across different issues and votes. One potential difference between single-party minority governments and coalition governments is that single-party minority governments are usually formed by parties that fall just shy of a majority. Therefore, the presence of single-party minority governments may condition expectations about the future possibility of SPM governments differently than coalition government. But this is less an artifact of single-party minority governments *per se*, and more the result of the size of the largest party in a legislature. Presumably, there is a direct relationship between the size of the largest party and the likelihood of future SPMs.

[111] In 2004, the St. Kitts and Nevis Labour Party won seven of the country's eleven legislative seats—all from St. Kitts. Since the party contested only in St. Kitts, the party was regional. Prior to the creation of Bangladesh, 162 of the Pakistan's 300 national legislative seats were elected from East Pakistan. In the 1970 election, the Awami League swept elections in East Pakistan, winning 160 of 162 seats. Contesting almost exclusively in East Pakistan, the Awami League won a SPM in spite of being a regional party.

with SPMs. One region must account for a majority of a country's legislative seats, and the electoral system must be highly disproportional.

When one region accounts for a majority of a country's legislative seats, then a party can potentially win all of its votes in a single region and still win an SPM. Countries with a large number of regions rarely have a single region larger than all other regions combined. Rather, regions constituting a majority of a country's legislative seats are almost exclusively found in countries with two, three, or perhaps four regions (e.g., Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Kingdom, St. Kitts and Nevis, Pakistan, the former Czechoslovakia). But, even if a single region accounts for a majority of a country's seats, a party can only win a SPM by winning a sizeable majority of the region's seats. In extremely large regions, this is almost impossible to achieve under a highly proportional electoral system, since single parties rarely win commanding majorities of more than two-thirds or three-quarters of all votes.[112]

By contrast, with electoral systems that permit a great deal of disproportionality (i.e., those with very low district magnitudes), a party can capture less than a majority of a region's votes and still win nearly all of a region's seats. The combination of one region accounting for the majority of a country's seats and an electoral system that permits disproportionality precludes regional parties from winning SPMs in most countries in the world. Pakistan and the United Kingdom are the only major countries (of which I am aware) in which both of these conditions are met, and, for the time being at least, both countries' major parties are sufficiently well-represented across all regions that none of them risks classification as a regional party. Therefore, in all but a handful of countries it is safe to assume that regional parties cannot win SPMs and that prolonged periods of national-level SPM government necessarily preclude regional parties from power.

This assumption applies only to the national level, where SPMs cannot be achieved unless a party wins votes from across the country. For state-level government, a party's ability to win an SPM does not depend on the dispersion of its votes across the country. So long as a party wins a large vote share in a state, then a party can achieve a SPM in state-level government. At the state-level therefore, regional parties are entirely compatible with SPM government, and SPM government is not necessarily a barrier to regional party participation in state government. Rather, the impact of SPM government at the state-level depends entirely on a party's size at the state-level. A party that is large at the state-level will benefit from persistent SPM governments, while small parties will be disadvantaged, irrespective of whether the parties are regional or national. By the same token, coalition government at the state level will help small parties, whether regional or national. As a result, any argument that rests on a regional party's exclusion from government because of SPMs can only apply at the national level.

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[112] An exception is South Africa, where the ANC in 2005 won more than 70% of the vote in five of the country's nine regions and over 60% in seven of the nine. If several of these regions were aggregated into a single region accounting for majority of the population, then the ANC could quite conceivably win a commanding majority in a single very large region. However, the ANC's electoral dominance in free and fair competition is virtually unheard of in contemporary democratic politics and represents an exception. In very small regions, crushing electoral majorities are more common. For example, in the 2005 legislative elections in Argentina, the Frente de Todos and the Frente Cívico por Santiago won just over 70% of the vote in the provinces of Corrientes and Santigo del Estero, respectively. In 2005, voters from Corrientes accounted for only 2.2% of Argentina's voters, while voters from Santiago del Estero accounted for only 1.5%.

The presence of national-level SPM government yields an unambiguous prediction for regional parties: They will be excluded from government. For national parties, no such prediction can be made because SPM and coalitions impact national parties differently depending on the party's size. Under SPM government, big national parties are advantaged, while small parties are disadvantaged (just like regional parties). Under coalition government, both large and small national parties have the opportunity to participate in government. In both cases, the aggregate result for national parties is unclear. However, the same payoffs that apply to regional parties should, in theory, apply equally to small national parties that cannot form SPM governments.

1.2 The importance of joining national government

Now that I have shown that regional parties cannot access the resources of national-level government except under conditions of coalition government, the second step in the argument is to show that politicians are less likely to join a party if it is excluded from government for the foreseeable future. This claim is reasonable if politicians highly prize being members of a party that participates in government. They will tend to avoid joining parties that cannot reasonably be expected to participate in government. However, if this is *not* the case—if politicians do not highly prize their party's participation in government—then the permanent exclusion of small parties from power at the national level will not deter politicians from joining regional parties. For convenience, I divide politicians into two categories: "believers" who participate in politics and work on behalf of a political party because they thrive on the "collective incentives...of *identity* (one participates because one identifies with the organization), incentives of *solidarity* (one participates because one shares the political or social goals of the other participants), and *ideological* incentives (one participates because one identifies with the 'cause' of the organization)" and "careerists," motivated by the promise of "power, status, and material incentives" (Panebianco 1988: 10).[113] For "believers," winning elected office and participating in government are usually a means to an end, while for "careerists" office is an end in itself. For office-seeking "careerists," exclusion from national-level government would undoubtedly deter them from joining a regional party. SPM governments preclude politicians in regional parties from accessing the power, prestige, and material resources available only from the national government—in short, the very goods that motivate a "careerist's" participation in politics. The important question therefore is whether "believers" behave differently from "careerists."

Do "believers" also prize participation in government? They should, except under unusual circumstances. When politicians have multiple avenues outside of government through which to effect significant policy change and when their beliefs are radically different from those espoused by the other parties, then believers may not prize participation in government. By contrast, if participation in government is the principal avenue through which to influence policy and if a politician's views are not especially radical, then she will highly prize participation in government. First, as the amount of influence on policy that a legislator has outside of government increases, then her need to participate in government to achieve her ideational and policy-related goals decreases. Indeed, in some contexts, opposition parties are granted considerable influence over the policy-making process (Strøm 1986); therefore, politicians can be excluded from governing and still influence policy. However, in most political systems,

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[113] In reality, most politicians are probably a mix of "careerist" and "believer." However, for the purposes of brevity, I discuss only these two ideal-types.

opposition parties have little direct influence on policy. Frequently, cabinets and presidents set legislative agendas; bureaucracies and the ruling political parties formulate legislation; and the legislative majority passes the legislation. Throughout, opposition parties often have little chance to influence either the agenda or the content of legislation. Even in systems in which a great deal of the law-making takes place in the legislature, the majority party often dominates the all-important committee system (as in the United States). Therefore most politicians will highly prize participation in government because of the limited opportunities available for opposition politicians to meaningfully influence policy-making.

Second, politicians often face a dilemma about whether to maintain their ideological purity at the expense of policy influence or to sacrifice ideological purity to increase their policy influence. Usually, politicians are willing to moderate their views to cooperate with relatively like-minded politicians, but may be unwilling to compromise with politicians whose views are radically different. For politicians in the mainstream, participating in government often entails cooperation with politicians whose beliefs are relatively similar. As a result, by participating in government, they can potentially influence policy-making while making relatively modest ideological compromises. These politicians are likely to place great weight on participating in government because of the limited tradeoffs required. By contrast, politicians with extremely radical views are unlikely to be able to join the government unless they cooperate with ideologically distant parties. For the politician whose beliefs differ substantially from other parties', these ideological sacrifices may be unacceptable. Participation in government therefore carries little weight since it cannot be achieved without an unacceptable amount of ideological compromise.

Following this logic, only a minority of politicians ("believers" who are ideologically extreme) in a minority of political systems (those in which opposition politicians exert a great deal of control outside of the government) should be relatively indifferent towards office. Meanwhile, a majority of politicians ("careerists" plus those "believers" whose views are not so different from those of the other parties) in a majority of political systems (those in which parties out of power have relatively little direct policy influence) place great weight on participation in government. The great majority of politicians who prize participation in government are going to be much less likely to join regional parties when persistent SPM government precludes regional parties from joining the government. Justifying step (2) in the logic means that a link can now be drawn between coalition government and the likelihood that politicians will join regional parties. Based on the arguments made in Chapters 2 and 3, step (3) follows; as more credible politicians join regional parties, more voters vote for regional parties, and parties are therefore more successful.

1.3 Causality

This chapter argues that the advent of coalition government in India directly *caused* the observed surge in support for regional parties in the 1990s. So far, this chapter has detailed a general and non-India specific logic explaining why coalitions lead to regional party success. But, the chapter has side-stepped vexing issues surrounding causality, which are the subject of this sub-section. I begin by discussing the causes of coalition government, before addressing two important issues. The first is whether coalitions *per se* are an important variable or whether they are simply a symptom of some other, more important, variable. The second is endogeneity—do coalitions cause regional party success or does regional party success cause coalitions? These discussions,

along with the subsequent sections on India, highlight how the Indian case is ideal for observing the causal relationship between coalitions and regional party success. In most cases, circumstances present a far murkier causal story than in India.

A necessary but insufficient condition for coalition government is a multi-party system. In a party system with strictly two parties, one party will always win a SPM. Usually, the more highly fragmented the party system—typically measured by the effective number of parties—the greater the likelihood of coalition government. But this relationship is not entirely straightforward, as multi-party systems with a relatively small effective number of parties (usually less than four) can nevertheless feature dominant parties capable of winning SPMs (i.e., India and Japan prior to the 1990s).[114] The conditions that lead, first, to party system fragmentation and, second, to preventing the dominance of a single major party can explain when and where coalition government is frequent.

Although much early research on party system fragmentation focused on social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), political science research quickly shifted gears to focus on formal institutions, most notably electoral rules. However, the most recent research in political science explains the effective number of parties as an interaction between electoral rules and societal heterogeneity or social cleavages (usually measured by ethnic fractionalization)—a marriage between the social cleavages and electoral rules schools of thought (Ordeshook and Shvestsova 1993; Amorim Neto and Cox 1997). According to these arguments, "permissive" electoral rules—normally thought of as those with highly proportional electoral systems and high district magnitudes—are not on their own sufficient to produce a fragmented party system. Social heterogeneity is also required to push a party system towards multipartyism, and without it, even a country with a permissive electoral system may only produce a small effective number of parties. Beyond electoral rules, presidentialism is another institution credited with influencing the number of parties in a party system. Presidential systems are thought to push countries toward bipartyism because the nature of the presidential contest—taking place in what is essentially a nation-wide single-member district—reduces the presidential race to two main candidates (Cox 1997). Since small parties are typically uncompetitive for the presidency, presidentialism makes membership in a small party considerably less attractive.

While political science has spilled a great deal of ink explaining the causes of party system fragmentation, explaining the presence or absence of a single dominant party is a considerably less straightforward endeavor.[115] Riker (1976; 1982) contends that Congress' success in India was predicated on the party's centrist ideological location. By monopolizing a wide swathe of the ideological center, Congress supposedly prevented coordination among its ideologically disparate rivals.[116] With the opposition vote split among many rivals, Congress easily won

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[114] For instance, a party system in which each of three parties wins one-third of the vote has an effective number of parties of three. Meanwhile, a party system with six parties in which the largest party wins 50% and the remaining five each wins 10% has an effective number of parties of 3.33. Although the former party system has a slightly lower effective number of parties, that party system should feature coalition government, while the latter would not.

[115] Magaloni (2006) and Greene (2007) both address the foundations of hegemonic party systems, but they focus on a non-democratic (or at best semi-democratic) setting.

[116] On this count, Riker is factually incorrect. In many state-level elections, parties to the right and left of Congress (including the communists) allied with one another to oust Congress from power. The best example was the 1967 state-level election in Tamil Nadu. At the national level, the 1971 Grand Alliance also included parties situated to

elections with far less than a majority of the popular vote. Somewhat similar arguments have been advanced with respect to Italy and Japan (Christensen 2000; McCarthy 2000). But, the Indian case suggests that factors other than ideological positions may also have been at work. Congress no doubt benefited from the fact that at decolonization the British handed power directly and exclusively to Congress. As a result, Congress enjoyed unfettered access to the state prior to the onset of party competition under universal suffrage, giving Congress the ability to forge dense clientelistic networks that helped sustain it in power. Similar stories have repeated themselves across much of the post-colonial world. Although few post-colonial countries stayed the democratic course as India has, many post-colonial transitions gave way to party systems that featured a single dominant party with substantial patronage networks against a fragmented opposition (e.g., Algeria and the Front de Libération Nationale, Senegal and the Socialist Party, Botswana and the Botswana Democratic Party, Malaysia and Barisan Nasional).

Because coalition governments do not arise exogenously to politics, one potential critique of this chapter's argument is that coalition government is not an underlying cause of regional party success but only a proximate cause. If this were the case, then focusing on coalitions as the source of regional party success would obscure the more important underlying causes. But, the causes of coalition government are multiple, including formal institutions (most notably electoral systems), societal heterogeneity, and, in some case, political transitions that create suitable conditions for single-party dominance. Electoral rules are the most obvious candidate for single-handedly explaining coalition politics. But, a number of countries with proportional representation electoral systems have been ruled with varying degrees of frequency by SPM governments or single-party minority governments (e.g., South Africa, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Austria, and Turkey). At the same time, elections under single-member district systems have often failed to yield SPMs in many countries (e.g., India, Pakistan, and Canada). Although variables like electoral systems or societal heterogeneity could predict where and when coalition governments are likely to be found, so long as coalition government is not the ineluctable result of one specific variable, then there is reason to treat coalition government as an important variable in its own right.

A second major concern is endogeneity: Does coalition government cause regional party success or does regional party success cause coalition government? For an argument applicable beyond India, endogeneity is a serious concern, since regional parties contribute to party system fragmentation—one of the necessary conditions for coalition government. The relationship between coalition government and regional parties can take three forms, two of which are consistent with the argument here. First, coalition government can arise exogenously, after which regional parties are more successful than they were under SPM government. Second, regional parties can gain increasing support for some reason unrelated to coalition government, because of which, coalition government arises. Regional parties subsequently grow more quickly and gain more votes than they would have without coalition government, had their success depended exclusively on the underlying reason for their initial gains. Third, regional parties could increase in strength under SPM government, eventually bringing about coalition government. After this, they could either stop growing or could continue to grow thanks only to the original reason that brought about their initial success.

Congress' ideological left (the socialists) and right (Swatantra and Congress (O)), although it did not include the communists.

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The first two scenarios are consistent with my argument that coalition government has a causal effect on regional party success; the third is not. In the first scenario, there is no endogeneity problem since coalition government occurs independently of the growth of regional parties. As later sections will show, this is how events transpired in India. The advent of coalition government in India occurred for reasons unrelated to regional party success. Regional parties were no more successful in 1989 (when for the first time no party won a SPM) than they had been for the previous 40 years under SPM government. In the second scenario, coalitions arise endogenously but still exert a causal effect on regional party success, amplifying regional parties' upward trajectory from what it would have otherwise been absent coalition government. Finally, the third scenario is inconsistent with my argument, and repeated evidence of such a trajectory would refute this chapter's argument.

Differentiating between the second and third scenarios is potentially difficult. Suppose for example that elite preferences begin to change in favor of joining regional parties. Perhaps some kind of social movement or mass organization socializes young politicians into opposing the country's national parties. As a result, new generations of political leaders begin joining regional parties and bringing with them additional popular support. The regional party's growing success eventually undermines the existing parties, bringing about coalition government. Suppose then that the regional party continues to grow. How would one know whether coalitions had a causal effect on party success? If the party continues to expand only because young politicians continue to come from the social movement into the party, then this would be an example of the third scenario—the party continues to grow, but only for the reasons that spurred its initial growth, not because of coalitions. However, if after the arrival of coalition government, politicians from outside the social movement begin to join the party, or if new regional parties are founded with no connection to the social movement, then this would constitute strong evidence that, in spite of the endogenous emergence of coalition government, coalition government still exerted a causal effect on regional party success. In these cases in which coalition government does not arise exogenously, the relationship between coalitions and regional parties is perhaps best thought of as a feedback loop in which regional party success partially contributes to the onset of coalition government and ensures its persistence over time, while at the same time coalition government causes regional parties to achieve greater success than they otherwise would and creates an incentive structure for politicians that is favorable for prolonged regional party success.

So far, the discussion of endogeneity has assumed a sequential series of events: first a period of prolonged SPM government, then a shift to coalition government, followed by an increase in regional party success. Of course, the process can be reversed, with a shift from coalition to SPM government and a consequent decline in support for regional parties.[117] But, in many countries, there is no such sequence, either from SPM to coalition government or the other way around. Many countries have never known prolonged periods of coalition government, while many

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[117] Some evidence shows that a similar dynamic prevailed between 1952 and 1957 in India. Prior to the first national elections in 1952, Congress was expected to win, though the size of its victory was uncertain. Before the coalition era, regional parties fared better in 1952 than in any other election. Immediately after that election, support declined. One interpretation of events is that given a more highly uncertain environment, some politicians anticipated coalition government. Once it was clear that this would not prevail, then politicians left regional parties for national parties, causing the support for regional parties to decline.

others have never known prolonged periods of SPM government. In these cases, assessing causality is difficult since the number of parties forming the government and the success of regional parties occur simultaneously. Moreover, coalition and SPM government cannot explain dynamic change, only overall levels of success, which should vary between countries with exclusively SPM government and those with exclusively coalition government. Furthermore, only an instrumental variables approach in a cross-national analysis can attempt to estimate the causal relationship between the two. Anything else can only reveal the size of the correlation between coalition government and regional party success.

1.4 General propositions

Before turning to the specifics of the Indian case, I end this section by outlining three general propositions that follow from the argument presented here. First, *when countries move from a prolonged period of predominantly SPM (coalition) government to prolonged periods of mostly coalition (SPM) government, then regional parties should become more (less) successful after the switch*. This proposition assumes that the other conditions associated with regional party success (i.e., geographically concentrated attributes) are present. If national parties are easy to form, then increasing the benefits associated with regional party membership may not cause politicians to shift to regional parties; they may stay where there are.

Second, *when a shift from SPM (coalition) to coalition (SPM) government occurs in part because of the increasing (decreasing) success of regional parties, then the subsequent success (decline) of regional parties should be greater and more accelerated than it would be in the absence of coalition (SPM) government.* In other words, even if coalition government arises endogenously, it can still exert an independent effect on the success of regional parties, above and beyond the other factors that led to the initial changes in regional party success. Third and finally, *in countries with histories of exclusively coalition or SPM government, regional parties should be more successful in countries with exclusively coalition government than they are in countries with exclusively SPM governments.*

2. Summary of events in India

With this second section, I now turn to the Indian case, first detailing the history of national-level government and describing the abrupt shift from SPM to coalition government. I then briefly discuss the trajectory of regional party success from independence to the present. India won its independence from Britain in 1947, at which point the British handed the reins of power to Congress. In late 1951 and early 1952, the country held its first elections under universal suffrage, electing both national- and state-level governments. The period lasting from the conclusion of India's first national elections in February 1952 until the ninth national elections in November 1989 constitute India's period of SPM government (see Table 6.1). India's first eight parliamentary elections all produced single-party legislative majorities: seven for Congress and one (in 1977) for the Janata Party. However, thanks to party splits in both Congress (in 1969) and the Janata Party (in 1979), two of these SPMs gave way to single-party minority governments. The first period of single-party minority government lasted from November 1969 to March 1971. In November 1969, the Congress expelled Indira Gandhi, the sitting prime minister, from the party. However, the vast majority of Congress MPs (226 of 291) remained

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loyal to her. Nevertheless, the split deprived her faction of Congress, often styled Congress (R) or New Congress, of its majority, rendering it reliant on outside support from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), a regional party in Tamil Nadu, and the Communist Party of India (CPI), a small national party.

The second instance of single-party minority government occurred from July 1979 to January 1980 under the Janata Party (Secular), a break-away faction of the Janata Party. In July 1979, Janata Party president Chandra Shekhar quit his party, ostensibly over a conflict with the former members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, one of the parties that had joined to form the Janata Party in 1977. Chandra Shekhar and his followers, constituting the newly-founded Janata Party (Secular), formed a government based on promises of outside support from Congress and Congress (U), another recent split from the Indira Gandhi-led faction of Congress.[118] However, Congress (under Indira Gandhi) quickly withdrew its support, and the government collapsed, leading to fresh elections at the beginning of 1980. Together, these two instances of minority government amounted to less than two years out of the nearly 39-year SPM period from February 1952 to October 1989. During the remaining 37 years, SPM governments ruled India.

The ninth general elections, held in November 1989, were the first national elections that failed to produce an SPM government. Since then, no Indian party has won a majority in the legislature. In 1991, Congress performed unexpectedly well, in large part because the party's leader, Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated mid-way through the election campaign. The party's results in states where polling took place after Gandhi's assassination were markedly better than they were in the states that voted before his death. Still, Congress failed to win a SPM. From 1991 to 1996, Congress ruled alone, originally as a minority government dependent on outside votes. By 1993, Congress machinations had led to the defection of a sufficient number of legislators that Congress enjoyed a slim majority for the second half of its term. But, during this period Congress suffered a substantial number of electoral setbacks at the state level, suggesting a grim prognosis for the party in the subsequent elections. Except for this period from 1991 to 1996, all governments since 1989 have been multi-party coalitions that have included regional parties in their cabinets. (In a crucial confidence vote in 1993, the Congress government survived thanks to the support of a regional party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.) The 1989 election therefore represents a critical juncture in Indian politics. It marked the end of nearly 40 years of regional parties' exclusion from national-level government and the beginning of an era in which national-level governments could no longer form without the support of multiple regional parties.

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[118] At the time of the party split, the Indira Gandhi-led faction was recognized by the Election Commission of India (ECI) as Congress (I), with "I" standing for Indira, while the other faction retained the name and symbol of the original Indian National Congress. However, the party was known unofficially as Congress (U), with "U" standing for the party leader Devraj Urs' last name. The party was officially styled Congress (U) from late 1979 onward. Much of Congress (U) quickly returned to the parent party, and the rump Congress (U) changed its name in 1981 to Congress (S), with "S" standing for socialist. The Congress (S) officially merged back in to Congress in 1984, but a dissident faction under Sarat Chandra Sinha remained outside of the parent party and retained the name Congress (S). In ECI reports, the party was known as ICS(SCS), Indian Congress (Socialist-Sarat Chandra Sinha). For details, see Butler, Lahiri, and Roy (1989), pp. 18-20.

From the 1950s through the 1980s, the percentage of the electorate voting for regional parties remained fairly constant, fluctuating between 20% and 30% of the vote. During this period, the vote share for regional parties included:

- support for independent candidates, which had declined sharply by the 1970s;
- a moderate number of resilient parties with roots in pre-independence political parties and movements (DMK, Shiromani Akali Dal, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, Muslim League, the many factions of the Republican Party of India, and various small Marxist parties);
- a smaller number of durable parties founded over the course of the period (Shiv Sena, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, AIADMK, Telugu Desam);
- the CPI(M), which had split from the CPI, and quickly became a regional party[119];
- splinters from Congress, some of which split for good (Kerala Congress), others of which were short-lived parties that either disappeared or returned to Congress (Bangla Congress, Utkal Congress, Telangana Rashtra Samithi); and
- various failed parties with miniscule support bases.

Although many regional parties came and went during this period, much of the total vote share rested on the fairly stable set of parties like the DMK, Akali Dal, and others that had deep roots in India's party system, many of them dating back to independence and before. Over time, as independent vote shares declined, a small number of durable new parties were founded. As a result, the aggregate vote shares for regional parties remained level.

By the mid-1990s, the patterns of support for regional parties changed dramatically, rapidly increasing to approximately 45% by the end of the decade. During this time, a small number of parties that had been state-level players shot to increased national-level prominence (Pattali Makkal Katchi, Shiv Sena, Asom Gana Parishad), but the vast majority of the increased support did *not* come as a result of existing regional parties expanding their support bases. Indeed, most of the regional parties that had existed prior to the onset of coalition government remained about as successful under coalition government as they had been under SPM government. The major difference came in the founding of completely new regional parties. First, Congress suffered a number of major splits (in Tamil Nadu—which did not last; and in West Bengal and Maharashtra, which have been enduring). Second, the Janata Dal slowly disintegrated over the course of the 1990s into a small army of regional parties. Third, several new parties were also founded (Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, People's Democratic Party, Telangana Rashtra Samiti). In short, the remnants of and fragments from large national parties—as well as smaller number of newly-founded parties with origins independent of major national parties—accounted for the startling upsurge in support for regional parties.

3. Explaining the shift from SPM to coalition government in India

Before moving into details surrounding payoffs associated with membership in a regional party during the periods of coalition and SPM government, this section first establishes that regional party success did not bring about the coalition era in India. Instead, coalition government was the

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[119] The CPI(M) managed to win a sufficiently broad base in the 1989 election that it was classified as national party. This was the only election, aside from the CPI(M)'s first election in 1967 in which it was a national party.

product of jostling amongst what were then the three major national parties (Congress, BJP, and Janata Dal).

In 1989, two factors robbed Congress of the massive majority that it had enjoyed after the 1984 elections: its own loss of votes and opposition coordination. First, Congress' vote declined sharply between 1984 and 1989 from 48.1% to 39.5% (see Figure 6.1), a drop that can be attributed to the exit of a large number of top leaders and to the "normal" conditions under which the 1989 elections were held. In 1988, Congress suffered what was tantamount to a party split when a number of senior leaders such as V.P. Singh, Arif Mohammed Khan, and Arun Nehru left the party to form the Janata Dal (Fickett 1993). These leaders enjoyed considerable prestige in precisely those North Indian states where the Janata Dal fared well in 1989. Additionally, the decline in 1989 almost certainly represented a "correction" for the party's performance in the extraordinary election held in 1984 in the immediate aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination. In that election, Congress almost undoubtedly benefited from a sympathy wave. Before the assassination, no one would have predicted that the upcoming elections would have given Congress its largest popular and legislative majority in history. If, instead, the 1980 national election was a more accurate measure of the party's "normal" levels of support, then some correction was due in 1989. Congress' 1980 vote share was around 42%, as compared to 48% in 1984. A reversion back to 1980 levels combined with the exit of several prominent leaders could well account for most of Congress' losses. Other state-specific factors may also have come into play and explained part of the drop.[120]

The second major factor underpinning the move from SPM to coalition government was opposition coordination. Prior to 1989, the 1977 election was the last election in which the opposition was unified. In 1977, most of the major pre-Emergency opposition parties had coalesced to form the Janata Party. Within three years of its formation, however, the Janata Party had fractured, producing new parties—the BJP and the Lok Dal—in addition to the rump Janata Party. After nearly a decade of division, the opposition came together again in 1989 in an alliance that roughly approximated the same array of parties that had come together in 1977. In 1977, the main components of the Janata Party were Congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), the Socialist Party, and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The Janata Dal, founded in 1988, consisted of Congress dissidents, the Lok Dal, and the Janata Party, which roughly approximated Congress (O), BLD, and the Socialists.[121] Furthermore, the Janata Dal and its alliance partners (Congress (S), TDP, and DMK), together known as the National Front, negotiated a seat-sharing agreement with the BJP (the successor party to the Jana Sangh) throughout much of North India. The National Front also negotiated a separate seat-sharing agreement with the Left Front in its strongholds of Kerala and West Bengal. In total, the BJP, National Front, and Left Front contested 505 of the 529 seats in which elections took place in 1989. Of those 505, in 345 constituencies only one candidate from the BJP, National Front, or Left Front faced Congress.

[120] For example, in Tamil Nadu, Congress contested without an alliance partner. Usually the party's vote share in national elections was inflated by support from its alliancer partner. Contesting alone, the party's vote share in Tamil Nadu decreased substantially.

[121] Many BLD and Socialist leaders were also members of the Lok Dal and Janata Party. However, the dissident Congress faction in the Janata Dal was different from the old Congress (O) leaders, most of whom were by this point deceased or retired from active politics.

Together, the nine parties of the Left Front, National Front, and BJP won 45.3% of the vote as compared to Congress' 39.5%.[122]

Opposition unity was especially important in North India, where the Janata Party had roundly defeated Congress in 1977 and where vote-splitting amongst the three largest opposition parties—Janata Party, Lok Dal, and BJP—could do the most to disadvantage the opposition.[123] Elsewhere in India, the seat-sharing agreements were far less critical since only one of the nine parties involved in the opposition seat-sharing agreements was strong prior to 1989.[124] The BJP and Janata Dal avoided direct competition with one another in 317 seats (see Table 6.2), where the dividends were massive. The four main Hindi heartland states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) plus the western state of Gujarat (which borders Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) together accounted for 230 seats in the Lok Sabha in 1989. Of these, the Janata Dal and the BJP won 180, or nearly 80% of all the seats that the two parties won throughout India. Meanwhile, the Congress could win only 30, as compared to 220 in 1984.

If the main factors bringing about coalition government in India were the loss of Congress votes mainly to the Janata Dal as well as opposition unity, principally among the national parties, then this means that regional parties played almost no role in bringing about coalition goverment. The most persuasive evidence of this comes from Figure 6.2, which demonstrates the constant level of support given to national parties from the 1984 through 1991 elections. If anything, national party vote shares rose slightly during this time.[125] Regional party vote shares, if anything, declined slightly from the mid 1980s to early 1990s. I disaggregate regional party vote share into three categories: independent candidates, major regional parties founded prior to the 1989 election, and "others." Up until the mid-1990s, the "other" category included the host of miniscule regional parties that contest elections as well as a small number of sizeable but short-lived regional parties. From 1984 to 1991, vote shares for the major regional parties hardly moved, suggesting there was no change in the popularity of established regional parties. Vote shares for independents decreased as part of a secular decline in support for independents. Meanwhile, vote shares for other parties remained roughly constant, albeit with a small bump up in 1989. In other words, there is no evidence that national parties (and Congress in particular) lost votes to regional parties during these years, since these parties did not gain in popularity. Movement began only *after* the 1991 election. At that point, national parties began to lose votes while "new" regional parties gained considerably. Throughout, the popularity of "old" regional parties has remained constant.

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[122] Since, in many constituencies these parties contested against one another, adding the opposition party vote share is misleading and overstates its strength against a single party like Congress. Nevertheless, the size of the opposition vote relative to Congress' points to the fact that once the opposition united, the Left Front-National Front-BJP combine was essentially on par with Congress in terms of popular support

[123] By 1988, the Janata Party's main strongholds were Karnataka, Orissa, and Gujarat. Throughout much of North India, the opposition vote was split mainly between the Lok Dal and BJP as the Janata Party was quite weak.

[124] For instance, the main non-Congress opposition came from the DMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh, the Left Front in Kerala and West Bengal, and the Janata Party in Orissa and Karnataka. The other opposition parties were extremely weak in these states.

[125] In 1989, the CPI(M) just crossed the threshold to be considered a national party. If included in the 1989 vote share, then the national party vote share would touch 80%, signaling a fairly substantial increase between 1984 and 1989. Furthermore, in 1991, the BSP just fell out of being classified as a national party. If I were to exclude it, then the national party vote share between 1989 and 1991 would stay almost level instead of increasing somewhat.

Figure 6.2 shows that during the late 1980s, Congress' loss was *not* regional parties' gain. Congress' decline appears to have come at the expense of the two national parties: BJP and Janata Dal (see Table 6.3). Absent individual-level survey data, it is impossible to know how voting behavior changed over time. It is possible that Congress voters shifted *en masse* to regional parties while regional party voters then shifted *en masse* to the BJP and Janata Dal or that Congress voters switched to regional parties in some states, while regional party voters went to the BJP and Janata Dal in other states. This possibility cannot be ruled out based on the aggregate election results, but there is no indication from qualitative accounts of the elections in question that this was the case. However, one way to further investigate where Congress votes went between 1984 and 1989 is to disaggregate the national elections results by state. Figure 6.3 plots the change in Congress vote share against the change in regional party vote share between 1984 and 1989 for sixteen of India's eighteen largest states.[126] If Congress lost votes in the same states that regional parties gained votes and in roughly the same proportions, then states should cluster in the upper left quadrant away from the axes. Although about half of the states are located in the upper left quadrant, most are close to one of the axes. In Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, there was almost no change in the Congress vote, though there was some increase in the regional party vote. In most states—West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Bihar—there was a dramatic loss in Congress vote share but no corresponding gains for regional parties as most of the data points lie close to the x-axis. Haryana and Maharashtra saw losses for *both* Congress and regional parties, while in Delhi, the Congress losses far outstripped minor gains for regional parties. Finally, in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, Congress appears to have gained, not lost, to the regional parties.

Figure 6.4 plots state-wise changes in the Congress vote share against changes in the "Janata" party vote share. I use "Janata" as shorthand for the main non-Communist opposition parties: in 1984, Janata Party, Lok Dal, and BJP; in 1989, Janata Dal and BJP. All of these parties were at one time part of the erstwhile Janata Party. If it is true that Congress lost votes to the Janata Dal and BJP, then most data points should, in this graph as well, cluster in the upper left quadrant. Indeed, well over half are in this quadrant. In states such as Punjab, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh, where "Janata" parties were historically weak, the data points representing these states are unsurprisingly located close to the x-axis. However, most states are in the upper left quadrant, indicating that in these states Congress suffered major losses, while the BJP and Janata Dal won roughly similar-sized victories. State level data therefore corroborate national level trends between 1984 and 1989—Congress losing roughly the same proportion of the vote as that which the BJP and Janata Dal gained. Based on the evidence available, regional

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[126]These are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. I exclude Assam because elections were not held there in 1989. I also exclude Jammu & Kashmir because it was an outlier. The National Conference essentially ran unopposed in the three constituencies of the Valley of Kashmir. In the Srinagar seat the JKNC candidate was literally unopposed, and in Baramulla and Anantnag, the candidates faced only token opposition. As a result, turn out was exceedingly low—between 5-6% for the two contested seats. By contrast, the other three seats were contested by multiple parties, and turnout was within normal ranges. The result, however, is that very few votes were cast for the National Conference at the state level although it won three of the state's six seats. Its vote share therefore declined massively between 1984 and 1989 in spite of its success in winning seats in 1989. Since Congress ran candidates in the three contested seats, it won a huge share of actual votes cast in 1989. As a result, on Figure 3 Jammu & Kashmir is a major outlier, albeit one that runs *in favor* of what I am arguing.

parties seem to have played almost no direct role at all in bringing about the shift from SPM to coalition government in India.

4. Payoffs prior to 1991

Having dealt with the question of endogeneity, Section 4 begins the detailed discussion of payoffs to politicians and how these payoffs influence party success. This section focuses specifically on payoffs in the period prior to 1991, looking first at payoffs for members of regional parties (Section 4.1) and then for members of national parties (Section 4.2). If the onset of coalition government exerts a powerful influence on the party system by increasing the payoffs associated with membership in regional parties relative to national parties, then I need to demonstrate three things: 1) what the payoffs to membership in a regional party were during the period of SPM government, 2) what the payoffs to membership in a national party were, and 3) that the latter were substantially larger than the former.

Throughout this and the following section, I relate politicians' payoffs to their party's participation (or not) in government. Multiple motives may drive a politician's behavior, whether the desire for prestige, power, influence over policy, or material gain, but winning power is the primary means through which politicians acquire nearly all the benefits that motivate their behavior. Relative to sitting in the opposition, participation in government almost always enhances (or enhances the likelihood of) policy influence, power, and material benefit. Furthermore, a party's participation in government (or not) is a readily observed indicator of the payoffs associated with membership in a particular party.

4.1 Payoffs for regional parties

During the period of SPM government, from 1952 to 1989, the payoffs associated with membership in regional parties were low. Up until 1989, regional parties' exclusion from national government was complete. Only politicians from national parties—Congress, Janata Party, Janata Party (Secular)—held cabinet berths.[127] During this period, four parties briefly lent outside support to minority governments. Of these, only the DMK was a regional party.[128] The DMK did not extract much in the way of direct concessions from Congress in return for lending it outside support in parliament. However, ahead of the 1971 national and Tamil Nadu state elections, Congress and the DMK concluded a seat-sharing agreement in which Congress contested no assembly seats and few parliamentary seats, instead supporting the DMK and its

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[127] The government of the Janata Party (Secular) assumed power in 1979 without having faced an election. At that time, therefore, its status as a national or regional party was unclear. In the 1980 election, the party was national. Since the Janata Party (Secular) broke away from a national party and in the subsequent election established itself as a national party in its own right, I treat the Janata Party (Secular) government as one formed by a national party.
[128] The other three were national parties: Congress, Congress (U), and CPI.

small allies.[129] But, given Congress' tremendous weakness in the state, this seat-sharing agreement may not have constituted much of a concession on Congress' part.[130]

Though excluded from the national cabinet prior to 1989, regional parties had governed at the state level, either alone or in coalition, well before that point. But the persistence SPM government at the national level had important repercussions at the state level. Article 356 of the Indian Constitution allows the President to establish central government control over a state in the event that "a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried out in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution" (Government of India 2008).[131] In effect, this power permits the President to suspend democratically elected legislatures and state governments (usually followed shortly thereafter by new elections or attempts to form a new state government) and impose central government rule. Throughout the period from 1952 to 1989, governing parties at the Centre routinely invoked Article 356 to manipulate state-level politics. So long as the ruling party at the Centre foresaw no need to rely on the support of regional parties in the near future, nothing stopped it from seizing on the slightest of pretexts to dismiss state-level governments formed by regional parties.[132] Without any leverage at the Centre, state governments headed by regional parties were vulnerable to the threat of central intervention at the hands of the ruling party. They could not even content themselves with the possibility of power at the state-level. For instance, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Congress used President's Rule as a strategy to regain control of states where it risked losing power to opposition coalitions, often including regional parties. Non-Congress state governments fell victim to President's Rule in Haryana (1967), Uttar Pradesh (1968, 1970), Punjab (1968, 1971), Kerala (1959, 1970), Orissa (1971), and West Bengal (1968, 1970). Upon winning power at the Center in 1977, the Janata Party dismissed several Congress-led state governments. Then again, when Congress returned to power in 1980, it dismissed a number of Janata Party state governments and state governments aligned against Congress.

Beyond showing that payoffs associated with membership in a regional party were low during the period of SPM government, it is also crucial to demonstrate that politicians in regional parties did not anticipate with a high degree of certainty that their payoffs would increase substantially in the near future. Events in India transpired in such a way that there was an almost continuous period of single-party majority government for more than three decades. But politicians may not have believed at the time that events would unfold as they actually did. Had they anticipated the imminent demise of Congress' political dominance at the Centre, then politicians' behavior could not be explained by the low payoffs that resulted from SPM government.

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[129] In the parliamentary elections, Congress contested nine seats, DMK 24, and other allies (CPI, Muslim League, Forward Bloc) contested six. In the assembly elections, the DMK contested 203 of 234 seats, and Congress contested none. Allies contested the remaining seats.

[130] Congress was widely believed to have little support in Tamil Nadu, since most of the party had joined Congress (O). Even if the DMK had not been supporting Congress at the Centre, Congress would not have been in a strong bargaining position vis-à-vis the DMK in seat-sharing negotiations.

[131] Colloquially, invocation of Article 356 is referred to as declaring President's Rule. I use the two interchangeably.

[132] The same logic holds for any opposition party on which the governing party does not anticipate relying. Small national parties that opposed Congress were also subject to the abuse of Article 356.

Over time, perceptions about the likelihood of transitioning from SPM to coalition government varied. In many pre-1991 elections, Congress was expected to win a single-party majority (1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1984), while in others expectations were more uncertain (1977, 1980, 1989).[133] However, no election was preceded by widespread expectation of coalition government. At best, non-Congress politicians may have been uncertain about what elections would bring and may have hoped for an end to the party's SPMs. Even ahead of uncertain elections—such as the post-Emergency 1977 election or the 1980 election held after both Congress and the Janata Party had split—if politicians used the past outcomes to extrapolate to future outcomes, then they would have bet on the return of a SPM government. Pre-1991 expectations differ markedly from the post-1991 period, during which all political actors approach elections believing with near certainty that coalition government is the only possible outcome. Therefore, for politicians calculating the payoffs associated with party membership, the safest assumption during this pre-199 period would have been to expect SPM government to persist rather than to expect a move towards frequent (or even periodic) coalition government.

4.2 Payoffs for national parties

The overarching aim of this sub-section is show that the payoffs associated with membership in a national party were higher than those for a regional party. During most of the SPM government period, India's national parties were either Congress or one of a host of small national parties.[134] This section therefore focuses on the payoffs to members of Congress and members of small national parties.

Understanding the payoffs associated with belonging to Congress is straightforward: they were extremely high, since the party enjoyed the lion's share of political power during this time. Congress governed at the Centre for almost the entire period from 1952 to 1989, and all members of the council of ministers were from Congress. Additionally, at any given time, the party governed in most of the states as well.[135] Because Congress usually governed at the national level, Congress state governments were generally safe from central intervention, since there was no need to undermine the state government as was the case when a state was governed by the opposition.[136] Congress' electoral dominance, especially in the first two decades after

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[133] I conducted a brief review of scholarly books and articles prior to 1989 (Roach 1957; Weiner 1957; Weiner 1962; Retzlaff 1963; Palmer 1967; Davey 1972; Weiner 1977; Joshi and Desai 1978; Narain 1978; Namboodiripad 1979; Gould 1980; Hardgrave 1984a; Hardgrave 1984b; Rudolph and Rudolph 1987). To the extent possible, I looked for articles written prior to the elections that predicted future electoral outcomes. Or, failing that, I looked for evidence based on post-election assessments of pre-election expectations. In the future, I plan to conduct a more thorough assessment of pre-election expectations by sampling newspaper articles in the month prior to national elections.

[134] The Janata Party in the 1977 and 1980 elections is the only exception, as it is the only instance of a large non-Congress opposition party. The party was founded in early 1977. By the end of 1980s, it was no longer a large party, having split once in 1979 and again in 1980. Since the party was only large for three of the 37 years of SPM, I exclude an explicit treatment of the Janata Party from the analysis. However, the same logic that applies to Congress during the SPM government period also applies to the Janata Party from 1977 to 1980.

[135] For brief periods in the late 1960s and late 1970s, parties other than Congress governed a majority of large states.

[136] This is not to say that the Congress did not declare President's Rule in states in which it governed. Indeed, it did, often for reasons relating to internal Congress politics. In these cases, it was not that the Centre wished to endanger the survival of a Congress-led government but rather that it sometimes wished to engineer the fall of a particular Congress leader and replace him with another.

independence, was so complete that the boundary between the party and the Indian state was often porous and distinctions between the two blurry (Bailey 1963; Weiner 1967).

If the comparison between national parties and regional parties were simply a comparison between Congress and the regional parties, then understanding the difference in payoffs between the two would be simple. Payoffs to membership in Congress were obviously greater than the payoffs to membership in regional parties. But, showing that the payoffs associated with membership in a national party were greater than those associated with membership in a regional party requires showing not only that the payoffs to membership in Congress were quite high but also that the payoffs associated with membership is a small national party were higher as well. Understanding the payoffs to small national parties is very important because the small national parties together garnered a substantial chunk of the total vote. Excluding Congress, most of the national party vote share during the period of SPM government was won by relatively small parties that individually won less than 10% of the vote. Moreover, during this time many more votes went to non-Congress national parties than to regional parties.

I divide the discussion of small national parties into three parts. First, I address why politicians join regional or small national parties at all. If parties anticipated that SPM government would persist in the future and that Congress was the only large party capable of forming a SPM, then what kind payoff would there be to joining any non-Congress party? This question applies to small national parties and regional parties alike, since SPM government disadvantages both types of parties. This raises a second concern, which I address next. SPM governments should have affected small national parties and regional parties equally. Why then did so many politicians congregate in small- or medium-sized *national* parties, rather than in regional ones, particularly when the linguistic and caste-based cleavages discussed in Chapter 5 militate against the formation of national parties? If anything, one should expect to have seen very few small national parties and many regional parties, rather than the other way around. I show that the reason politicians chose to join small national parties lay in their long-term hope of building a large national party in which their party would be the dominant faction. The third part of the discussion concerns why opposition politicians preferred the idea of building a large national party to displace Congress rather than a coalition of small parties.

4.3 Why politicians joined non-Congress parties

I propose three reasons non-Congress opposition parties attracted a large number of politicians, even despite Congress' dominance. The first has to do with prospects for upward mobility within Congress. Thanks to the near monopoly that Congress enjoyed on political power (especially up until the mid-1960s), the party was crowded with political aspirants. Competition was stiff for coveted organizational positions and election tickets. To advance within the party, politicians had to either assiduously cultivate a base of support among Congress activists (when the party held regular internal party elections) or establish a personal rapport with Indira Gandhi or members of her coterie (after internal party elections were suspended). In other parties, achieving power and prestige within the party was far easier. Instead of having to adjudicate between multiple aspirants for party tickets as in Congress, many parties could not find enough qualified candidates to contest all the seats that they would have liked (Erdman 1967; Fickett 1976; Graham 1990). Particularly for those politicians who believed that their prospects for upward

mobility in Congress were low, the prospect of quickly making one's way up the ranks of an opposition party might be preferable to the idea of languishing in low-level post in Congress.

The second reason has to do with politicians of limited ambition. Some politicians wish only to secure a local MLA or MP seat and are indifferent to wider state- and national-level politics. Since locally popular independents have always been potentially viable candidates in India, politicians may have happily foregone joining Congress (or any party for that matter) and therefore avoided competing for an election ticket. When nothing is stopping a local notable from winning an election on her own, why would a politician want to join Congress and compete with other aspirates for a party ticket, unless she harbored grander political ambitions that could be served only through a major political party? During the 1950s and 1960s, the total vote share for independent candidates in Lok Sabha elections surpassed that of even the largest non-Congress party. Large vote shares for independent candidates in the 1950s and 1960s are consistent with the anecdotal characterization of Indian politics at this time as dominated by local notables (Brass 1965; Burger 1969). Many of these notables no doubt had wide aspirations and interests in state- and national-level politics and therefore made their way into some of the more important political parties. But for others, there was a strong emphasis on the "local" aspect of being a "local notable," and their interest in state and national politics was sometimes minimal. Absent this kind of ambition, there was little incentive for leaders to join parties.

The third reason for the persistence of opposition parties is ideology. Although the average Indian voter might not be highly ideological, many politicians are. The history of Congress shows that politicians with a variety of ideological leanings operated within the party: Gandhians, socialists, Hindu nationalists. However, many others chose to operate outside of Congress to pressure Congress for policy change from outside. Riker (1976; 1982) characterizes Congress as an ideological centrist party and credits the party's success to its centrism. Riker's observation accurately captures the reality that from the 1950s through much of the 1980s when most main national parties offered significantly different policy alternatives: socialist, Hindu nationalist, conservative, and communist. Many politicians were willing to forego power and direct policy influence in the hope of pressuring Congress from the outside to change its policies for the sake of ideological purity. Although many politicians were and continue to be highly opportunistic, for many others personal ideology constrains their decisions on party choice.

4.4 Why politicians preferred small national parties to regional parties

The three reasons noted in the previous sub-section explain why politicians joined parties that had little chance of participating in government. But, why did Hindu nationalists, communists, conservatives, and socialists bother to make common cause with one another across caste and linguistic boundaries?[137] The payoffs to membership in a small national party should have been nearly the same as the payoffs to membership in a regional party, since both types of parties were opposition parties excluded from power. If that is the case and if most salient individual-level attributes are geographically concentrated, then this poses the question of why politicians would have joined small national parties rather than regional parties.

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[137] The Bharatiya Jana Sangh in fact did little to cross linguistic boundaries. Even in elections in which its votes were comparatively dispersed, it usually fared well only in Hindi-speaking states plus Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

I argue that the difference between small national parties and regional parties lies in expectations about future payoffs. In terms of present day payoffs, being a member of a small national party was never more beneficial than being a member of a regional party: present-day payoffs were identical. However, as part of small national party there was the possibility of larger long-term payoffs. Members of small national parties hoped that their own party would one day constitute the nucleus around which a large national opposition party would form. Since a regional party could never be big enough to constitute the basis around which a large national opposition party would unite, members of regional parties could not realistically harbor similar hopes. The higher payoffs associated with membership in a small national party, as compared to membership in a regional party, could therefore have been driven by the belief that membership in a small national party could eventually lead to a future as the leading faction in a large national party capable of forming its own SPM government. I formalize this logic with a simple decision theoretic exercise, before turning to a brief discussion of how the exercise explains events in India.

Suppose that a politician must decide whether to join a regional party or a small national party. Once a politician decides which party she wants to join, her decision is binding. There is an incumbent SPM government, and the politician in question believes that the SPM government will persist in the future. In the present period, there are several small national parties of roughly equal size and several regional parties. In the future, the national parties can decide to unite into a single party or not. First, the politicians make the binding decision to unite. Then some kind of election takes place, and the strength of the various parties is revealed. Once this has happened, then the largest party becomes the dominant faction in the new party.[138] Since the relative size of the opposition parties in unknown when they decide to unite, the politician must make her decision based on her beliefs about the probability that her own national party will constitute the nucleus of the new party. Payoffs are found in Table 6.4.

- U_1 is the payoff associated with membership in a small party under an SPM. The party has no access to national government and only the possibility of tenuous power at the state level.
- U_2 is the payoff associated with membership in a large party under an SPM. The party can credibly vie for (and often wins) national level power. U_2 is greater than U_1.
- U_3 is the always negative payoff associated with membership in a party dominated by a faction other than one's own. The factions here are determined by the party to which a politician belonged before the opposition unites. Payoff size can vary, depending on how (un)palatable a politician finds the prospect of belonging to a party dominated by politicians with a different party background. If the parties that unite are similar, then U_3 will be small; but, if the parties are very different, then U_3 will be large.
- P is the probability that the politician assigns to her own party constituting the core of the large national opposition party. $(1 - P)$ is therefore the probability assigned to another party constituting the dominant faction.

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[138] I preclude the possibility of regional parties uniting with the national parties to form a single opposition party. Because of its size, a regional party has a zero probability of constituting the dominant faction in the large opposition party. Therefore, it will never decide to unite.

Because regional parties never unite to form a large national party, payoffs for regional parties are the same throughout. If the small national parties choose not to unite in the future, then the payoffs for membership in a small national party and in a regional party are identical, and the politician is indifferent between the two. Therefore, the politician's decision about which type of party to join comes down to her payoffs if the small national parties decide to unite. A politician will join a small national party, rather than a regional party when:

$$P * U_2 + (1 - P) * (U_2 - U_3) > U_1.$$

This simplifies such that, the politician will join a small national party when:

$$P > 1 + [(U_1 - U_2) / U_3].$$

From this, the following statements can be made.

(1) The greater the probability (P) that the politician's own party will constitute the basis of the new large national party, the *more* likely the politician will join a small national party over a regional one. Explanation: Joining a small national party is a lottery. When the probability of the positive outcome (dominating the future party) is very high, then politicians will opt to join the small national party. When the probability of a negative outcome (being dominated in the new party) is high, then they will opt for a regional party.

(2) The greater the payoff to being in small parties under SPM government (U_1), the *less* likely the politician will join a small national party over a regional party. Explanation: If the payoffs to small parties (regional or national) are high, then politicians are more likely to choose the safe option of joining a regional party and reaping the payoff and avoid the risk of ending up in a national party dominated by a faction other than one's own.

(3) The greater the payoff to being in the large opposition party (U_2), the *more* likely the politician will join a small national party over a regional party. Explanation: If the payoff to being the dominant group within a large party under SPM government is sufficiently large, then even when this is a relatively low probability event, politicians will join a small national party anyway.

(4) The greater the (negative) payoff to being a member of a large opposition party when it is dominated by members of a party to which the politician did not formerly belong (U_3), the *less* likely the politician will join a small national party over a regional party. Explanation: When the worse outcome associated with joining a small national party becomes more unpalatable, politicians are less willing to risk this outcome and so join regional parties.

(5) If $U_2 - U_3 > U_1$, then politicians will always join a small national party over a regional party. Explanation: When even the worse of the two outcomes from joining a small national party is better than the outcome of remaining a small party of any kind under SPM government, then politicians will always join a small national party in expectation of future unity and never join a regional party, which they expect to remain small.

Even though there are several ways in which this exercise does not precisely reflect the reality of pre-1989 Indian politics, the intuitions that it formalizes are helpful in understanding why so many politicians chose to join small national parties, even when the present-day payoffs were just as low as those for regional parties. First, it provides a logic for understanding why regional parties would merge into a small national party as happened with the Swatantra Party.

Erdman (1967) describes the Raja or Ramgarh's decision to merge his Janata Party into Swatantra as stemming from the fact that the Raja of Ramgarh,

> had for a long time entertained higher political ambitions than the leadership of a small local party and he was always looking for new ways to carry out his vendetta against the architect of Bihar's *zamindari* abolition act, K.B. Sahay [a Congressman]. Unable at the time to pursue either goal effectively through the Congress (which he was by no means averse to joining on the proper terms) or through Janata, the Raja saw an opportunity in the Swatantra Party (112).

Without some notion of future payoffs, regional parties merging into small parties would seem irrational, since the payoffs for both party types are identical. Instead, the decision to merge could reflect the fact that the payoff to U_2 is high and the payoffs associated with U_3 and U_1 low. In other words, Raja of Ramgarh apparently placed little value on membership in a small party (a small value of U_1) and had little aversion his party's wholesale absorption into a larger party (a small value of U_3). Of course, this may have been the case because he believed that although his party would not command a privileged position within Swatantra, he himself might wield considerable influence. The Raja's personal ambitions and desire to carry out his vendetta against Sahay suggest that he placed a high prize on membership in a large national party (a large value of U_2), or at the very least, in a party larger than his own (which was quite small).

The second way the model helps is in how it captures small parties' uncertainty about which opposition party would dominate the non-Congress opposition. Politicians continued to join small national parties (rather than regional parties) during the period of SPM government because they weighted U_2 very heavily and because they over-estimated P, the probability that their own party would come to dominate the large national party that they hoped would emerge. They perceived a high payoff to joining a small national party because they thought there was a strong possibility that they would eventually reap the rewards of dominating a large national party. In reality, it took nearly 30 years and India's only authoritarian interlude—the Emergency—before opposition parties actually merged. And even then, the large national party that was founded quickly fell apart. Why was merger into a large national party so difficult?

My reading of the history of non-mergers in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s is that members of these small national parties pervasively over-estimated the probability that their own party would make an electoral breakthrough in coming elections. An electoral breakthrough would end the opposition stalemate and produce a single focal point around which the rest of the opposition organized.[139] However, each successive election was inconclusive as the national opposition parties remained evenly matched. Additionally, the "national" edge that some larger parties enjoyed was not reproduced across all states. Even the smaller of the national opposition parties enjoyed pockets of strength in which they dominated other parties. As a result, rather than merge on another parties' terms (as dictated in the model above), the parties chose to maintain the status quo, along with its low payoffs, in hopes of making a breakthrough and dominating their rivals.

4.5 Why politicians hoped to one day form a large national party

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[139] To some extent that happened in the 1990s with the BJP.

So far, I have argued that politicians' preference for small national parties over regional parties rests on expectation of future payoffs within a large national party. But this logic in turn rests on politicians' widespread preference for membership in a large national party and particularly for membership in the dominant faction of a large national party. Without justifying this long-term preference for a large national party, there is no obvious reason politicians should weight membership in a small national party highly and therefore join one over a regional party. There are two ways to displace a dominant SPM government like Congress—either with an alternative SPM government or with a coalition government. Regional parties can participate in an electoral alliance or coalition as easily as any small national party. If politicians ultimately preferred to displace Congress through a coalition, then there would be no reason at all to prefer small national parties to regional parties. So, why then did politicians prefer the prospect of a large national party?

The most important reason is that the formation of a large national party creates the possibility for politicians to significantly enhance their own power. Usually when a small party merges into a larger party, the larger party gains more than it gives up. The larger party benefits from the added voters and workers infused by the small party, which enhances the party's overall strength and bargaining power in the party system as a whole. At the same time, since the smaller party often has little leverage in bargaining with the larger party, the larger party does not always have to cede very much power within the new party to leaders who formerly belonged to the small party. In other words, for forward-looking politicians confident that their own party will prove to be the strongest of the opposition parties, exercising dominant (but not complete control) over a much larger party may be preferable to exercising complete control over a small party.

Another reason is that a persistent coalition arrangement can lead to a party's long-term decay. When parties arrive at seat-sharing agreements, they often agree that each party contests in its areas of existing strength. With little opportunity to contest outside these pockets of proven support, parties are limited in their ability to expand. They cannot convince potential voters to vote for the party if it does not field candidates. Activists in areas where the party does not contest may tire of constantly campaigning for candidates belonging to allied parties rather than their own. Small parties are especially hurt by stable, long-term alliances because they are not the alliance's focal point. By contrast, larger parties in the alliance dominate key cabinet berths and are more likely to attract new recruits. Perhaps the best example of this dynamic is in West Bengal, where the parties of the Left Front have contested the same MP and MLA seats for over 30 years. During this time, the dominant party in the alliance CPI(M) has gained considerable strength, while the junior partners in the alliance (Forward Bloc, RSP, CPI) are virtually absent from large parts of the state and face considerable problems recruiting new members. Therefore, a party might view the prospect of a long-term alliance as undesirable so long as it is not in position to dominate other members of the coalition. Instead, the party might wish to continue attempts to expand in hopes that it can one day constitute the core of a much larger party.

Beyond rationales relating to power and party growth, large national parties also have desirable properties from the perspective of posing a stable challenge to opponents. More specifically, a large national party can ease the coordination problems that often plague multiple parties

working together in coalition.[140] When multiple parties must coordinate to avoid splitting the opposition vote, there are many points at which negotiations can collapse. They must coordinate with each other over seat-sharing, a common manifesto, a post-election policy agenda, and post-election power-sharing. Coordination can be particularly tricky since the time periods involved are often very short. Parties must quickly resolve their various issues to nominate candidates and proceed with the election campaign. By contrast, if parties have already come together under the banner of single party, many of these negotiations have already taken place, potentially over a long period of time. The party has already resovled many divisive issues well in advance of the election campaign. Indeed, resolution of these issues is often a necessary condition for party formation in the first place. Come election time, the only issue to resolve is candidate nomination.

In almost any centralized party in which candidates are nominated rather than elected, election ticket allocation is always a hazardous process. Party leaders must balance different factions and avoid arousing the ire of those who do not receive tickets. At worst, candidate nomination in a large opposition party simply resembles negotiations among allied parties but without many of the added problems of manifestoes and common minimum programs. The same processes that constitute inter-party bargaining in coalition negotiations are intra-party factionalism within a single large party. At best, however, candidate nomination in a single party can be smoothed considerably for a number of reasons. First, because factional membership in most systems is far less formalized than party membership, working together within a single party may (though it need not) reduce the number of groups bargaining over seats as larger factions may absorb minor groups. Second, because of the usually informal nature of factions, the allocation of seats to different factions is not always transparent. Some candidates may be unaligned or their factional allegiances unknown, ambiguous, or shifting. By contrast, seat-sharing agreements between parties are explicit. Parties know exactly how many seats they are being allocated.[141] Intra-party bargaining can potentially obscure which factions are winning and losing and by how much.

Third, exit options are fewer when factions operate within a single party. When multiple parties coordinate with one another, exiting the alliance is easy. Throughout negotiations, the party retains its party apparatus, membership, loyalists, program, and symbol. If it is unsatisfied with negotiations, it can simply contest on its own, making use of its existing resources. However, if a faction of a party is dissatisfied with its seat allocation within the party, the costs to contestation are higher. It must set up a new party and faces uncertainty about how many of its former members will remain loyal. These challenges are especially daunting because of the time-frame involved for setting up a party apparatus anew. Ticket allocation usually takes place shortly before elections. Tickets must first be allocated for a faction to be dissatisfied. If the faction

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[140] For the purposes of this chapter, I assume that the only way to form a large opposition national party is through the purposive coming together of multiple groups already in existence. In other words, I do not entertain the idea of a "natural" process through which a single party attracts an increasing share of the votes over a series of elections. In the case of natural electoral growth, there are fewer inherent coordination problems since leaders have presumably joined the party because they find its policies acceptable and/or identify with the party. Coordination challenges are much higher when groups of ideologically dissimilar politicians with loyalties to pre-existing parties attempt to come together under a single party label.

[141] Usually, it is the number of seats that each party receives that causes seat-sharing agreements to collapse. A secondary issue is which seats are allotted. A party may not object to the number of seats that it receives but rather to the fact that it receives a number of seats in which the party is expected to lose.

chooses to put up its own candidates, it has little time before the election to re-establish itself as a new party. Therefore, coming together under a single party can commit parties to coordination.

In sum, this section has shown that payoffs associated with membership in Congress were very high relative to those for membership in a regional party. I also addressed the question of small national parties and why politicians would prefer to join them rather than regional parties. This argument rests on politicians' beliefs about the long-term prospects of their parties to constitute the core of a large national party. These beliefs in turn rely on a preference for a large national party rather than a coalition of small parties as an alternative to the dominant Congress.

5. Payoffs under coalition government

Section 5 outlines the payoffs to parties during the coalition era. It begins by looking at payoffs to national and regional parties in terms of national-level power before turning to a discussion of state-level power. The section concludes by analyzing politicians' expectations about the persistence of coalition government.

With the advent of coalition government in 1989, the payoffs for all parties—whether regional or national, small or large—greatly equalized. At the national level, although large- or medium-sized national parties have retained the premiership (with the brief exception of Chandra Shekhar in 1990-1991), members of small national parties or regional parties have held top cabinet positions such as Minister of Finance (Satpal Maharaj of AIIC(T)), Minister of Defence (Mulayam Singh Yadav of Samajwadi Party and George Fernandes of Janata Dal (United) /Samata) and Minister of Home Affairs (Indrajit Gupta of CPI). Even the post of prime minister is not perceived as necessarily being the preserve of the country's large national parties, as was proven by rampant speculation about Mayawati's future as a potential prime minister prior to the 2009 elections.[142] In previous elections there was also speculation that Mulayam Singh Yadav or Jyoti Basu, both from regional parties—the Samajwadi Party and CPI(M), respectively—might come to occupy the position of prime minister.

In the coalition era, regional parties now routinely occupy a third or more of all ministerial berths. In the last ten years, 21 regional parties have held ministerial portfolios at the Centre, and regional parties' representation in India's council of ministers is roughly equivalent to both the percentage of seats and votes that they contribute to the governing coalition. In particular, the percentage of seats that regional parties contribute to the coalition mirrors almost exactly the percentage of ministerial berths allocated to regional parties. With respect to the percentage of votes that regional parties contribute, there may even be a tendency to over-represent. Outside of ministerial berths, regional parties have also successfully used their positions as kingmakers for other kinds of advantage. For example, during the tenure of the NDA-led government, to which the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) provided critical support, TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu was never "averse to arm-twisting the Union government to ensure that more funds flow[ed] from New Delhi to Hyderabad. He successfully lobbied with the Vajpayee government to ensure that

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[142] Mayawati is head of the Bahujan Samaj Party, a small national party. As it happens, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance won more seats in the 2009 national elections than expected. In the aftermath of the election, speculation about Maywati as a potential prime minister ceased abruptly. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Mayawati's name even figured into the discussion in the months leading up to the election.

more money was given to the state for various natural calamities and to ensure that the public sector Food Corporation of India procured large quantities of rice from farmers in the state" (Thakurta and Raghuraman 2004: 226).

Unlike the SPM era, the coalition era has allowed small parties, especially regional ones, to gain unprecedented access to national-level power. Some have also demonstrated an uncanny ability to maintain access to power, even as the political fortunes of the large parties vary. For example, the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference held cabinet berths under both the Janata Dal- and BJP-led governments in the 1990s and 2000s. Similarly, the DMK has held cabinet berths under JD-, BJP-, and Congress-led governments, dating from 1996 till today. Since regional parties will not constitute the poles around which national politics revolve, regional parties have a tremendous amount of dexterity in coalition maneuvering.

Turning to the state-level, opposition-led governments are now safer than ever before from meddling by the central government and imposition of President's Rule. This is an especially welcome development for regional parties in power at the state-level that would never have had the opportunity to guarantee their own tenure in office under a SPM government. Now, regional parties make potential allies for the parties in power at the Centre. The dynamics of coalition politics may deter interference in governments led by regional parties, precisely because these parties often have the latitude to ally with either of the major parties.[143] In the 1950s and early 1960s, Congress rarely dismissed governments, since it governed in most states. The average number of times that President's Rule was invoked yearly was only 0.4 in the 1950s. However, beginning in the late 1960s, the use of President's Rule increased to an average of 1.8 times per year as the number of opposition-ruled state governments also rose.[144] Invocations of Article 356 peaked in the 1970s (3.9 times per year on average), and declined in the 1980s and 1990s (on average 2.3 and 2 times per year, respectively). Beginning with the Janata Dal-led United Front government in 1996, President's Rule has been invoked sparingly. Comparing the SPM period to the coalition period, President's Rule was invoked more frequently (on a per yearly basis) than during the coalition period, even when including the 1950s and early 1960s when Congress dominated both the Centre and most states.

One confounding factor in identifying the effect of coalition government on payoffs to regional parties is the March 1994 Supreme Court case of S.R. Bommai v. Union of India. In this case, a former Chief Minister of Karnataka brought suit against the government for abusing Article 356. The Supreme Court found in favor of Bommai and laid down guidelines for future imposition of President's Rule. Most notably, the decision mandated that as a routine matter, state governments must be given the opportunity to prove their majority in a state legislature before being dismissed

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[143] Since the BJP and Congress remain the two main poles around which Indian electoral politics revolves, coalition politics has not changed those parties' incentives to meddle in each others' governments. Congress will not in the foreseeable future ally with the BJP. Therefore, there is little to prevent it from interfering with BJP-led state governments (and vice versa). As an example, in 2005, the Governor of Jharkhand, Syed Sibtey Razi, a Congressman, called on the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader Shibu Soren to form the government, despite the fact that the BJP was the largest party in the state legislature and claimed to command the support of a legislative majority. The Shibu Soren government quickly fell, and the BJP formed a government under Arjun Munda. The governor was widely criticized for attempting to keep the BJP out of power and install a government headed by a Congress ally.

[144] Only 37% of instances of President's Rule (42 of 112) involve the Centre dismissing its own state governments.

by the Centre. In theory, the Bommai decision made abuse of Article 356 more difficult by setting out guidelines for its use. But, since this 1994 decision occurred shortly after the advent of coalition politics in 1989, disentangling the effects of the Bommai decision and coalition politics is difficult. It is worth noting, however, that less than a year after the Bommai decision, four governments were dismissed, two (Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat) under highly questionable circumstances.[145]

Just as it was important to show that politicians rightly perceived that SPM government would persist in the pre-coalition era, it is also important to show that in the post-coalition period expectations coincide with reality. By 1996, observers had also noted both the decline of Congress and regionalization of the party system, neither of which was favorable to the prospect of future SPM governments (Pai 1996; Nigam 1996). For politicians as well, the 1996 election was unequivocal proof that the era of SPM governments had ended and that the coalition era had arrived. Today, politicians take the persistence of coalition government for granted (Thakurta and Raghuraman 2004; Chakravarty 2006), as no party has come close to an SPM in more than a decade and a half.

Furthermore, India's two largest parties have adopted electoral strategies that effectively preclude either from winning a single-party majority. Both parties' current electoral strategies are highly dependent on alliances. Congress and the BJP each know that it will lose national elections if it contests alone against a rival contesting in alliance. However, by continually contesting in alliance, both parties forfeit the possibility of winning an SPM. In 2004, of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, the BJP and Congress contested 364 (67%) and 417 (77%), respectively. However, the BJP forfeited its deposits in 57 seats and Congress in 82 seats,[146] indicating that they were competitive in only 307 and 335 seats, respectively. To win an SPM, the BJP would have to win nearly 90% of the seats in which it did not forfeit its deposit and Congress over 80%.

6. Changing payoffs and changing political behavior

The previous sections showed how payoffs (and perceptions about these payoffs) changed dramatically from the period of SPM government to the period of coalition government. More specifically, payoffs for regional and national parties converged with the onset of coalition politics. Is there evidence that politicians' behavior changed as a consequence? Indeed, behavior changed most notably in the realm of party founding. Throughout modern Indian political history there has never been a shortage of new parties. New parties are always emerging. But, during the period of single-party majority government, politicians demonstrated a preference for founding national parties over regional parties (see Table 6.5). Taking the party system in 1952 as a baseline, 37 new parties winning more than 0.20% of the vote appeared in Election Commission of India reports on national elections from 1957 to 1989.[147] A "new" party is any party that appears in any of the ECI reports for the first time from 1957 through 1989. Any party appearing

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[145] See Praveen Swami, "Protecting secularism and federal fair play." *Frontline* Vol 14, No 22, November 1-14, 1997. http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/fline/fl1422/14220170.htm, Accessed April 27, 2008.

[146] Each candidate must put down a deposit when filing nomination papers. Any candidate who secures less than one sixth of votes cast forfeits this deposit.

[147] I include the 1989 election report because parties that competed in the 1989 election were founded before the election, during the period of single-party majority government.

in 1952 is not considered new since it was founded prior to the first elections, when the type of government (single-party majority or coalition) that would emerge from elections was unclear. Party splits count as new parties, but parties that simply change names (e.g., when the Janata Party (Secular) became the Lok Dal) do not count.

During the course of 37 years of SPM government, 24 significant regional parties were founded. Over the course of only fifteen years of coalition government since then, a nearly identical number of significant regional parties were founded. However, there are two major differences between the SPM and coalition government eras. The first is the number of national parties founded: thirteen under SPM government, only two during coalition government. In other words, during the coalition era, virtually all of the new parties founded have been regional parties, whereas under SPM government, there was a mix of both regional and national parties founded. Second, under the SPM government most national parties were reasonably large in their inaugural elections (more than 5%) while many of the regional parties were quite small (less than 0.5%), whereas the opposite has been true since the advent of coalition government. No national parties founded have won more than 5% of the vote, while most regional parties have won more than 0.5% in their debut elections.

One objection to this characterization of the SPM government period as one in which politicians demonstrated a clear preference for national parties is that many of the "new" parties founded during this time were not really "new." The "new" national parties include a large number of parties reconstituted from older parties that featured a similar cast of characters in the top leadership. But, this is, in fact, is precisely the point. Despite repeated instances of parties splitting and disintegrating, political leaders routinely attempted to reconstruct *national* parties. This stands in marked contrast to the coalition era, during which political leaders have made no such similar attempts to reconstitute old parties into new national parties. Looking back from the present day, perhaps it seems obvious that the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (formerly a national party) should reconstitute itself as a new national party in the guise of the BJP after the collapse of the Janata Party. But, the decision to found the BJP as a national party was, in fact, a choice. Also, many former socialists who were once part of national parties—Socialist Party, Janata Party, Janata Dal—have happily struck out on their own as leaders of regional parties during the coalition period.

7. Alternative explanations

Having presented my argument about why coalition government caused regional parties' vote shares to increase dramatically in the 1990s in India, I conclude the chapter by considering alternative explanations for the dramatic spike in support for regional parties. I consider four alternative explanations: changing voter preferences, the decline of Congress, the "Mandalization" of politics, and decentralization.

7.1 Voter preferences

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that voter preferences for regional parties are not the root cause of regional party success. However, this possibility should be taken seriously. Is there any evidence that voter preferences changed in the 1990s in favor of regional parties? Recall

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Figure 6.2, which showed constant levels of support for "old" regional parties. For 20 years, from 1984 to 2004, the aggregate vote share for the same set of seventeen regional parties founded prior to 1989 barely changed. The massive increase in support for regional parties during the 1990s reflects increasing support for "other" parties—the micro-parties (whose support remained miniscule) and the newly founded regional parties, many of which were fragments from Congress and the Janata Dal. If the spike in regional party success were the product of changing voter preferences, then why would the only beneficiaries of these changing preferences be newly founded regional parties and not the regional parties already in existence? This is all the more puzzling because many parties actively associated with ethno-nationalism and demands for decentralization—DMK, Telugu Desam, Akali Dal—are precisely the "old" regional parties whose vote shares did not increase in the 1990s. Instead, the fact that the increase in support for regional parties was driven by newly founded parties corroborates my contention that voters follow politicians. The spike in support for regional parties resulted from the decisions that politicians made about founding and joining regional parties since the early- and mid-1990s.

7.2 Congress' decline

The second alternative hypothesis is that Congress' decline led directly to increase in support for regional parties. There are two possible ways to theorize Congress' role. One is direct: Congress' decline directly caused the rise of regional parties. It is this alternative hypothesis that I wish to address and refute here. The second way to theorize Congress' role is how I have framed it in section 1.3. For a variety of reasons, Congress lost votes between 1984 and 1989, to the benefit of the two main national parties, BJP and Janata Dal. As a result of the party's losses and the BJP and Janata Dal's successful seat-sharing agreement, Congress lost its legislative majority. The onset of coalition government changed the payoffs associated with membership in a regional party, spurring politicians to establish new regional parties. Then, after the shift to coalition government, some new regional parties directly benefited from Congress' decline by luring voters away from Congress or by splitting from the party itself. But this occurred only after coalition government had changed payoffs faced by politicians.

This section will refute the first hypothesis, that Congress' decline directly caused the rise of regional parties. I do so by showing that the latter explanation—Congress' indirect role in bringing about regional party success through coalition government—is more consistent with the data than the former. Congress lost votes to regional parties only *after* the onset of coalition government had spurred the founding of new regional parties and initiated the increase in regional party success. First and foremost, Congress' initial weakening took place between 1984 and 1991, when it lost 11.7% of the vote. During this time, regional party vote shares did not increase. Section 1.3 showed how the most likely beneficiaries of the party's decline between 1984 and 1989 were the Janata Dal and the BJP. Figure 6.5 shows state-wise changes in the Congress' vote share from 1989 to 1991 plotted against similar changes for the regional parties.[148] As with Figure 6.3, there are very few states in the upper left quadrant to indicate that Congress lost where regional parties gained. The only states in this quadrant are Gujarat and Haryana. However, Figure 6.6, which plots changes in Congress vote shares against changes in

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[148] Figures 6.5 and 6.6 exclude Punjab. Because of the ongoing insurgency there, the vote shares for the main regional party, Shiromani Akali Dal, were abnormally low.

BJP vote shares, shows not only that the BJP improved its performance almost across the board between 1989 and 1991, but also that many places where Congress declined are the same places where the BJP picked up votes. These figures suggest that when Congress lost votes between 1989 and 1991, it lost them to a national party, the BJP, rather than to regional parties. This is entirely consistent with conventional wisdom that the BJP benefited not only from the agitation surrounding the Ram temple but also from the caste-based mobilization associated with the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report.

After 1991, Congress' decline in votes can be attributed in large part to regional parties winning voters away from Congress. But it is important to note that this happened well *after* the advent of coalition politics. By the 1996 election, when Congress suffered another sharp drop in its vote share (7.6%), there was little doubt in anyone's mind (except for a few wishful thinkers in Congress) that coalition politics would be a permanent fixture in Indian political life. Congress' post-1991 decline is more consistent with a story about coalition politics. If regional party success were really rooted in something that Congress had done—its organizational decay, postures on Mandal or the Babri Masjid, or a scandal like Bofors—that pushed its voters in the direction of regional parties and therefore spurred their success, why did regional parties not benefit before 1996? Why were national parties the beneficiaries of Congress decline from 1984 to 1991 and regional parties more so afterwards? What changed was coalition politics.

In 1996, Congress for the first time appears to have shed a substantial number of votes to regional parties. Congress' most notable losses came in Tamil Nadu (- 24.3%) and Haryana (-14.58%), where the party suffered major splits with the formation of the Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) and the Haryana Vikas Congress. Other major Congress losses came in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where the party may have lost a large number of votes to fragments from the Janata Dal—the Samata Party in Bihar and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh. Losses in Uttar Pradesh may also have come at the expense of two small and (barely) national parties, the BSP and All India Indira Congress (Tiwari). In some places the BJP may also have continued to be a beneficiary of former Congress voters.

The picture of Congress decline from 1991 to 1996 is therefore that it benefited a wide variety of parties—regional and national Congress splinters, regional parties with no roots in Congress, and perhaps even national parties. In other words, once coalition politics prevailed, Congress' decline redounded to all types of parties, including regional parties. Prior to the onset of coalition politics, however, only national parties had benefited: hence the primacy of coalitions, rather than Congress' decline, in explaining the rise of regional parties in the 1990s.

7.3 Mandalization of politics

Another alternative hypothesis that I consider is the impact of the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report in 1990. Conventional wisdom suggests that the *mandalization* of politics (i.e., fallout from implementation of the Mandal Commission Report) was the transformation of the party system in North India into one that was increasingly and more explicitly oriented around caste. Caste polarization purportedly led to a large-scale sorting of voters into parties according to caste: the upper castes into the BJP; OBCs and intermediate castes into the Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)), and Indian

National Lok Dal (INLD) as well as in small parties such as the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Apna Dal; and SCs into the BSP and Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJSP). The caste polarization associated with Mandal by almost all accounts benefited the BJP and many OBC-dominated parties. On the one hand, the BJP appears to have won away much of the upper-caste vote bank from Congress. On the other hand, caste-based politics hampered the BJP's rise by limiting the ability of its Hindu-based appeals to win over sections of the OBCs and pushing many OBC communities toward OBC-based regional parties.[149] Meanwhile, the BSP solidified its position, at least in Uttar Pradesh, as the SCs' preferred party. However, there are problems with citing the Mandal-inspired caste-based mobilization as the central driver of regional party success in the 1990s. First, how can Mandal explain the rise of regional parties across India when its effects have been limited to a specific portion of the country? Second, why would the mandalization of politics inevitably lead to *regional* parties?

First, the Mandal hypothesis has limited applicability across India, which is problematic since regional parties have flourished throughout much of the country. The impact of Mandal was greatest in North India, and more specifically in the Hindi belt. Elsewhere, implementation of the Mandal Commission Report failed to disrupt normal politics. South India pioneered use of caste-based reservations long before 1990, so introducing Mandal was nothing new there. In parts of eastern India, notably West Bengal and Orissa, the politics of caste and reservation have not yet caught on. However, since the early 1990s, important regional parties emerged in Tamil Nadu (MDMK, TMC(M), DMDK), West Bengal (AITC), Orissa (BJD), Maharashtra (NCP, MNS), Andhra Pradesh (TRS, PRP), and Karnataka (JD(S)), in precisely the areas where Mandal was a non-issue. At best, a Mandal-based explanation accounts for events in the Hindi belt.[150]

Second, although Mandal has had a profound impact on Indian politics, nothing inherent in the politics of Mandal lends itself to the rise of regional parties. The strongest argument in favor of a Mandal hypothesis would be that by shifting the emphasis of politics to caste, which is highly geographically concentrated, Mandal pushed politics toward regional parties. But, in fact, Mandal institutionalized caste on two-different levels, that of *jati* and that of mega-caste categories. Mandal increased incentives to organize around the category of OBC, which was defined in terms of individual *jatis*. *Jatis*, of course, are geographically concentrated, but there is ample evidence that *jati* was an integral part of pre-Mandal political mobilization in North India. The mega-caste category of OBC is not at all concentrated; instead, it is a pan-Indian category. Mandal therefore institutionalized identities that present counter-veiling pressures when it comes to the geographic breadth of a political party. Moreover, the regionalizing pressure (*jati*) was already important in politics, whereas the nationalizing pressure (mega-caste categories) was not. By increasing the salience of potentially pan-Indian mega-caste categories over *jati*, the

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[149] This statement should not be taken to mean that the BJP does not win a substantial number of votes from OBCs. Particularly during the early- and mid-1990s, the BJP won a large share of the OBC vote in North India, and in some states it still does (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh). But in other states, notably UP and Bihar, the party is very weak among a certain set of communities—Yadavs, Kurmis, Koeris—that are numerous in the OBC-dominated parties.
[150] Since regional parties are very weak in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, and Uttarakhand, Mandal really carries weight in only three Hindi-belt states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Admittedly, these states account for over 20% of the country's population, but as noted above, even in these states it is unclear why an institution that should have at least partially entrenched a pan-Indian caste category would have led to more *regional* parties.

mandalization of politics should have laid the groundwork for *national* parties, rather than regional ones.

7.4 Decentralization

A final hypothesis worth considering is decentralization. Several authors have linked decentralization to regional parties and party system denationalization (Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Brancati 2008). In particular, Chhibber and Kollman explicitly argue that fiscal decentralization in the 1990s prompted the regionalization of India's party system. However, this section suggests three reasons, based on empirical evidence from the Indian case, why it is doubtful that decentralization can actually explain the rise of regional parties in the 1990s.

First, in describing India's decentralization in the 1990s, Chhibber and Kollman focus heavily on *de facto* decentralization that occurred as a result of economic liberalization that began in the early 1990s. Chhibber and Kollman rightly point to this as an important instance of decentralization. When the economy liberalized many decisions formerly made by the central government—particularly regarding investment—were removed from government altogether. As a result, states in India found themselves competing for private investment, *de facto* giving states additional autonomy to pursue policies directed at increasing state-level economic growth (McCarten 2003). But the decentralization in investment and industrial policy that followed liberalization was not accompanied by other meaningful forms of decentralization.

With respect to the formal powers allocated to the states and to the national government, India did not decentralize. The Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists the powers formally assigned to the central government, the states, and to both the states and the central government concurrently. Despite minor changes over the years, the distribution of powers between the Centre and the states remains fundamentally unchanged, retaining the "centripetal bias in India's federal structures" (Rao and Singh 2005: 60). The major constitutional change that took place in the 1990s was passage of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which mandated creation of local government in India and constitutionally assigned certain powers to the local governments. This change did little to diminish the national government's power, since most powers devolved to the local governments came at the expense of the state governments.[151] Although the states lost some decision-making power to the localities during the 1990s, the Indian party system became increasingly centered on India's states, not its localities.[152] Beyond formal reallocation of power to lower levels of government, Rao and Singh also show that there has been no trend toward increasing transfers to the states as a proportion of Central revenue. McCarten (2003) shows that as a percentage of GDP, states' total revenues have not changed significantly from 1990-91 to 1997-98, nor have central transfers as a percentage of GDP or total states expenditure as a percentage of GDP.

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[151] Even then, Chaudhuri (2006) points out that in practice, actual levels of decentralization have varied dramatically across states. In most states, local governments remain virtually powerless as the states have not relinquished substantive decision-making power or resources to local government.

[152] Vote shares for independents have not gone up during this period. If the party system were increasingly localized, it would be reasonable to expect a surge in support for independent candidates.

If decentralization was most acute in arenas directly affected by economic liberalization, the question then is whether this type of decentralization alone was sufficient to produce massive changes in the party system, even as the rest of the government remained nearly as centralized as ever. Although India's economy has grown rapidly in the past decade, much of that growth has been skewed toward urban areas. Standards of living in rural areas have risen much more slowly (if at all), and growth in the agricultural sector is much lower than in others. A majority of the Indian population, around 70%, still resides in rural areas and depends economically on agriculture (at least in part). For those whose livelihoods are not tied as closely to agriculture, large swathes of the poor and lower middle classes remain heavily dependent on state employment, as large private sector enterprises are yet to move much beyond India's cities. In areas where the average rural Indian interacts most with the state—education, state employment, health, law and order—no meaningful decentralization occurred during the 1990s when regional parties gained in strength.

Second, Chhibber and Kollman's argument cannot explain variation across their cases, only within. The authors carefully document how, within each case, changes in the nationalization of the party system follow changes in fiscal decentralization. They therefore show that their argument is consistent with observed inter-temporal variation. But fiscal decentralization cannot account for cross-national variation. According to a variety of measures taken from Rodden (2004), India is about as fiscally decentralized as the United States and nowhere nearly as decentralized as Canada (see Table 6.6). Rodden's measures include the proportion of state and local expenditures as a share of total government expenditures (row 1), own-source state and local revenue as a proportion of total government revenues (row 2), grants plus revenue sharing as a proportion of total state and local revenue (row 3), and a measure of borrowing autonomy constructed by the Inter-American Development Bank (row 4). The first three measures all place Canada, India, the U.S., and the U.K. in the same descending rank-order position from most decentralized to least decentralized. The measure of borrowing autonomy presents a slightly different rank order, with the American states exercising more borrowing autonomy than either Indian states or Canadian provinces. Across all measures, however, the levels of regional party success (my measure) and the levels of party system nationalization (Chhibber and Kollman's measure) are inconsistent with levels of decentralization. Based on levels of decentralization, Canada should have the most denationalized party system, India and the U.S. should look very similar, and the U.K. should have the most nationalized party system of the four. Instead, the U.S. and India look very different from one another, and the U.K. and Canada—which should be the most different in terms of party system nationalization—look fairly similar.[153] Despite being one of the more decentralized countries in the world, Canada's party system is only modestly denationalized, whereas India, a fairly centralized federation according Rao and Singh (2005), has one of the least nationalized party systems in the world.

Finally, Chhibber and Kollman (2004) highlight one observable implication of their argument that is confirmed based on recent election results. Following the logic of their argument, they explain that subnational units that are more dependent on the central government for financial support should exhibit higher levels of support for national parties. As evidence, they cite

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[153] Chhibber and Kollman's data on Canada stop before the merger of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Reform Party, which would have substantially nationalized the polity. Therefore, if their measure were updated, Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. would almost certainly look very similar.

national party strength in India's northeastern states (208) and Union territories (207-208). All of the states in India's northeast are called special category states, that receive more financial assistance from the Centre than other states, and Union territories are governed directly by the Centre. Indeed, during the course of much of the last 30 years, national parties have won a substantial majority of seats from parliamentary constituencies in these special category states and Union territories. But looking at the support for national parties in these constituencies based on vote shares presents an alternative picture. In fact, in state-level elections regional parties receive the least support (and national parties the most) in non-special category states that are the least financially dependent on the Centre (see Figure 6.7). Looking at vote shares in national-level elections in individual Union territories reveals that some Union territories give consistently strong support to national parties (Delhi, Chandigarh), while others do not (Lakshadweep, Puducherry). Meanwhile, in terms of vote shares, the states in India's northeast typically provide more support for regional parties and less support for national parties that the all-India figures. All of this is contrary to Chhibber and Kollman's prediction and suggests that decentralization is not responsible for the rise in support for regional parties in the 1990s.

Table 6.1 National governments, 1952-2008

Prime minister	Election year	Party	% Seats	Government type
Single-party majority era				
Jawaharlal Nehru	1952	Congress	74%	Single-party majority
Jawaharlal Nehru	1957	Congress	75%	Single-party majority
Jawaharlal Nehru	1962	Congress	73%	Single-party majority
Lal Bahadur Shastri	1962	Congress	73%	Single-party majority
Indira Gandhi	1962	Congress	73%	Single-party majority
Indira Gandhi	1967	Congress	54%	Single-party majority
Indira Gandhi	1967	Congress	43%	Minority
Indira Gandhi	1971	Congress	68%	Single-party majority
Morarji Desai	1977	Janata Party	55%	Single-party majority
Charan Singh	1977	Janata Party (Secular)	17%	Minority
Indira Gandhi	1980	Congress	67%	Single-party majority
Rajiv Gandhi	1984	Congress	77%	Single-party majority
Coalition era				
V.P. Singh	1989	Janata Dal	27%	Coalition
Chandra Shekhar	1989	Samajwadi Janata Party	11%	Minority
P.V. Narasimha Rao	1991	Congress	46%	Minority
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1996	BJP	30%	Coalition
H.D. Deve Gowda	1996	Janata Dal	8%	Coalition
I.K. Gujral	1996	Janata Dal	8%	Coalition
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1998	BJP	34%	Coalition
Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1999	BJP	34%	Coalition
Manmohan Singh	2004	Congress	27%	Coalition
Manmohan Singh	2009	Congress	38%	Coalition

Note: I report the party's seat shares at election time and do not take into account subsequent bye-elections or vacancies. I only take into account party splits when they affect whether a party has a legislative majority.

Source: Seats in Lok Sabha come from reports from the Election Commission of India; Congress seats from 1969-1971 and Janata Party (Secular) seats from 1979 to 1980 come from Hardgrave and Kochanek (2000), p. 254 and p. 291, respectively.

Table 6.2 Changes in contestation patterns for national parties, 1984-1989

	Congress	*National party opposition*
Vote %	-8.6%	+ 9.4%
Seats won	-218	+ 213
Seats contested with coordinated opposition	--	+ 136
Seats contested with fragmented opposition	--	-116

Note: The national party opposition consists of the BJP, Janata Party, and Lok Dal in 1984 and the BJP and Janata Dal in 1989. Seats with coordinated opposition are seats in which only one party from the main national opposition parties contested. Seats with fragmented opposition are ones in which candidates from more than one major national opposition party contested.

Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Table 6.3 Electoral change among major national parties and regional parties, 1984-1996

	1984-89	*1989-91*	*1991-96*
INC	-8.6%	-3.1%	-7.6%
BJP	**4.0%**	**8.7%**	**0.2%**
Janata	**5.5%**	-6.1%	-7.0%
Regional	-3.3%	**1.7%**	**7.3%**

Note: Instances when a party (group of parties) increased its (their) vote share are in bold.

Source: Election Commission of India and author calculation.

Table 6.4 Decision theoretic model of payoffs to joining a small national party versus a regional party

Time	Present	Future	Future	Future
Opposition fragmented	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dominant party in united opposition party	--	--	Other party	Own party
Payoff to member of small national party	U_1	U_1	$U_2 - U_3$	U_2
Payoff to member of regional party	U_1	U_1	U_1	U_1

Note: Assume that $U_2 > U_1 > 0$.

Table 6.5 Party founding in the SPM and coalition government eras

	1952-1989	1989-2004
Elections	8	5
New parties founded	37	27
Regional parties founded (winning more than 0.5% in debut election)	24 (12)	25 (21)
National parties founded (winning more than 5% in debut election)	13 (9)	2 (0)

Notes: Data are from Lok Sabha elections.
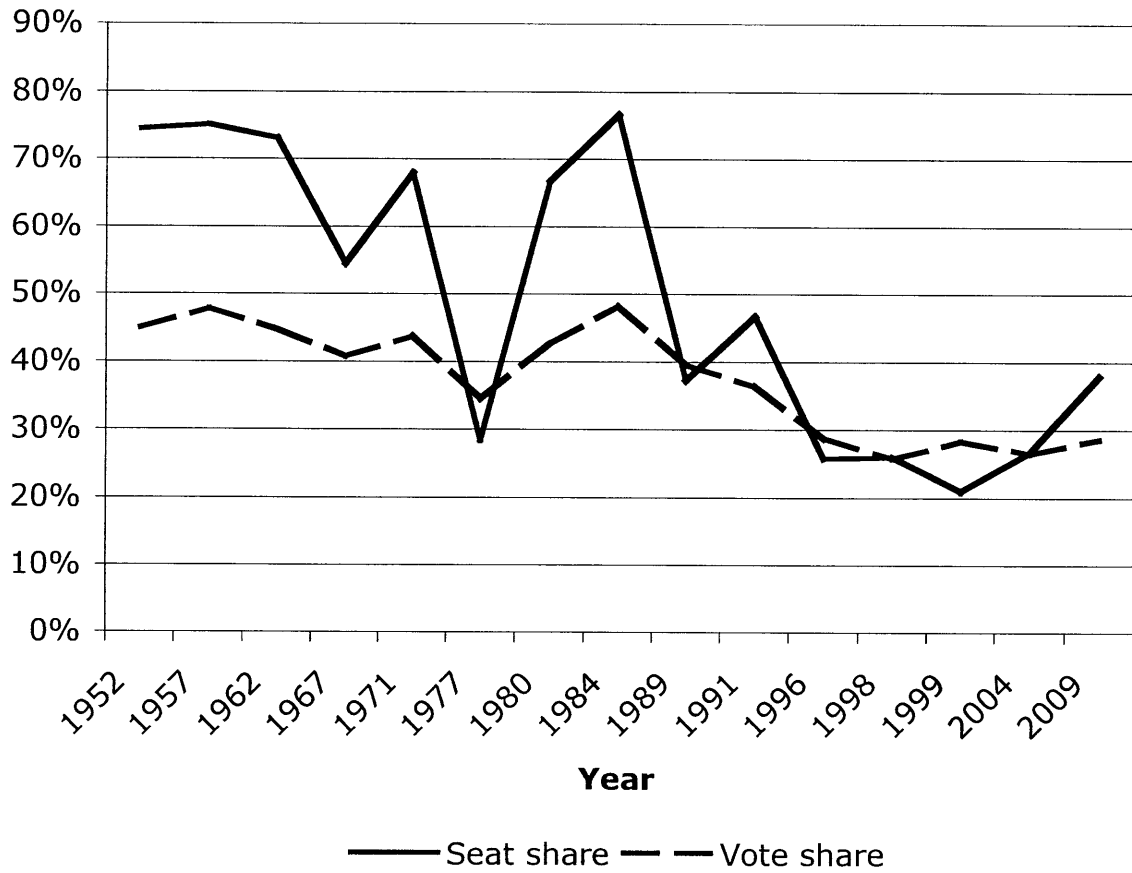
Source: ECI and author calculations.

Table 6.6 Measures of fiscal decentralization in Canada, India, U.K., and U.S.

		Canada	India	U.S.	U.K
(1)	State-local expenditures / total govt. expenditure	0.65	0.53	0.49	0.29
(2)	Own-sources state-local revenue / total govt. revenue	0.51	0.42	0.33	0.09
(3)	Grants + revenue sharing / state-local revenue	0.32	0.34	0.42	0.74
(4)	Borrowing autonomy	2.7	3.0	2.5	1.5
(5)	Regional party vote %	11.5%	44.2%	2.4%	9.3%
(6)	Party system denationalization	≈ 1.5	≈ 4	≈ 0.5	≈ 0.5

Note: The measure of party system nationalization is taken from Chhibber and Kollman (2004). They provide graphs with their measure of party system denationalization over time but not the actual data. The values are for the most recent data points in the graphs and are approximate values based on the graphs.

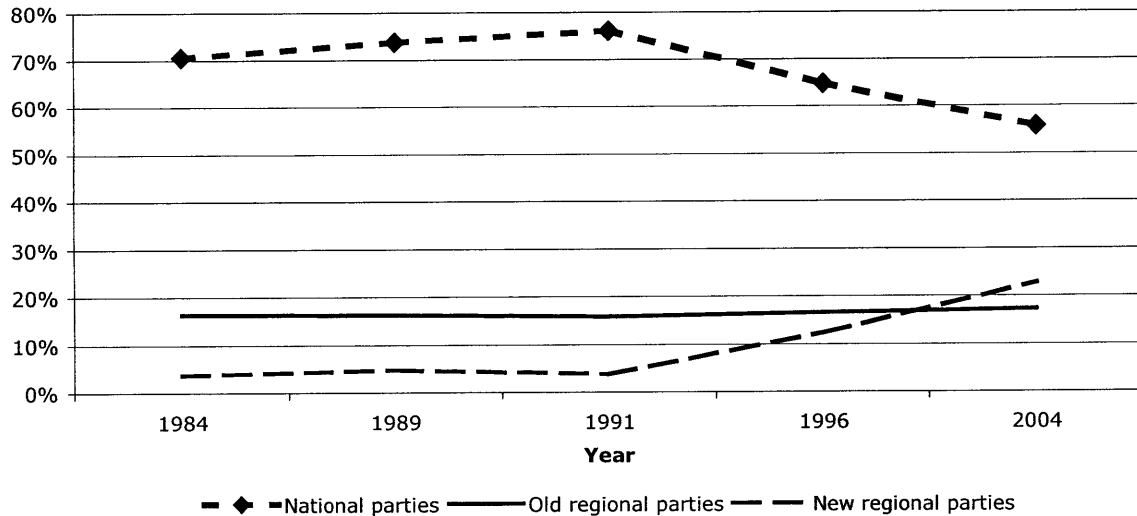Source: Rodden (2004: 483), rows 1-4; author calculations, row 5; Chhibber and Kollman (2004: 166), row 6.

Figure 6.1 Congress' electoral performance

Note: Data are for Lok Sabha elections.

Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Figure 6.2 Vote shares by party type: 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 2004

Note: National parties include all parties classified as national except that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) and Republican Party (RPI) of India are excluded from the category in 1989, and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is included in 1991. These changes are made to keep the same parties in the same row across time, such that the CPI(M) and RPI are always in the row for major regional parties and the BSP in the row for national parties. The major regional parties founded prior to 1989 election are: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Forward Bloc, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Kerala Congress, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak, Mizo National Front, Muslim League, Peasants and Workers Party, Republican Party of India, Republican Party of India (Khobragade), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Shiromani Akali Dal, Shiv Sena, and Telugu Desam. Data are for Lok Sabha elections.

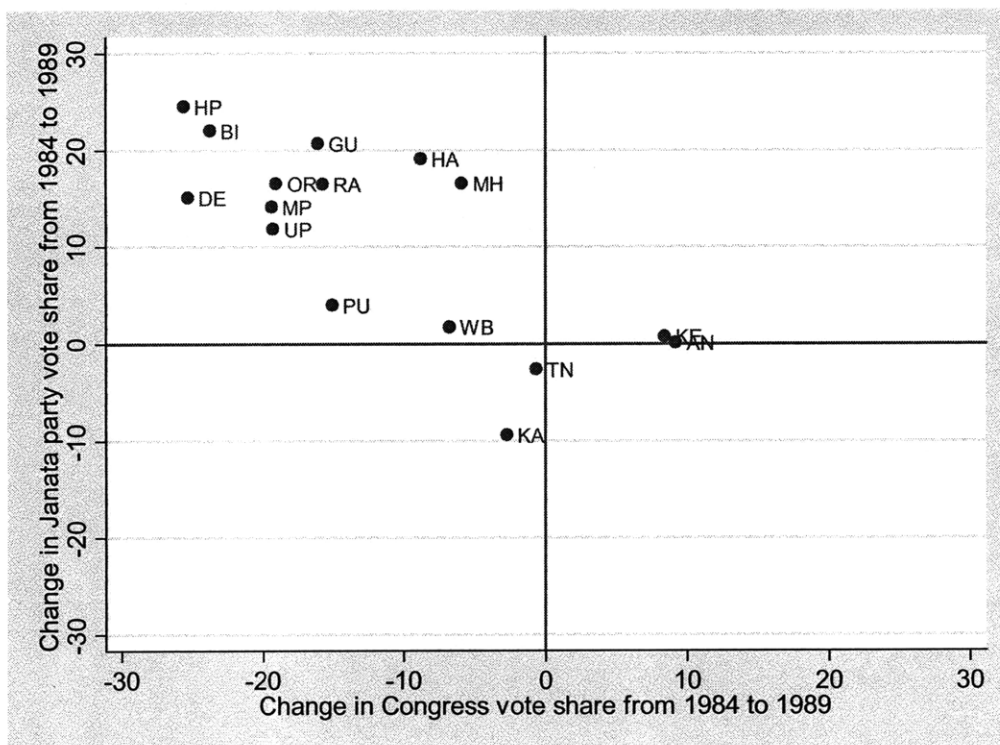Source: ECI and author calculations.

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Figure 6.3. State-wise change in Congress and regional party vote shares from 1984-1989
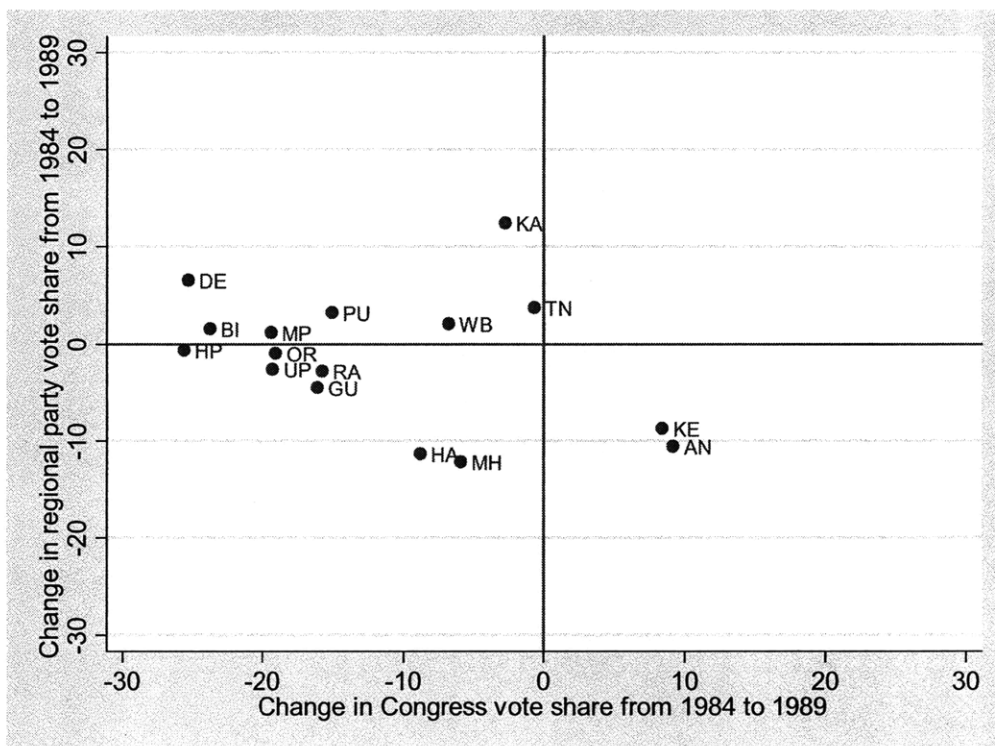
Note: The y-axis includes vote shares for all regional parties (including independent candidates). Data are for Lok Sabha elections. AN=Andhra Pradesh, BI=Bihar, DE=Delhi, GU=Gujarat, HA=Haryana, HP=Himachal Pradesh, KA=Karnataka, KE=Kerala, MH=Maharashtra, MP=Madhya Pradesh, OR=Orissa, PU=Punjab, RA=Rajashtan, TN=Tamil Nadu, UP=Uttar Pradesh, WB=West Bengal.

Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Figure 6.4 State-wise change in Congress and Janata vote shares from 1984-1989

Note: The y-axis (Janata party) refers to the change in the vote share between the Janata Dal in 1989 and the combined vote shares of the Lok Dal and Janata Party in 1984. Data are for Lok Sabha elections. AN=Andhra Pradesh, BI=Bihar, DE=Delhi, GU=Gujarat, HA=Haryana, HP=Himachal Pradesh, KA=Karnataka, KE=Kerala, MH=Maharashtra, MP=Madhya Pradesh, OR=Orissa, PU=Punjab, RA=Rajashtan, TN=Tamil Nadu, UP=Uttar Pradesh, WB=West Bengal.

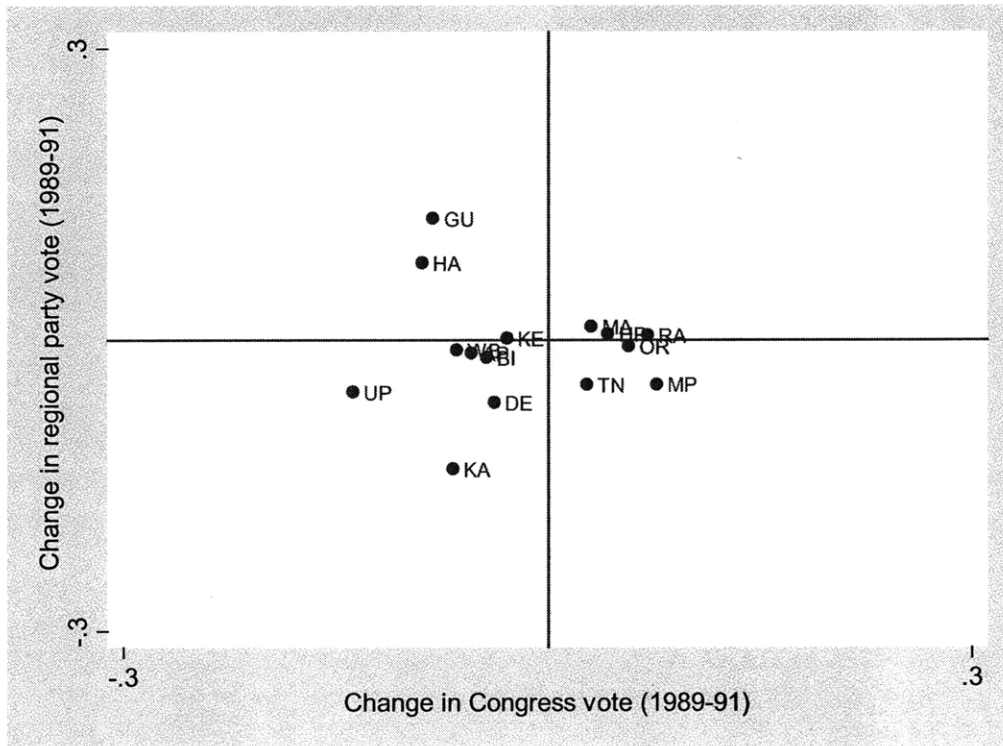Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Figure 6.5 State-wise change in Congress and regional party vote shares from 1989-91

Note: The y-axis includes vote shares for all regional parties (including independent candidates). Data are for Lok Sabha elections. AN=Andhra Pradesh, BI=Bihar, DE=Delhi, GU=Gujarat, HA=Haryana, HP=Himachal Pradesh, KA=Karnataka, KE=Kerala, MH=Maharashtra, MP=Madhya Pradesh, OR=Orissa, RA=Rajashtan, TN=Tamil Nadu, UP=Uttar Pradesh, WB=West Bengal.

Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Figure 6.6 State-wise change in Congress and BJP vote shares from 1989-91
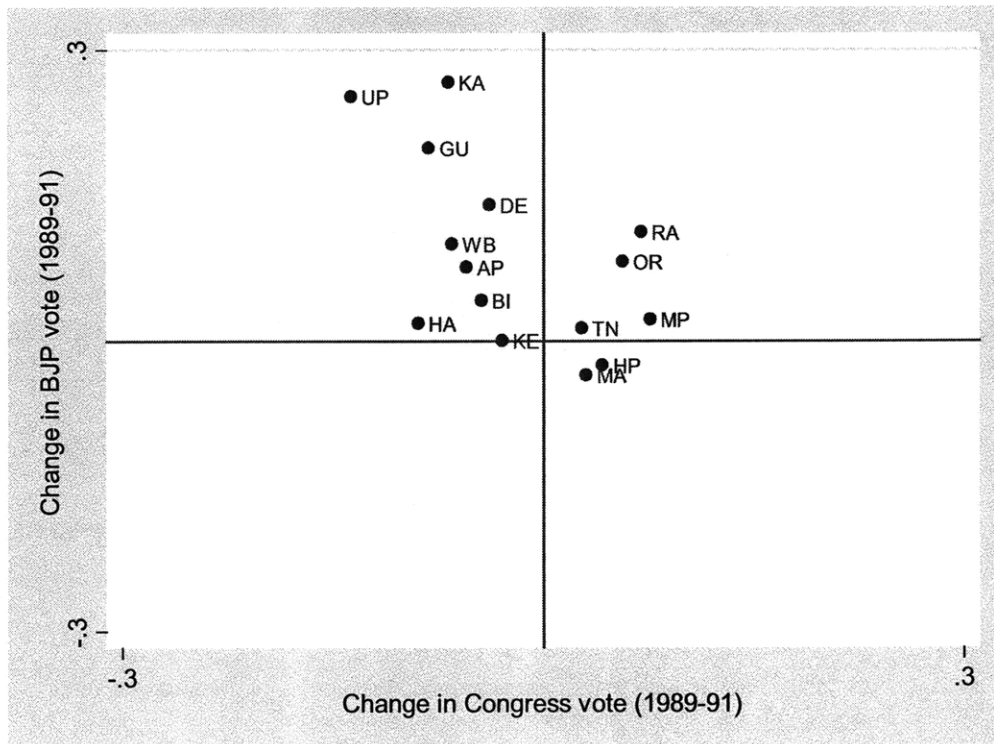
Note: Data are for Lok Sabha elections. AN=Andhra Pradesh, BI=Bihar, DE=Delhi, GU=Gujarat, HA=Haryana, HP=Himachal Pradesh, KA=Karnataka, KE=Kerala, MH=Maharashtra, MP=Madhya Pradesh, OR=Orissa, RA=Rajashtan, TN=Tamil Nadu, UP=Uttar Pradesh, WB=West Bengal

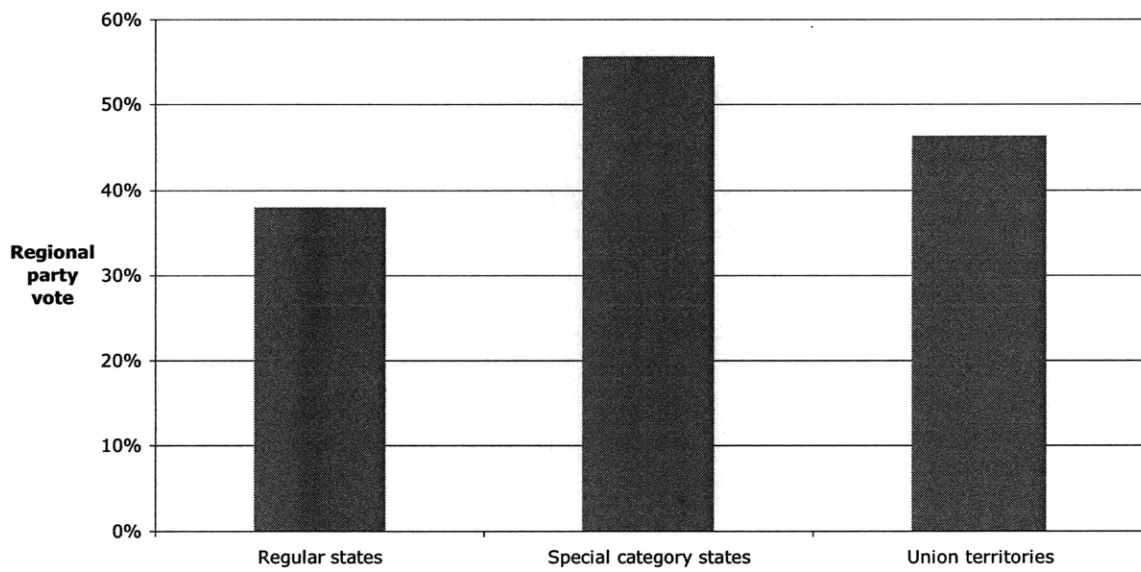Source: Election Commission of India and author calculations.

Figure 6.7 Regional party vote shares by subnational unit, 1977-2004

Note: Data come from Vidhan Sabha elections. Figures for each type of subnational unit are regional party vote shares, averaging across each election in each subnational unit.

Source: Election Commission of India and author's calculations.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This dissertation has advanced arguments on two fronts. On one front, it has introduced a new variable into the study of party systems: rule of law. In so doing, I have attempted to change how political scientists think about party system formation across much of the world. Until now, voters have been at the center of almost all scholarly accounts of party system formation. Most have explained party system formation either through sociological arguments about where voters' preferences come from or institutional arguments about how institutions translate voters' interests and preferences into the party system. Only very recently has some research turned its attention to elites and how they shape party systems (Brancati 2008; Hicken 2009). But in these studies, the emphasis on elite decision-making does not reflect a conscious shift in theoretical orientation away from voters and in favor of politicians as the most important actors in party system formation.

This study argues that such a shift is indeed appropriate in much of the world, thereby advancing a very different account of party system formation than is typically found in the existing literature. However, the dissertation goes beyond simply providing an alternative account. It goes one step further by explaining when party systems ought to be viewed as a function of *voters'* preferences and decisions (i.e., under strong rule of law) and when they ought to be viewed as a function of *politicians'* preferences and decisions (i.e., under weak rule of law). When the rule of law is weak and citizens do not expect the state to meet the commitments it lays out, then voters are less concerned about using their vote to express their policy preferences. They are instead concerned about using their vote to influence which politicians will be in charge of implementing state policy. If voters care only about the individuals that they elect and are largely indifferent to the type of party for which they vote, then responsibility for the shape of the party system rests largely with politicians. Party systems take shape based on what types of parties and how many parties politicians are willing to establish and join.

By contrast, when the rule of law is strong, then familiar arguments from the literature apply. Party systems under strong rule of law reflect what voters, rather than politicians, prefer. Understanding party systems requires understanding where voters' preferences come from and how formal institutions mediate those preferences. In short, the theoretical contribution of the dissertation's first half is to link weak rule of law on the one hand to a highly candidate-centered brand of politics on the other hand. Candidate-centered politics in turn leads to party systems whose contours depend mainly on elite behavior and decision-making.

On the other front, this dissertation looks specifically at regional parties in India, with an eye toward regional parties more generally. The treatment of Indian regional parties builds on the dissertation's argument about the rule of law and party systems. Since India is a weak rule of law democracy, choices made by politicians should determine the shape of India's party system. When applied to the question of regional parties in India, the underlying question that needs answering is why so many politicians opt to join regional parties rather than why so many voters prefer to vote for regional parties. Previous studies of regional parties in other countries, most of which have strong rule of law, examine the latter question. This study, focusing on a weak rule of law setting, approaches the topic of regional parties by focusing on politicians. As such, it arrives at somewhat different conclusions from previous studies. In India, the important factors

that shape politicians' decisions about whether to join regional or national parties are the geographical concentration of politically salient groups and the frequency of national-level coalition governments.

When groups are concentrated, the costs associated with establishing national parties are particularly high. In response, many political entrepreneurs opt to join regional parties. The geographic concentration of groups in India—mainly caste groups, but also linguistic and personality-based groups—has ensured that a substantial number of politicians have always preferred founding regional parties. Meanwhile, coalition government at the national level provides small regional parties with the opportunity to participate in government and benefit from the perks of power. As such, coalition government entices many politicians to join regional parties when they otherwise would not. Although the concentration of caste groups and the advent of coalition government are specific to India, these arguments provide more general insight into when regional parties will be successful in weak rule of law party systems. When the preponderance of salient groups is geographically concentrated and when small parties have access to national level power, then regional parties should be particularly strong.

I summarize the dissertation's main arguments into three claims. 1) Weak rule of law produces a highly candidate-centered brand of electoral politics, while strong rule of law promotes far more party-centered politics. 2) When the rule of law is weak and politics is therefore candidate-centered, then elite-level behavior (i.e., the behavior of politicians) shapes party systems far more than mass-level preferences. 3) Regional parties figure prominently into the Indian party system because of a) the geographic concentration of caste groups and b) frequent national-level coalition governments.

Having recapitulated the dissertation's main arguments, I use the rest of this chapter to discuss the implications of this research, both from the perspective of how the rule of law influences party systems as well as from the perspective of regional parties. I conclude by noting avenues for future research raised by this study's conclusions.

1. Rule of law

Linking the rule of law to electoral politics and party systems has important practical and theoretical implications, not only for the study politics in India, but also for the study of politics in other parts of the world where the rule of law is often weak, from Latin America to Africa to Asia. From a theoretical standpoint, the most obvious contribution of this research is the introduction of a new variable into the study of party systems. This dissertation links the goals, capabilities, and performance of the state to party system formation and aspects of voting behavior. To my knowledge, this is the first study to draw such a connection.

This argument is an important one because it provides leverage in explaining obvious but largely unexplained variation. On the one hand, in most of the developed world, politics is highly ideological and based around parties. Although many in the West might decry the increasing personalization of politics, few political leaders in developed countries can sustain political parties or movements entirely on their own. While the party systems in advanced industrial countries may no longer be "frozen" as they once were, they nevertheless exhibit high levels of

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stability over time. On the other hand, politics and party systems in much of the developing world are everything that politics in the West is not. Parties are frequently unideological, hyper-personalized, and highly fluid. Indeed, perhaps precisely because of these features, few scholars bother to study party systems in much of the developing world. Despite these fairly obvious differences between the developed and developing worlds, political science has developed few ideas about how to explain them. Rule of law may be an answer and a helpful tool for thinking about why politics differs so dramatically across countries in different parts of the world.

Another contribution of this work is that it can potentially reconcile mass- and elite-driven approaches to politics. Scholars often take very different approaches to studying politics, some assuming highly top-down processes driven by elites, with others adopting bottom-up approaches that focus on the role of the masses. My argument about the rule of law can potentially reconcile these two approaches, at least in the study of electoral politics. The theory outlined in the first half of the dissertation suggests that an elite-centered approach is more appropriate when the rule of law is weak, while a mass-based approach fits with strong rule of law contexts.

For future research, the distinction between strong and weak rule of law democracies implies the need for caution in cross-national work. This dissertation suggests that the rule of law is not simply a control variable that exerts an independent effect on certain outcomes of interest. Rather, the rule of law effectively changes the nature of the game being played. Politicians establish and join parties for reasons that are often very different from the reasons why voters would vote for a party. Therefore, if politicians are the center-pieces of analysis in weak rule of law contexts and voters are the focus of analysis in strong rule of law contexts, then the variables at work in these cases may differ substantially. Scholars should therefore proceed with caution when comparing electoral politics in strong and weak rule of law contexts or when importing theories from one part of the world for application to countries half a world away. This does not mean that scholars should retreat to purely idiographic studies; it simply means that generalizability from one case to another should be proven rather than assumed.

Another major theoretical contribution of this work is the new paradigm that it suggests for modeling voting. Previous work treats voting as either a process through which voters try to influence policy-making or through which they engage in an exchange in return for goods or services. Instead, I conceptualize voting as insurance that voters take out in the event of a proverbial rainy day. Treating voting as insurance is not altogether different from traditional notions of clientelism and patronage, but it implies important differences. In this model of attribute voting, voters are not passive agents whose votes are bought away from them; instead they actively seek out the best "insurance" that they can find in an electoral market. This idea of voting also shifts focus away from the contractual aspects of clientelism and the attendant attention to monitoring and enforcement of the clientelistic bargain.

The argument about the rule of law also has important implications of a more practical nature. The first concerns the interpretation of electoral results. Typically, observers analyze elections for signs of mandates and attempt to read the public mood from election results. But in weak rule of law democracies, using elections for these ends may be a fruitless endeavor. This research suggests that elections should provide relatively little information about public opinion.

Furthermore, analysts should be particularly cautious about using the party system as a barometer of support for particular ideas and ideologies. For instance, the rise of the BJP in India in the 1980s and 1990s was widely read as evidence of the collapse of India's secular national identity. According to my argument, the proper interpretation of the BJP's rise is not that *voters* became increasingly attracted to the BJP, but rather that *politicians*—and good politicians in particular—became increasingly attracted to the BJP. This may have been because of the collapse of India's secular identity among a certain segment of society, or it might not. Even if it were, the BJP's rise only gives an indication of the mood of India's political elite, not necessarily its masses. This example comes from India, but similar questions can be raised about parties elsewhere in the world. Does the rise of Evo Morales' Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) necessarily reflect the rise of indigenous nationalism and anti-American sentiment among the average Bolivian? Does the dominance of secular political parties in Pakistan necessarily suggest a broad commitment to secularism? Perhaps, but perhaps not.

A second practical implication is that many unhealthy aspects of politics may actually stem from weak rule of law. In India, elite commentators frequently decry the criminalization of politics as well as ethnic politics, suggesting various cures for these ills. But treating these problems on their own may be akin to treating symptoms of an illness rather than the illness itself.[154] It may be that voters are willing to vote criminals into office because they prefer a criminal with local ties to the community over an upstanding candidate drawn from a far-away urban elite. More voters may simply find the former a more credible insurance policy than the latter. So too with ethnic voting, where the bonds of community may be important in shaping voters' inferences about which voters are most likely to assist them through favorable policy implementation. The better cure for many of these ills may be to allow voters the luxury of voting for ideas and policies. By strengthening the rule of law, voters can focus on what parties have to say, without having to worry whether those ideas will ever be implemented. Thus, instead of devising ways to get voters to vote the way that others think they should, the better investment may be in finding the best and quickest ways of improving policy implementation.

2. Regional parties

The second part of this dissertation examined regional parties in India. Theoretically, this part of the argument highlights the need to look at informal institutions and beliefs about politics when explaining party systems. One of the most important innovations in the study of parties and party systems over the past thirty years has been a close attention to the role of institutions. While no study of party systems can ignore them, formal institutions are often only part of the story. In the case of India, formal institutions helped make coalition government possible, which in turn led to the dramatic upsurge in support for regional parties. But, the advent of coalition government did not occur in response to formal institutional change. Nor was coalition government ever formally institutionalized. Yet, coalition government has exerted a powerful influence on the strategic calculations of politicians in India. Other studies would be well served by looking at informal institutions and norms that shape political behavior, particularly among elites.

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[154] Chandra (2004: 292) arrives at similar conclusions about how "the fear of ethnic politics may have blinded us to this deeper malaise in the character of the *states* in which such politics takes firm root."

On the practical side, the second part of the dissertation questions the pervasive pessimism surrounding regional parties. Scholars almost uniformly treat regional parties as evidence of potential secessionist conflict, the failure of nation-building projects, and the resilience of parochial identities. My reading of the Indian party system suggests that these concerns have little to do with the success of regional parties. Regional parties succeed in India thanks to the geography of the country's groups and the incentives that politicians have to cultivate small parties. It remains to be seen whether regional parties are, in fact, a political ill. And if they are, the source of their pathology is something altogether different from perennial concerns about nations and nationalism.

Were India a strong rule of law democracy, regional parties might still exist as important parts of the party system. Given India's size, ethnic heterogeneity, and growing economic disparities across regions, it is easy to imagine that many among the Indian electorate might endorse a regionalist agenda. But, for the time being, the success of regional parties does not reflect the success of such political platforms. If the success of regional parties should give observers reason to worry, it is because it reflects a widespread failure of party building. If politicians devoted considerably more time and effort to institutionalizing their parties and building an effective organization, then far fewer regional parties might exist. Instead, politicians might find the task of constructing and maintaining national parties far easier.

3. Future research

For scholars of India or those interested in regional parties, one of the most important questions that this study leaves unanswered is sub-national variation in Indian party systems. The variables cited in Chapters 5 and 6 are more or less constant across India; they cannot therefore explain why some states have highly regionalized party systems and others do not. One promising avenue suggested by Chapter 5 is to examine the role of caste. States with regional parties are frequently those in which parties with a very explicit and identifiable caste base have managed to break into the party system (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam), while states without regional parties are often those in which parties have somewhat muddled caste bases (Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat). One possibility is that caste demography shapes the likelihood of the emergence of parties with clear caste bases. Variation in the likelihood of producing caste-based parties could then influence the likelihood of a state giving rise to regional parties.

But, all regional parties are not explicitly caste based, and the success of non-caste based regional parties also requires explanation. Other potential avenues for research in this vein may include focusing on why some states have more consistently given rise to regional parties that splinter from major national parties (Orissa and West Bengal), while other states have rarely seen successful breakaway parties (Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh). Other questions that might require answers are why some states saw very early activity among ethno-regionalist politicians (Tamil Nadu and Punjab) or why the Left parties have effectively become regional parties. Given the many distinct party systems in India and the heterogeneity of the category "regional parties," an exhaustive explanation of sub-national variation in regional party success will almost certainly be very complex.

Because no one has previously explored the connection between the rule of law and party systems, this dissertation raises as many questions as it answers, opening up new avenues for research about how the rule of law shapes electoral politics and party systems. Some of the most interesting questions that it raises concern voting behavior under weak rule of law, politics in intermediate cases of rule of law, and the transition from weak to strong rule of law.

Voting behavior is one of the most heavily studied topics in political science. A vast literature has modeled vote choice as a function of myriad factors: electoral rules, policy views, socio-demographic characteristics, etc. Another large literature has modeled vote choice as a bargain between patrons and clients. Chapters 2 and 3 present a new paradigm for thinking about voting in weak rule of law contexts—attribute voting. This new paradigm raises new questions about vote choice. Above all, which of a politician's attributes matter most to voters when they make inferences about which candidate running for office represents the best "insurance policy"?

Chapter 2 identified community, *noblesse oblige*, and altruism as potential mechanisms on which voters base their inferences about which candidate is their best bet to secure favorable policy implementation. However, this dissertation does not adjudicate among these mechanisms or claim to have compiled an exhaustive list. Future research could attempt these tasks, determining precisely which mechanisms are foremost in voters' minds when they cast their ballot and which characteristics weigh most heavily in vote choice. For instance, do voters rely more on characteristics related to altruism, such as hard work or fairness, or do they tend to focus on attributes that signal shared community? Just as voters in strong rule of law democracies might have to weigh competing policy concerns, so too might a voter in a weak rule of law democracy have to weigh a politician's many attributes. How do voters accomplish this complicated task, trading off different candidate characteristics? Do they prefer a co-ethnic with a criminal past (as often seems to be the case in parts of India) or would they rather elect an honest politician with no ties to the locality or its people? These are all open questions.

A great deal also remains to be learned about politics in settings where the rule of law is neither strong nor weak, but somewhere in between. Throughout this dissertation, I treat polities as though they fall into one of two categories: weak and strong rule of law. But, many countries fall somewhere in between, on their way from weak to strong rule of law. Where exactly does the threshold lie between a weak rule of law and a strong rule of law society or between an attribute voter and a policy voter?

At the societal level, at what point is policy implementation sufficiently routine and uniform that most voters vote with an eye towards policy formulation rather than implementation? At the individual level, how certain of policy implementation must a voter be before he casts his vote based on the laws that parties plan to pass? Surely, heterogeneity must exist among individuals in the certainty of policy implementation that they require in order to vote based on policy. Whereas some voters might only require the possibility that a law will be implemented in order to vote based on politicians' policy promises and performance, other voters might demand near certainty before they given up on voting to influence policy implementation. What accounts for this presumed heterogeneity across individuals?

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A final direction for future research lies in the study of transition from weak to strong rule of law. This line of work may be the most normatively important since it asks how a society moves away from weak rule of law toward strong rule of law. Understanding this transition requires knowing exactly what causes weak rule of law. As I define it, rule of law is an observable condition, one in which the state fails to routinely and uniformly implement its laws, policies, and regulations. Chapter 2 identifies several conditions associated with weak rule of law—a lack of human and financial resources, corruption, etc.—without making any claims about which of these conditions actually causes weak rule of law. Presumably some of the conditions associated with weak rule of law are more important than others in determining whether the state implements laws and policies. If scholars can identify the pathologies most responsible for weak rule of law, then they should be able to suggest policy prescriptions for how a society can most effectively transition from weak to strong rule of law and from a politics based on politicians and particularistic implementation of policy to one based on parties, platforms, and ideologies.

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